POLICE ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE MANAGEMENT

“WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT WE GET IT RIGHT”: ORGANIZATIONAL IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT BY A POLICE SERVICE CONFRONTED WITH CONTROVERSY

By AMANDA LANCIA, B.A (Hons.)., M.A.

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Lay Abstract

This dissertation explores how the Toronto Police Service (TPS) responded to three controversies involving its relationship with marginalized and racialized communities - the removal of the TPS from the Toronto Pride parade; the investigation of the serial killer case involving Bruce McArthur; and the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer of 2020. Using an interpretivist approach and qualitative methods the dissertation identifies the image management strategies the TPS adopted in each case and discusses similarities and differences. The analysis contributes to a better understanding of how the police attempt to negotiate their legitimacy with communities with which they have traditionally had problematic relationships in a context where the increased visibility of police violence has created a legitimacy crisis.

Abstract

This dissertation explores the presentational strategies the Toronto Police Service (TPS) used to respond to three controversies involving its relationship with marginalized and racialized communities - the removal of the TPS from the Toronto Pride parade; the investigation of the serial killer case involving Bruce McArthur; and the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer of 2020. Using an interpretive approach and a variety of conceptual frameworks derived from Goffman's work on impression management and applying a grounded theory methodology combined with qualitative media analysis (QMA), the dissertation identifies the image management strategies the TPS adopted in each case.

The findings show that the strategies were context specific in the sense that they were directed to the precise criticisms being leveled at the TPS in each case. However, there were common themes across the cases which involved acknowledging a problematic past and committing to corrective actions in the future. The main difference in strategies had to do with the degree to which the TPS was prepared to push back on the claims made against the organization and defend its actions.

The dissertation speaks to the broader question of how police organizations are attempting to negotiate their legitimacy in a climate where social media has made police-citizen encounters more visible and where recent high profile incidents involving police violence and abuse of power have shaken public confidence and threatened police legitimacy. I argue that taken together, the TPS responses offer a glimpse into how one police organization is seeking to defend its legitimacy by projecting an image of the kind of police service it is aspiring to become, particularly in relation to the marginalized and racialized communities it serves.

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Abbreviations and Symbols

BLM - Black Lives Matter

CAMH – Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

CCC – Community Consultative Committee

GLBT – Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender

LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

LGBTI – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex

LGBTIQ2S+ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, Two-Spirit

LGBTQ – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer

LGBTQ2S+ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit

MCIT – Mobile Crisis Intervention Team

NAPS – Nishnawbe Aski Police Service

PACER – Police and Community Engagement Review

RIBDC – Race and Identity Based Data Collection

SIU – Special Investigations Unit

TBPS – Thunder Bay Police Service

TPS - Toronto Police Service

TPSB - Toronto Police Services Board

TPA - Toronto Police Association

TTC – Toronto Transit Commission

INTRODUCTION

Decades of research has established that for police organizations to function effectively within the societies they serve, they need to be seen as legitimate (Tankebe, 2013). Legitimacy is a concept that can be traced back to Max Weber's (1978) classic work. Weber (1978) defined legitimacy as "a belief in the legality of the enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands" (p.215). Tyler (2004) has adapted the term to policing by defining legitimacy as the right of police to exercise their power. In order for the police to have legitimacy, citizens need to have confidence that the police are acting according to the principles of procedural justice, that is, they need to trust that police are treating everyone equally and fairly (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In fact, research shows that a belief in the legitimacy of the police is a stronger predictor of public compliance and cooperation with the police than police performance (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Recent high-profile events involving police violence and abuse of power have shaken that confidence. While the vast majority of citizen-police interactions unfold without incident, too many of them have ended tragically and a disproportionate number of those have involved members of racialized and marginalized communities (Edwards et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020; Kahn et al., 2017; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2012). Incidents in the United States fill news pages on an almost weekly basis. Names like Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd – all of whom were Black - have become easily recognizable (see BBC, 2021 for a timeline of high-profile deaths in the U.S. over the past decade). The same is true in Canada for names like Robert Dziekanski, a Polish immigrant who was taken into custody in 2007 at the Vancouver International Airport shortly after he arrived because he was distraught, and died after police tasered him five times (Hume & Dhillon, 2007); Sammy Yatim, an 18-year old Syrian

immigrant who was shot by police in 2013 on an empty streetcar after brandishing a knife (Mukherjee & Harper, 2018); Dafonte Miller, a 19-year old Black male assaulted with a lead pipe in 2016 by an off-duty police officer, leading to removal of his eye (Loriggio, 2019); Chantel Moore, a 26-year old woman from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, who died in Edmundston, New Brunswick in 2020 after police called to her residence for a wellness check shot her (Magee, 2021).

Advances in communications technologies, especially the growing popularity of social media, have contributed in significant ways to this erosion in public confidence (Deuchar et al., 2021; Graziano et al., 2010; Greene et al., 2016; Mohler et al., 2022). Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) observe that the ease with which raw footage of violent police encounters can now be captured by private citizens and widely disseminated has inverted the traditional relationship between the police and the public, so that the watchers are now the watched. Mann et al. (2006) use the term "sousveillance" (inverse of surveillance) to describe this development (p. 177). Others have referred to the challenges presented by policing's "new visibility" (Goldsmith, 2010, p.914), and the "visibility crisis" created as social media has transformed policing for a "low visibility" to a "high visibility" profession (Sandhu & Haggerty, 2015, para.13).

The growing disaffection of the public with police is reflected in the large protests that often follow incidents of police violence and shootings of civilians (Worden & McLean, 2017), none more pronounced than those that broke out globally after the death of George Floyd (Altman, 2020) with demands to "defund the police." Cobbina-Dungy et al. (2022) and Fappiano (2022) have noted that the "defund the police" mantra has come to mean anything from a complete dismantling of police organizations to a scaling down of police responsibilities with a corresponding redirection of funds to social programs in areas such as poverty reduction,

housing, and mental health services. There are indirect indicators of public disaffection as well, including the difficulties that police organizations are having recruiting new officers. Several police associations in Ontario, including Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Toronto Police Association, and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police have recently come together to deal with their staffing crises by initiating an effort to "re-brand the policing profession" and attract new recruits (Viau, 2023, para.10).

If police legitimacy is understood as "public trust in and a felt obligation to obey the police" (Worden & McLean, 2017, p.42), public disaffection with the police raises the question as to whether the police can effectively perform their role as maintainers of law and order. The ever-growing erosion of public trust has led to a legitimacy crisis that has put police organizations in the position of having to justify their actions and their very existence as an institution (Greene et al., 2016, Lum & Nagin, 2017; Nix, 2017; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Skogan, 2019). Police organizations are negotiating their legitimacy with the communities they serve, particularly racialized and marginalized communities that have long experienced violence or indifference at the hands of police. *How* the police manage their legitimacy is one of the underlying concerns of my dissertation.

Interest in police use of presentational strategies to try to manage public perceptions and generate trust and confidence in the police pre-dates the emergence of new communication technologies, with the work of researchers such as Ericson (1982), Manning (1971, 1977, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010) and Mawby (2001, 2002, 2014). Lee and McGovern's (2013) observation goes a long way towards explaining why: "…legitimacy rests on public support and public support rests as much on what police are perceived to be doing as what they do" (p.103). Manning (1997) has characterized policing as a "masterful costume drama" (p.5) and police

impression management strategies as an effort to "hold the show together" (p.4). Recent developments have only intensified interest in just how the police are "holding the show" together.

My question in this dissertation is: How do police respond to controversies that raise questions about their relationships with racialized and marginalized communities and engage in presentational strategies meant to counter the negative images that are undermining their legitimacy? The premise of the dissertation is that the challenges that the police face take form of specific incidents in specific communities. For this reason, I have chosen to focus my study on the Toronto Police Service (TPS), the largest municipal police organization in Canada, serving a population of almost three million people in a city known for the diversity of its citizenry. I analyze how the TPS responded to three recent controversies that generated considerable media attention and raised questions about how well the organization was serving the community, particularly Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities.

The first case arose in 2016 when activists stopped Toronto's annual Pride parade to protest the TPS's problematic relations with the city's Black and LGBTQ2S+ communities. The protesters refused to move or allow the parade to continue until organizers acknowledged and signed a list of nine demands. Many of the demands focused on a more inclusive parade, but among the most prominent and controversial of the demands was a promise to ban uniformed police from marching in future parades and the removal of TPS floats from the parade. After about 30 minutes, the organizers agreed. The parade continued, but the ban on TPS participation in the parade is still in place.

The second case occurred in 2017-2018 and involved the TPS's investigation of serial murderer Bruce McArthur. The LGBTQ2S+ community had been complaining to police since

2010 that men were going missing from Toronto's largely LGBTQ2S+ neighbourhood (the Village), only to be told that there was no evidence of a serial killer in the neighbourhood. On January 18, 2019, Bruce McArthur was arrested and eventually charged with eight counts of first-degree murder in relation to men he had murdered between 2010-2018, all of whom had connections to the Village. The TPS's handling of the case came under intense attack and raised questions about the quality of the policing provided to the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The third case involved the protests that occurred during the summer of 2020 in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a 29-year-old Afro-Indigenous woman, in Toronto two days later. The facts of Floyd's death are well known (BBC, 2020). In Korchinski-Paquet's case, the TPS had been called to her apartment by her family after an altercation involving a knife broke out between Korchinski-Paquet and her brother. As the police were entering the apartment, Korchinski-Paquet fled to the balcony and appeared to be trying to access a neighbour's balcony when she fell to her death (Gillis, 2020d). The protests sparked by the deaths of Floyd and Korchinski-Paquet had started just as I was deciding on a third case to examine for my dissertation. The attention the protests drew to the troubled relationship between the TPS and racialized communities, particularly Black communities, led me to conclude that the case offered an opportunity to do a comparative analysis between police responses to two marginalized communities – the LGBTQ2S+ community and Black and racialized communities.

Using a range of conceptual frameworks derived from Goffman's classic work (1959, 1963) on impression management and face work (Chapter 2) and using Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory methodology and Altheide and Schneider's (2013) qualitative media analysis approach (Chapter 3), I analyze the range of statements made by the TPS in

response to the three controversies that arose, identifying the key themes and strategies among them.

My findings show that the image management strategies the TPS deployed were context specific in that they were directed in pointed ways to the claims that critics were making in each case. The findings also show that the TPS modulated its responses based on a series of factors – the thrust of the criticisms, including whether the claims concerned their problematic relationships with the community or the organization's competency, the audiences the organization was seeking to target and reactions to previous messaging.

But there were also common themes in the TPS responses, paramount among them the regret that the organization expressed for past actions with respect to each community and its commitment to changing in ways that would earn them trust. I argue that the TPS responses projected an aspirational image of the transformed police organization the TPS claimed to want to become. At the very least, I argue in my conclusion, the messaging reflects an image of what the TPS believes the public expects of its police service organizations. In that sense, I argue, the presentational strategies tell us as much about what the public expects of its police services and what it would take to rebuild public trust.

There are several caveats to bear in mind before proceeding. First, these findings should not be read either as a defense or critique of police actions. In line with the interpretive stance I take in this research, my concern is to understand the social processes of presenting organizational images and managing impressions. I am interested in "what is" as opposed to "what could/should be."

Nor do I assume that the image of the TPS that emerges from its presentational strategies are an accurate picture of the organization's actions on the ground. As LaPiere (1934) famously noted, what people say and what they do are two different matters. That adage can apply just as well to organizations. How far the rhetoric goals of the TPS with respect to their relational problems with marginalized and racialized communities match their actions on the ground is a separate question. My focus is exclusively on the TPS's rhetoric.

Third, I am looking at the official responses of the TPS as an organization. I am not assuming that the views expressed by TPS leadership or those who speak for them represent the views of rank-and-file members of the organization. Nor do I assume that various positions taken by the TPS align with other organizations that speak for the membership, including the Toronto Police Association (TPA)[1]. I come back to these caveats in my conclusion.

The dissertation is organized in the following manner:

Chapter 1 presents a discussion of literature relevant to the dissertation. I begin by presenting an overview of research that documents the troubled relationships that police have had with marginalized and racialized communities and the impact that this has had on perceptions of the police. I focus in particular on the two communities of concern in this dissertation – the LGBTQ2S+ community and racialized communities. The chapter then looks at

[1] The Toronto Police Organization (TPA) is a labour organization representing the membership of the TPS. Police officers in Ontario are prohibited by the *Ontario Police Services Act* from being members of a trade union (Government of Ontario, 2019), but the TPA functions essentially as a public-sector union, engaging in collective bargaining and negotiating contracts for its members (Toronto Police Association, n.d.). (For more information, see: https://tpa.ca/)

policing's visibility crisis and legitimacy crisis, providing a more detailed look at the literature I have cited in this introduction.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical approach I have taken in this research, providing an overview of the various streams within interpretive theory that came together to shape my research questions and guide my analysis. I start by discussing symbolic interactionism and what has become one of its key variants (Meltzer et al., 1975) – Erving Goffman's (1963) dramaturgical approach. I explain how Goffman's approach inspired Scott and Lyman's (1968) work on the offering of accounts as a way to save face and attention in the organizational image management literature to image repair work, paying particular attention to Benoit's (1997, 2015) image repair theory. I also discuss how Goffman's work has impacted social problems theorizing through the typology of counter framing and reframing/repairing strategies that Benford and Hunt (2003) have developed.

Chapter 3 is a methodological chapter. I explain the two related approaches I employed to conduct my analysis – Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory and Altheide and Schneider's (2013) qualitative media analysis approach. I also provide details as to how I conducted this research.

The following three chapters – Chapters 4, 5, and 6 - present my substantive findings. The case studies are presented chronologically, that is, in the order in which they initially occurred. However, it should be noted that the debates generated by the controversies overlapped to some extent, especially the debates around the Pride parade and the police handling of the McArthur case, and that those debates are ongoing. Each case study is structured around a

description of the controversy, a brief background section to provide context, a presentation of the strategies adopted by the TPS in response, and an analytical discussion.

Chapter 7 offers a conclusion. I briefly summarize my findings, focusing on the similarities and differences that I found in my analysis of the three case studies. I discuss what I see as the major contributions of the dissertation. I end by considering the limitations of the study and areas that call for additional research.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several bodies of literature relevant to this dissertation. Most basic is the literature that documents the problematic relationships that the police have had with marginalized and racialized communities over the years and the outcome in terms of the perceptions these communities have of the police. It is these perceptions that necessitate the image work I explore in the dissertation. I pay particular attention to research relating to the two groups of concern in my dissertation - the LGBTQ2S+ community and racialized communities. A second body of literature considers the impact that the dramatic advances in communication technologies over the last several decades have had on policing, leading to what Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) have described as a crisis of visibility. The increased visibility of police work has exposed the police and their actions to unprecedented outside scrutiny. This exposure has seriously exacerbated another crisis the police are experiencing, a legitimacy crisis. The legitimacy crisis in policing involves fundamental questions about the very need for policing as an institution. The literature pertaining to the legitimacy crisis is examined at the end of the chapter. I conclude by situating my research within the context of all three bodies of writing.

Policing Marginalized and Racialized Communities

The troubled nature of the relationship between police and marginalized and racialized communities is not new. Indeed, several scholars have argued that the history of policing has been largely a history of authorities supressing marginalized and racialized groups (Akbar, 2020; Maynard, 2017; Maynard, 2020; Vitale, 2018). Vitale (2018) argues that the functions and the origins of the police are linked to "the management of inequalities of race and class" (p.27). He maintains that the notion of the ruling classes exerting social control over marginalized groups can be traced back as far as the ideas of Sir Robert Peel. Peel is often recognized as the father of

modern policing because of his role in establishing the London Metropolitan Police in 1829, an organization that was to become the model for most metropolitan police services in the United States and Canada. Peel formulated his ideas about policing, Vitale (2018) points out, while leading "the British colonial occupation of Ireland" and trying to implement new reforms that would address riots and uprisings and aid in political and economic domination (p.35). The same fundamental principles were then implemented in the establishment of the London Metropolitan Police where duties entailed controlling and supressing riots, protecting property, and creating a disciplined workforce with the ultimate goals of maintaining economic and political control (Vitale, 2018).

As police organizations emerged throughout North America, they had a similar focus. Cities like Boston and New York City adapted the model of the London Metropolitan Police to address issues with immigration and industrialization (Vitale, 2018). Police directed their attention mostly to immigrants and racialized people, the control of labour unrest and disputes between different ethnic groups, and the enforcement of laws implemented to control different groups of people (Vitale, 2018). In the Southern states and cities like Savannah, New Orleans, and Charleston, early police forces "were derived not from the informal watch system as happened in the Northeast, but instead from slave patrols that were created to prevent revolts" (Vitale, 2018, p.45-46). In Texas, the Texas Rangers served as colonial police and were used to protect the interests of white settlers. Their work focused on pursuing Indigenous peoples "accused of attacking white settlers" and investigating crimes like the theft of cattle (Vitale, 2018, p.43). The Texas Rangers also "acted as vigilantes on behalf" of white settlers in disputes with Spanish or Mexican people (Vitale, 2018, p.43). If Mexican or Indigenous peoples resisted the authority of the rangers, there was the risk of being killed, beaten, intimidated, or arrested.

Akbar (2020) too observes that some scholars mark the beginnings of modern policing with models that developed out of London and Boston in the 19th century. But Akbar (2020) points out that these accounts often neglect the ways in which enslavement, settler colonialism, and the Jim Crow system of segregation and discrimination influenced policing as an institution in the 20th century.

Some authors (Kelling & Moore, 2006) have characterized the history of policing as having gone through three distinct phases, including the political era beginning in the 1840s, the reform era in the 1930s, and most recently the community problem-solving era. But other authors critique this characterization, deeming it to be a "*revising* of police history" (Strecher, 2006, p.67). Williams and Murphy (2006) note that the analysis by Kelling and Moore (2006) is incomplete and does not take into consideration "how slavery, segregation, discrimination, and racism have affected the development of American police departments" and how this has impacted the policing of America's racialized communities (p.27). Strecher (2006) maintains that the Kelling and Moore (2006) account of three neatly packaged eras neglects to consider social context. According to Strecher (2006), there is "no clear recognition of the interplay of change and continuity in social institutions, roles, values, structures, economics, technology and political development" (p.68).

Similar observations about the social control function of the police have been made about Canadian policing. Brodeur et al. (n.d.), point out that Canada's first municipal police organizations emerged in cities such as Toronto, Quebec City, and Montreal. Their focus was primarily on arresting criminals, policing conflicts between labourers and their employers and between different ethnic groups and maintaining morality by controlling and enforcing laws applicable to gambling, sex work, and drunkenness (Juliani et al., 1984).

In 1873, for example, the North-West Mounted Police (renamed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1920) was established at the federal level to enforce order in the rural parts of Canada. Much of their work involved the control of Indigenous peoples, protecting the territory from attack, and maintaining order in the goldfields (Lunney, 2012; Macleod, 1978; Mawby, 2011). The North-West Mounted Police enforced a rule of law that overrode "Indigenous customary law and sovereignty" and aided "the effective occupation of the colonial state" (Nettelbeck & Smandych, 2010, p.385). The force suppressed "the independence of Indigenous groups as sovereign peoples" and brought Indigenous peoples "within the reach of colonial authority" (Nettelbeck & Smandych, 2010, p.361). Maynard (2020) concludes that "as more formal policing was entrenched [in Canada], law enforcement continually functioned in order to enact and maintain racial, gendered and economic inequality (p.72). This, then, is the larger historical backdrop against which the cases I examine must be considered.

Police Relations with the LGBTQ2S+ Community

Since two of the three cases I examine in this dissertation concern the LGBTQ2S+ community, I focus in this section on the literature that concerns itself specifically with the relations between the LGBTQ2S+ community and the police.

Over Policing

Historically, police organizations have had a difficult relationship with LGBTQ2S+[2] communities (Dario et al., 2019; Dwyer, 2014; Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Owen et al., 2017). As

[2] Throughout this dissertation, the acronym LGBTQ2S+ is used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-spirit, and queer community. The "+" in the acronym is used to encompass and represent the many other gender and sexual identities that are not directly mentioned in the acronym. In this chapter, various acronyms are used to represent this community, as I am deferring to the authors and the acronyms and language they employed in their writing. Therefore, the appearance of different acronyms in the chapter is not evidence of inconsistency, but of an effort to be accurate and respect authors' usages.

Goldberg et al. (2019) have succinctly put it, members of the LGBT[3] community were "intentionally and systematically targeted by law enforcement based on their sexual orientation and/or gender expression" (p. 374). Instances of this kind of over-policing include the frequent heightened presence of police in leisure settings such as bars, bath houses, and nightclubs and in the form of raids where members of the community have been victimized, harassed, and arrested by police officers (Buhrke, 1996; Comstock, 1991; Dario et al, 2020; Dwyer, 2011; Gallant & Gillis, 2001; Groves, 1995; Russell, 2020). The police have been described as "active "enforcers"" of the law when it comes to the LGBTQ2S+ community (Colvin, 2014, p.189).

Perhaps the most comprehensively documented example of police harassment of the LGBTQ2S+ community involves the Stonewall riots. The riots at the Stonewall Inn in New York City marked "the beginning of the modern-day gay liberation movement" (Buhrke, 1996, p.6). The Stonewall Inn was a popular bar where members of the LGBTQ2S+ community gathered in the 1960s.The police had previously raided the bar multiple times, but on the night of June 27, 1969, they arrived with a warrant that claimed that liquor was being sold without a license (Duberman, 1993). They made arrests and took anyone who could not produce identification out to police vehicles. Outside of the bar a crowd had gathered, and tensions were rising. The crowd protested by yelling, throwing cans, coins, bottles, and bricks at the officers (Duberman, 1993). The riots at the Stonewall Inn continued for two nights, with a crowd of 2,000 battling about 400 police officers (Cruikshank, 1992).

Stonewall is not the only example. Buhrke (1996) discusses a 1991 case where two Miami Beach police officers entrapped gay men by pretending to engage in oral sex, inviting

[3] LGBT is an acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people

men to join them, and then arresting the men for "lewd" behaviour (p.1). Using a variety of documents, such as media articles, first-person accounts, and court decisions, Stein (2019) describes multiple cases of police harassment and anti-gay policing. In 1968, police conducted a raid on a women's gay bar called Rusty's in Philadelphia and arrested approximately a dozen customers for "disorderly conduct" (Stein, 2019, p.36). There were no violations of the law and the charges were eventually dropped, but not before the women were hauled before a magistrate. While in police custody they were subjected to verbal abuse and pressured to fill out questionnaires without being informed of their rights to refuse to respond to police questioning (Stein, 2019).

Another case involved the police raid of the Continental Baths in New York City in 1969. Police entered the bathhouse and ordered customers to get dressed and leave (Stein, 2019). One of the patrons was in fact a police officer. Wearing only a towel, he pointed out which customers had allegedly offered to have sex with him and those he believed had had sex. Twenty-two customers were ultimately arrested. The police claimed that they had raided the bathhouse in response to a citizen complaint. The citizen had seen an ad, visited the bathhouse, discovered that customers were having sex, and called police. Police claimed they had no choice but to raid the bathhouse (Stein, 2019).

Both Groves (1995) and Russell (2020) describe the police raid of the Commerce Club in Melbourne, Australia, where 40 police officers used a single warrant to strip search 463 staff and patrons during "Tasty," a gay event being held at the club. Those who were strip-searched and detained by the police described the raid as "frightening, homophobic, threatening, abusive, and humiliating" (Russell, 2020, p.38). Patrons acknowledged that they knew a raid was occurring once the police entered but did not know strip searches were going to be conducted until they

started happening (Groves, 1995). The police ignored the guidelines that existed for searches and did not wear individual identification while conducting the raid (Russell, 2020).

In Canada, Gallant and Gillis (2001) provide a detailed history of the TPS raid on the Toronto Women's Bathhouse, known more commonly as "The Pussy Palace," on September 14, 2000. Both Gallant and Gillis were present at the raid. They explain that the Pussy Palace was established in part "to address the invisibility of queer women's sexuality" (Gallant & Gillis, 2001, p.153). It provided a space for "women interested in casual, kinky, and public sex" to gather (Gallant & Gillis, 2001, p.154). On the night of the raid, five plain-clothes male officers from the TPS 52 Division raided the bath house. At the door, the officers were told it was a women's event. The police responded by threatening to charge the bathhouse with obstruction of justice if they were not allowed in. Once inside, the officers proceeded to conduct an extensive search. Gallant and Gillis (2001) claim that they "were explicitly prevented from warning participants of the police presence" even though most of the approximately 350 women in attendance were naked or semi naked (p. 157). Many of the women in attendance were "deeply angered and emotionally distressed by the police presence" (Gallant & Gillis, 2001, p.157). Loralee Gillis recalled:

> Police have insisted that the purpose for the men's presence was a liquor license inspection. I watched as these men knock on women's doors, search their rooms, take their names and addresses, and visually inspect their bodies with an aggressive and penetrating gaze. (pp.157-158)

This was not the first time TPS had raided bath houses. During the 1980s, police were notorious for raiding men's bathhouses in Toronto, charging occupants with public indecency – which were later dropped - and publishing names in local newspapers. Gallant and Gillis (2001) describe the bathhouse raids of the 1980s as a pivotal moment for the LGBTQ2S+ community in

Canada. The raids created a bedrock of mistrust that has tainted the police's relationship with the community ever since.

Under-Policing

While in some ways LGBTQ2S+ communities have experienced over-policing, in other ways they have experienced under-policing. Under-policing includes "instances where police persistently fail to respond to instances of violence perpetuated against certain (vulnerable) groups in society, thereby denying them official victim status" (White & Perrone, 2005, as cited in Dwyer, 2011, p.422). Several studies have concluded that members of LGBTQ2S+ communities have come to expect that when they are victimized in some way and try to report the incident to the police, they will receive little understanding, a negative response or no response at all (Dario et al., 2020; Dwyer, 2011; Goldberg et al., 2019).

Wolff and Cokely (2007) analyzed 1,896 incident reports collected by OutFront Minnesota, a GLBT[4] advocacy group, between 1990-2000. The reports documented encounters that members of the GLBT community had with police. The reports included many instances of "police acting disrespectful, rude, in an inappropriate manner, engaging in harassment, and denying services to victims" as well as "officers acting as the actual perpetrators of anti-LGBT[5] verbal harassment, intimidation, and physical assault" (Wolff & Cokely, 2007, p.12). Among the specific responses included in the reports were "911 operators failing to send assistance, police officers mocking victims, officers blaming victims for the crime that has happened to them, as well as police laughing at victims' accounts of the situations that occurred" (Wolff & Cokely,

[4] GLBT is an acronym representing gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people
[5] Wolff & Cokely (2007) used the acronym GLBT in their writing, however it appears that OutFront Minnesota who initially collected the data that was analyzed in the study, at the time, used the acronym LGBT to represent the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

2007, p.13). Even when it was reported that the police responded appropriately to situations, victims noted that officers often failed to file a basic incident report, which indicated to victims that police did not think a crime had occurred (Wolff & Cokely, 2007).

Similarly, Copple and Dunn (2017) discuss a reluctance on the part of the police to take crimes reported by members of the LGBTQ[6] community seriously. They note that there have been reoccurring instances of homicides involving victims from the LGBTQ community, particularly racialized trans women, remaining unsolved for years and sometimes decades. Copple and Dunn (2017) conclude that the police's poor record in this regard reflects a lack of commitment to equally serving and protecting transgender people. In another study, participants complained about police officers focusing on issues not relevant to the report, such as "asking a victim of intimate partner violence about the purpose of sex toys rather than stopping the abuse they were experiencing" (Dwyer et al., 2020, p.262).

Police indifference or malign neglect has been observed even in cases where a police organization has an established LGBTQ2S+ liaison. In an Australian study, Dwyer et al. (2020) found that LGBTI[7] individuals rarely reached out to liaison officers. This was due in part to the fact that the general duties officers they initially approached were often unaware of the LGBTI liaison programs within their own services, making them invisible. When LGBTI individuals did have contact with liaison officers, they found their interactions with them to be not much different with those they had with general duties offices (Dwyer, 2020). Liaison officers often did not return their calls or did not act on the issues brought to them (Dwyer, 2020).

[6] LGBTQ is an acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people
[7] LGBTI is an acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people

Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Given this history, it is not surprising that members of the LGBTQ2S+ community have negative perceptions of law enforcement. Sexual orientation and/or gender identity have been found to play a significant role in how an individual views the police. LGBT+ participants in a study conducted by Pickles (2020), for example, expressed that police were viewed negatively by LGBT+ people. One of the main contributors to this negative perception was "the historic baggage surrounding the police as a repressive agency of persecution" (Pickles, 2020, p.747). Similarly, Owen et al. (2017) found that members of the LGBT community held more negative views of the police than non-LGBT individuals, and that they were more likely to perceive the police as treating the LGBT community negatively. Both Serpe and Nadal (2017) and Hodge and Sexton (2020) have found the same to be true for transgender individuals, as transgender participants reported more negative perceptions of police in both studies. Trans*[8] participants in Serpe and Nadal's (2017) study also reported being less comfortable with interacting with police than cisgendered individuals. Overall, participants in Hodge and Sexton's (2020) study believed that being a member of the LGBTQ community had a negative impact on how police treated them. Many participants admitted to basing their perceptions of police on previous negative encounters with the police (Hodge & Sexton, 2020).

These negative attitudes extend to the issue of police legitimacy. A survey conducted at the 2014 Rainbows Festival in Phoenix, Arizona found that members of the LGBT community view police legitimacy at lower levels than non-LGBTQ individuals (Dario et al., 2020). Miles-

[8] Trans* is an umbrella term used to include and represent the many "gender identities along the transgender/gender-nonconforming continuum…the asterisk denotes a radically inclusive use of the term for all persons not identifying as cisgender (i.e., gender-conforming people), as the asterisk acts as a placeholder for all identities falling under the transgender umbrella" (Jones 2013 as cited in Serpe & Nadal, 2017, p.281).

Johnson (2013) found that members of the LGBTI community in Australia hold different views on police legitimacy and trust than heterosexual Australians. In Canada, Kelly (2022) found that perceptions of procedural justice among members of the LGBTIQ2S+[9] community are strongly related to perceptions of legitimacy. The less members of the LGBTIQ2S+ feel that they can trust and expect justice at the hands of the police, the less likely they are to see police organizations as legitimate. Additionally, Kelly (2022) found differences in perceptions of police legitimacy among identities within the LGBTIQ2S+ community, with cis-gendered men "more likely to perceive the police as legitimate than cisgender women, nonbinary and trans individuals" (p.136). Kelly (2022) explains that within the past few decades certain groups of the LGBTIQ2S+ community, such as cisgender men, have experienced more acceptance into mainstream society especially "if they conform to dominant norms concerning sexuality, relationships and behaviour" but not everyone in the community fits into these norms (Duggan, 2002 as cited in Kelly, 2022, p.136). The police still continue to regulate the LGBTIQ2S+ community and maintain the gender binary when interacting with individuals which exacerbates the exclusion of some community members (Robinson, 2020 as cited in Kelly, 2022). Privileged community members experience a greater degree of protection and are regulated less by the police, thus minimizing interactions with police which could lead to more confidence in the legitimacy of the police (Kelly, 2022).

Remedial Efforts

There have been efforts on both the part of police organizations and the LGBTQ2S+ community to address the issues between them. On the part of police organizations these efforts

[9] LGBTIQ2S+ is an acronym representing "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, two-spirit, and queer identifying individuals" (Kelly, 2022, p.1).

have included recruiting more LGBTQ2S+ individuals as police officers, establishing LGBTQ2S+ liaison, introducing mandatory bias training, and updating operational and personnel policies, particularly those concerning bias-free policing, sexual harassment, and recruitment and retention protocols (Colvin, 2012; Copple & Dunn, 2017; Dwyer et al., 2020; Kirkup, 2013; Parent & Parent, 2019).

Police organizations in Canada have been recruiting and welcoming gay and lesbian officers since 2000, with more recent efforts to include bisexual and transgender individuals as well (Parent & Parent, 2019). The purpose of these efforts is to increase "the diversity of policing by expanding the representation of diverse individuals from the communities" (Parent & Parent, 2019, p.147). Police organizations believe that having police officers who are part of the LGBTQ2S+ community serves to improve relationships with the community and can potentially lead to changes within police culture. Parent and Parent (2019) also note that individuals in top administrative positions in police organizations publicly advocate for the recruitment and employment of more LGBTQ2S+ individuals.

Another remedial step has been joining with LGBTQ2S+ communities to create liaison committees. The purpose of these LGBTQ2S+ liaison committees is to foster community partnerships, build trust and respect, and create more solid understandings between the community and police (Colvin, 2012; Copple & Dunn, 2017; Dwyer, 2014; Dwyer et al., 2020; Kirkup, 2013). How far any of these initiatives have gone in making fundamental changes is questionable. Parent and Parent (2019) point out that many of the changes within police organizations have been mandated by human rights legislation and workplace laws and policies. The fact that LGBTQ2S+ officers still have varying levels of comfort in disclosing their sexual

orientation to their colleagues is telling and speaks to the changes that need to happen at the level of police culture (Parent & Parent, 2019).

Dwyer et al. (2020) observe that while the introduction of liaison officers is useful, members of the community are still loath to approach them. Whether it was a negative encounter with police that LGBTI individuals had themselves or an encounter they heard about from others, the impact shaped their attitude towards liaison officers. Dwyer et al. (2020) note that: "regardless of whether it was contemporary or historical, the interviewees made it abundantly apparent that negative interactions contributed to the development of negative perceptions of police, and subsequently less willingness to approach any police, including liaison officers" (p.261). In any case, Dwyer et al. (2020) point out, all police officers should have knowledge about LGBTI matters since members of the community are more likely to interact with general duties officers than liaison officers.

Copple and Dunn (2017) note that until recently, any collaboration between the police and community has tended to be seen as a "symbolic gesture" and that there is still a long way to go (p.3). They recommend that police organizations consider paying more attention to running community forums, creating advisory boards that members of the LGBTQ2S+ community sit on, and having a stronger and – where appropriate - more supportive presence at LGBTQ2S+ community events.[10] They also suggest that accountability processes within police organizations need to be addressed if they want to earn the trust of the community. It is also important for police organizations to understand, Copple and Dunn (2017) point out, that their role is not only to police communities but that it is also to provide protection. LGBTQ2S+ community members

[10] Copple and Dunn (2017) state that police organizations should contact community agencies "to ensure that a police presence would be welcome" at events held for members of the LGBTQ+ community (p.19).

need to know that they can also count on the police to provide protection (Copple & Dunn, 2017).

In short, while police organizations have made efforts to address the tense relationship, they have traditionally had with the LGBTQ2S+ community, there is a long legacy of mistrust still to overcome. Conceding that there have been improvements, Dwyer (2014) argues that it is simplistic to think of the evolution of the relationship as a linear progression moving from a "painful past to a more productive present" (p.149). Instead, Dwyer (2014) argues, the relationship has fluctuated "between historical moments of police criminalizing 'homosexual perversity' and contemporary landscapes of partnership between police and LGBT people" (p.149). Regressive moments of policing can appear in policing even in the present, negatively impacting police and community partnership efforts. The relationship is still fragile. Any progress that police at the local level have made to improve relations can easily be damaged if violent policing practices reminiscent of the past emerge (Dwyer et al., 2020). This explains why the stakes are so high in the cases of police responses I examine in this dissertation.

Police Relations with Racialized Communities

The third case study in my dissertation concerns police relations with racialized communities. Where the history of police relations with the LGBTQ2S+ community be characterized as exhibiting a pattern of over- and under-policing, police relations with racialized communities have exhibited patterns of over-policing. Patterns of racial bias in the criminal justice system, including police practices, have been well documented. Much of the literature focuses on the United States, where the relationship has been particularly strained. The literature there covers such issues as racial disparities in traffic stops (e.g., Castle Bell et al., 2014; Engel & Calnon, 2004; Harris, 1999; Smith & Petrocelli, 2001), stop-and-search practices (e.g., Fagan

& Davies, 2000; Gelman et al., 2007; Goel et al., 2016), and use of force (e.g., Edwards et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020; Kahn et al., 2017; Legewie, 2016).

The data for Canada is more problematic because until recently there have been restrictions in most jurisdictions on collecting information about the race of individuals being processed through the criminal justice system and those interacting with police services.[11] Owusu-Bempah and Millar (2010) describe the situation as a "*de facto* ban on the collection and publication" of justice statistics by race (p.99). The only police department that was an exception was the Kingston Police Service, which in 2003 began a data collection project that involved officers collecting race and ethnicity data during non-casual interactions with civilians after a series of events that forced the service to acknowledge racially biased policing was an issue for the service (Closs & McKenna, 2006; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2012). In 2018, Ontario passed the *Anti-Racism Act* which mandates that specific public sector organizations, including the police, must collect race-based data to identify and address systemic racism (Government of Ontario, 2018). That change notwithstanding, the lack of complete data until recently has made it difficult for researchers to fully explore racial bias in Canadian policing.

Even so, there is ample survey and qualitative evidence showing that Black and other racialized communities, including Indigenous peoples, have been the target of aggressive policing practices in Canada (Khenti, 2014). I review some of that literature below.

[11] The exception to this is statistics on the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian federal corrections system (Owusu-Bempah & Millar, 2010), and several reports and task force inquiries such as *Police Use of Force in Ontario: An Examination of Data from the Special Investigations Unit* (Wortley, 2006).

Racial Profiling and Stop and Search Practices

There is a vast literature detailing the racial disparities in police profiling practices in Canada. Both Tanovich (2006) and Maynard (2017), for example, note that racialized people are much more likely than white people to be stopped by the police. Tanovich (2006) points out that racialized stereotypes often play a role in determining who the police choose to stop, question, search, arrest or detain. Tanovich (2006) notes that racialized people "face a much greater risk of attracting the attention of law enforcement," experience more unwanted encounters with law enforcement, and are more likely to be arrested due to being stopped by police (p.1). In a more recent study, Maynard (2017) reached the same conclusion. Observing that Black people are subjected to higher rates of police surveillance than white people, Maynard (2017) argues that "profiling is itself a form of violence, because it infringes on Black people's ability to move freely and without fear in public space" (p.88).

Khenti (2014) looked at the impact of the Canadian war on drugs, particularly in Ontario which has the highest number of Black residents in Canada. He observed that the disproportionate focus on Black communities has resulted in mass incarceration and an overrepresentation of Black individuals within Canadian federal prisons (Khenti, 2014). The Canadian war on drugs, Khenti (2014) argues, intensified racial profiling practices which have "become a pervasive reality for Black Canadians" (p. 192). This has left Black communities, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status, struggling to cope with generations of mass incarceration, violence, trauma, and stigma (Khenti, 2014).

Some of the literature deals specifically with the Toronto area. Wortley's (1996) survey of Toronto residents, for example, found that Black male respondents reported being stopped by the police the most, in comparison to Chinese and white respondents. A survey conducted by

York University's Institute for Social Research in 1995 found that almost one third of Black male respondents disclosed being stopped by police two or more times, and that Black respondents, especially Black males, "were much more likely to report involuntary police contact" than white or Asian respondents (Wortley & Tanner, 2004, p.198). These findings are supported by another Toronto-based study conducted by Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011) which also showed that in comparison to other racial groups, Black respondents were six times more likely to report that family or friends have also recently experienced racial profiling.

Racialized youth appear to be particularly vulnerable to police stop and search practices. Wortley and Tanner's (2004) study found that Black youth living in the Toronto area are much more likely than non-Black youth to be subjected to random stops and to be questioned on the street. They also found that racial disparities were greatest between students who reported low levels of criminal behaviour. For instance, only 4% of white students who had not engaged in criminal activities reported having been stopped by the police two or more times within the past two years, whereas 34% of Black students in this same category reported being stopped. Additionally, 23% of Black students with no deviant behaviour disclosed being searched by police in contrast to only 5% of white students in this same category (Wortley & Tanner, 2004).

Neugebauer (2000) found similar results in a study of Black youth in Toronto and York region. In that study, youth reported that being stopped and questioned by police was a common experience for them as was being treated in a hostile manner during these encounters. The participants expressed the view that as far as police were concerned, "colour signifies class and imputes a debased or "spoiled" status" (Neugebauer, 2000, p.90). They noted that police were quick to make assumptions about them based on their clothing, accent, and appearance. Youth involved in the study shared that they are constantly on guard (Neugebauer, 2000).

These findings confirmed the results of James' (1998) earlier study which looked at the experiences of Black youth in six different Ontario cities. In the James (1998) study, many of the participants claimed that they had been stopped under the pretense of a "routine check" or because they "matched the description of a crime suspect" (p.167). They viewed this as racism as the police were operating on the idea that "all [Black people] look alike" (James, 1998, p.167). Like the youth interviewed in the Neugebauer (2000) study, youth in this study believed that the police harboured stereotypes of Black youth and that their clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry increased the probability that they would be stopped by police since the police treated these as cues of suspicious activity (James, 1998).

Meng (2017) looked specifically at police carding practices, a particularly controversial issue with respect to the TPS. Carding, officially referred to in Ontario as the Community Contacts Policy, is an intelligence-gathering policy that involves collecting information about individuals during routine street stops or stop-and-searches, when no specific offense is being investigated. It gives police the discretion during such stops to complete a Field Information Report (FIR), also known as a 208 card. The 208 card initially included information such as age, gender, stoppage location, contact ID, skin colour, and birthplace, but was eventually expanded to include details on the home location of the individual as well as the nature of contact such as loitering, general investigation, drugs, etc. The practice has become controversial over recent years because while the police have argued that it is a useful tool to fight crime and "get to know the neighbourhood," many citizens see it as a racial profiling practice (Meng, 2017, p. 8). Using TPS data gathered from Field Information Reports between 2003-2012, Meng (2017) established that the number of stops and stop/arrest ratios increased for Black youth over those years, while decreasing for white youth. Meng (2017) also found that Black youth tended to be stopped and

carded by police excessively in neighbourhoods where more white people lived and in areas with higher crime rates.

Use of Force

Another practice that has led to tensions between police and racialized communities is use of force. The evidence here shows that Black individuals are more likely to be subjected to this practice and that there is a clear overrepresentation of Black individuals in use of force data. For example, Wortley (2006) examined police use of force in Ontario using both focus groups consisting of members of the Black community and data provided by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) from SIU Director's Reports. Members of the focus groups believed strongly that police would be much more likely to engage in use force on Black people than on white people, especially regarding deadly force, that police treat Black individuals more violently, and that Black individuals "were much more likely to be the victim of police brutality" (Wortley, 2006, p.16). When asked to explain the racial bias in police use of force, members of the focus groups attributed the cause to racism (Wortley, 2006).

The experiences and beliefs of the focus group participants were borne out in the SIU data which revealed that Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada are exposed more to police use of force and are vastly overrepresented in these incidents compared to white people (Wortley, 2006). Black people comprised 3.6% of the population of Ontario but represented 12.0% of the citizens involved in SIU investigations. Indigenous peoples comprised 1.7% of the population of Ontario but represented 7.1% of citizens involved in SIU investigations. Cases that involved direct harm caused by police actions were more likely to involve Black civilians. The shooting rate of Black civilians by police officers in Ontario was found to be 7.5 times higher than the

overall provincial rate. Black civilians in Ontario were 10 times more likely to be involved in a police shooting (Wortley, 2006).

An Ontario Human Rights Commission study (2020) that looked specifically at Toronto found that Black people are more likely to be involved in fatal shootings, use of force cases, deadly encounters, and shootings. In this study, while Black people represent 8.8% of Toronto's population, they represent 32.4% of all charges in the data. Between 2013 and 2017, a Black person was 20 times more likely to be shot and killed by police than a white person. The report's authors concluded that Black people "are subjected to a disproportionate burden of law enforcement in a way that is consistent with systemic racism and anti-Black racial bias" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2020, p.2).

Perceptions of Law Enforcement

The impact of police practices vis-à-vis racialized communities is reflected in the perceptions these communities have of law enforcement which studies show are more negative than they are among white people (Cao, 2011; O'Connor, 2008; Wortley, 2006; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2009). A national study by O'Connor (2008) found that racialized groups in Canada tend to have unfavourable views of the police, though these views are influenced by variables such as age, experiences with criminal victimization, feelings of safety, and perceptions of their neighbourhoods. Cao (2011) also reports that race structures how people view the police, with significant differences in opinions between "visible minorities" and "non-minorities" (p.14). Analyzing data from the *General Social Survey, Cycle 18 – Victimization* in Canada, Cao (2011) found that while both "visible minorities" and "non-minority" groups expressed confidence in the police, "visible minorities" had overall lower levels of confidence. The largest difference in confidence between the two groups came in terms of whether "local police do a good job of

treating people fairly" (Cao, 2011, p. 10). "Visible minorities" had less confidence in police in this area (Cao, 2011).

At the provincial level, a study of perceptions of the criminal justice system in Ontario showed that Black respondents were much more likely than Chinese or white respondents to perceive discrimination by police and court judges (Wortley, 1996). Perceptions of injustices were found to be higher among those who had been stopped by police in the two years prior to the study. Black respondents also reported believing that Black people are subjected to more widespread discrimination by police and court judges than Chinese people (Wortley, 1996). Similarly, in a study of immigrant groups living in the Toronto area, Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2009) found that while most Black, Chinese, and white respondents had favourable evaluations of police, the performance of police was rated more negatively by Black and Chinese respondents.

A recent study by Samuels-Wortley (2021) that explored how Black and Indigenous youth in Toronto perceive the police showed that despite police claims that they are dedicated to values of multiculturalism and equality, racialized youth report high levels of discriminatory and negative experiences with police. Youth participants reported feeling that the police treat them differently due to their race and that police stereotype racialized communities and criminalize youth belonging to these communities. They were cynical about the notion that police are there to serve and protect, suggesting that racialized communities do not seem to be included in that mandate. Some youth also reported that the police do little to foster positive engagement. They felt that the only times police were present in their communities was to arrest or detain people (Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

Remedial Efforts

As in the case of the LGBTQ2S+ community, there have been efforts to address complaints about the troubled relationship with racialized communities. Some of the efforts police have made and reforms that have been suggested, particularly in response to the killings of racialized civilians by police, include police officers wearing body worn cameras, stopping racial profiling practices, sensitivity training for police personnel, establishing civilian review boards, demilitarization, hiring racially diverse officers, as well as eliminating zero tolerance and other stop-and-frisk / carding practices (Weitzer, 2018).

But in many ways, the observation that Dwyer et al. (2020) have made with reference to the LGBTQ2S+ community applies to racialized communities as well. These efforts have gone only so far and have not resolved the fundamental issues in the relationship. Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2022) note that some of the efforts the police have made in trying to address racial discrimination, particularly in Toronto, have been considered by some to be more performative than anything else. The police wanted to "give the impression" that they are taking steps and implementing change when nothing is really changing (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022, p.581). Similarly, Tator and Henry (2006) note that while there have been many task force reports that identify the problem, most of their recommendations have been limited in range. The recommendations typically call for changes in recruitment, cultural sensitivity training, and establishing civilian review boards and community advisory committees (Tator & Henry, 2006). While useful, such changes do not address institutional culture, racialized practices and norms, and racialized ideologies within policing (Tator & Henry, 2006). The relationship between racialized communities and the police remains fragile with every controversy threatening to undo even the small steps forward that have been taken.

The Visibility Crisis

While problems between the police and marginalized and racialized communities have been longstanding, police visibility has been dramatically intensified by advances in communications technologies, especially the development of the Internet and social media platforms. These advances have provided the police with new tools to communicate with the public and conduct investigations (Crump, 2011; Trottier, 2012). But they have also made police practices more visible to the public. Civilians can now easily record police actions with smartphones and upload images and videos to social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube with little to no delay.

The New Visibility

Thompson (2005) has called the increase in the visibility of practices, actions and events once hidden from the public the "new visibility" (p.32). He argues that these advances in communication technologies have rendered spatial distance insignificant:

> An individual is no longer limited to being present in the same spatial-temporal setting in order to see the other individual or to witness the action or event: an action or event can be made visible to others by being recorded and transmitted to others who are not physically present at the time and place of occurrence. (p.35)

The new visibility creates risks for institutions and organizations due to its uncontrollable nature (Thompson, 2005). Institutions and organizations have greater difficulty keeping their practices a secret, as they are now accessible and open to the public in a way that they never were before. Thompson (2005) points out that the new visibility has created a new kind of fragility where organizations can try to manage their visibility but control over information about them can so easily "slip out of their grasp and can, on occasion, work against them" (p.42).

Goldsmith (2010) has applied Thompson's (2005) concept of the new visibility to policing and considered the implications for police legitimacy, image management, and accountability. Goldsmith (2010) argues that "new citizen-controlled media technologies and their associated social uses have meant the seeds of scandal-mongering and reputational damage have been cast much more widely, posing a huge reputational threat to contemporary police organizations" (p.930). Civilians can challenge police narratives, explanations, or definitions of situations (Goldsmith, 2010). This is particularly true in situations where an image or video becomes public after the police have already publicly addressed the situation and/or the image or video contradict police statements, undermining their credibility. Police have always had to respond to local situations of impropriety, but according to Goldsmith (2010), there is every reason to expect that such situations will be more frequent and attract global attention.

Goldsmith (2010) notes further that police services have attempted to manage, if not totally control, their new visibility by doing things like seizing citizens' cameras and deterring citizens from filming. However, the viral capabilities of social media and the Internet to circulate user generated content almost immediately makes management a difficult challenge for the police. Social media platforms are more difficult for the police to influence than traditional news media. The heightened levels of visibility that the police are experiencing, Goldsmith (2010) asserts, inevitably leads to police monitoring their own actions and behaviours as well as the public reactions to their actions and behaviours. The new visibility also leads the police to engage in repair work due to content about the organization on the Internet and the potential for increasing negative public perceptions of the police (Goldsmith, 2010).

In a similar vein, Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) have argued that with the advances in social media, policing can no longer be considered a "low visibility" occupation (p.1). Citizens

are now engaging in acts of surveillance of the police. The images and videos citizens capture and disseminate broadly can challenge the appropriateness of police actions. The police no longer have much choice over how visible they are to the public. Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) use terms such as "reversing the gaze" and "watching the watchers" to describe the effect (p.3). In the surveillance literature, this effect is referred to as "sousveillance" (Mann et al., 2006, p. 177). Sousveillance inverses surveillance and "seeks to reverse the otherwise one-sided panoptic gaze" by involving "the recording of an activity by a participant in that activity" (Mann et al., 2006, p.117).

As a result of such effects, Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) argue, the power dynamic between police and the public has shifted. The police are now in a defensive position, having to answer publicly for their practices and behaviours. Police organizations "are involved in an ongoing struggle for legitimacy, played out on a public stage and involving various images, audiences, and interpretations of their recorded behaviour (Sandhu & Haggerty, 2015, p .1). In a nod to Erving Goffman's work on impression management, which I discuss more fully in Chapter 2, they write: "…the police watch the public while also being seen by citizens, giving rise to complex personal and organizational projects of impression management" (Sandhu & Haggerty, 2015, p.2). Sandhu and Haggerty (2015) note that officers "act out social scripts that structure the expectations of appropriate behaviour for themselves and citizens" and will attempt to keep behaviour that may appear unprofessional confined to back regions (p.2).

Police Impression Management

Academic interest in the image work and presentational or impression management strategies used by the police predates the development of social media. Beginning with fieldwork that he started in the 1970s, the research that Manning (1977, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2008,

2010) has conducted over the span of his career shows that police are faced with what he calls an "impossible mandate" – to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders, and to enforce the law apolitically, efficiently, and professionally (Manning, 1971, p.151). Not always able to fulfill that mandate, police organizations use presentational strategies aimed at giving the impression of control, professionalism, and efficiency (Manning, 1977). The need for control pushes the police to declare themselves as professionals and to promote the idea that only they can discharge the mandate assigned to them. Promoting the professionalism of the police has payoffs both internally and externally. Internally, constructing themselves as professional "is the most important strategy employed by the police to defend their mandate and thereby build self-esteem, organizational autonomy, and occupational solidarity or cohesiveness" (Manning, 1977, p.125). Externally, presenting themselves as professional is intended to bolster their image vis-à-vis the public and their legitimacy. Manning (1977) noted that the police have always had to deal with public complaints, but also emphasized the extent to which they have relied on secrecy and information control to do so. Secrecy, according to Manning (1977) has always been "one of the most effective sources of police power" (p.135). Similarly, Ericson (1982) emphasized the degree to which police organizations must present themselves to the public in ways that justify the power and authority they exert over citizens. Ericson (1982) uses the concept of "image work" to describe this effort (p.10).

Traditionally, police organizations have used the news media to engage in image work (Chermak & Weiss, 2005; Ericson, 1989; Lee & McGovern, 2013; Mawby, 2001, 2002, 2012). The relationship between the police and the media, as Chermak (1995) points out, has been symbiotic. The media relied on the police as an information source, but the police used this dependency to try to control the image of the institution the media presented to the public

(Chermak, 1995). Police organizations exercised great caution in what information to conceal and reveal to media outlets, cognisant of how critical their decisions were to the legitimacy of the police as an institution (Ericson et al., 1989).

For their part, media traditionally treated police sources as "authorized knowers" (Fishman, 1980, p. 6). Fishman (1980) used the concept of authorized knowers to describe how news workers generally viewed claims made by police officials. He states that "news workers are predisposed to treat bureaucratic accounts as factual because news personnel participate in upholding a normative order of authorized knowers in the society" (Fishman, 1980, pp.144-145). As authorized knowers, police accounts of their actions were rarely challenged and tended to be taken at face value (Fishman, 1980). This gave police organizations a powerful tool in controlling what was said about the institution and mitigating potential crises (Doyle, 2003).

However, social media and the new visibility that has come with it have seriously challenged the police's status as authorized knowers and their ability more generally to "patrol the facts" (Ericson, 1989, p. 206). The same media that were once inclined to take the police at their word, are now more likely to subject the police to scrutiny as reporters and members of the public can more readily view police actions, and post information and images of the police without police approval. Police narratives are now more likely to be challenged. Additionally, due to social media the police are having to respond to user-generated content (ie: videos or images) of their actions that prompts negative public reactions and challenges their authority (Schneider, 2015). The police no longer have the control over information that they once did. The definitions of situations proffered by the police now compete with those of others.

The growing complexity of the multi-media world has forced police organizations to engage in ever more sophisticated framing and impression management techniques to maintain

their desired public image. In their efforts to manage the threat their greater visibility has created, the police are taking a more professional approach to media relations and becoming more organized. Police organizations are hiring communications specialists, public information officers, and public relations professionals, and setting up press offices to handle matters related to how the police are presented in the media (Lee & McGovern, 2013; Mawby, 1999; Mawby, 2012). They are also incorporating social media platforms into their presentational strategy and image work efforts (Cheng, 2021; O'Connor, 2017; O'Connor & Zaidi, 2020; Schneider, 2016a, 2016b; Walby & Wilkinson, 2021; Wood & McGovern, 2021).

Several Canadian police forces, including the TPS, Vancouver Police Department, Hamilton Police Service, and Winnipeg Police Service, are now using Twitter to connect with the public (O'Connor, 2017). O'Connor's (2017) research shows that the platform has become an important way to pass information on to the public about crimes, and safety and traffic related issues, and to enlist public assistance with their on-going investigations. An analysis of tweets revealed that the display of police effectiveness and efficiency was a persistent underlying theme in the messages communicated (O'Connor, 2017). O'Connor and Zaidi (2020) explored the reasons why the police create and operate departmental social media pages in relation to police image work. Through interviews with Canadian police personnel responsible for running these pages, they found that one of the main purposes of these pages was to promote the idea that the police are a community partner by enhancing community relations, promoting collaborations between the police and community partners and agencies, asking community members to help solve community issues, and educating the public on policing (O'Connor & Zaidi, 2020). Social media offered additional control over the messaging the police disseminated to the public by bypassing the media (O'Connor & Zaidi, 2020).

Schneider (2016a, 2016b) has focused on how TPS officers use their department-issued Twitter accounts. He discovered that their messages too are used to protect and reinforce positive images of the police. Officers often share information about their personal lives, and tweet both on and off-duty. For example, one TPS officer posted a photo holding a baby goat at the Bowmanville Zoo, and tweeting about the Toronto Maple Leafs and other professional sports teams was also common (Schneider, 2016a, 2016b). Schneider (2016b) concludes that personal tweets from officers "built upon previous efforts intended to legitimise police-community relations, by further cultivating police officers as personable and relatable individual members of the community" (p.141). Even in instances where controversial tweets or tweets that challenged the position of the police were levelled against the TPS online, officers still demonstrated an interest in interacting with online users (Schneider, 2016a, 2016b). However, these relations between the police and the community occurred based on terms that the police set (Schneider, 2016a, 2016b). For instance, when presented with challenging tweets officers would often reframe the situation when responding. As Schneider (2016a, 2016b) notes, "this process allows police to effectively maintain control of the situation, while simultaneously presenting themselves as openly available to community members" (p.142).

Building on O'Connor (2017) and Schneider (2016a, 2016b), Kudla and Parnaby (2018) argue that tweets by both the TPS and citizens need to be analyzed "because what matters is not just what the police say on Twitter, but how often they engage other users, whom they choose to engage (or ignore), and which issues they appear willing to address" (p.4). Their study found that the TPS kept their tweets simple, typically addressing only one issue at a time, and avoided tweeting about socially and politically sensitive topics raised by civilians. When it came to sensitive issues, the TPS either ignored the public challenges to their legitimacy or would choose

not to engage in these discussions. Kudla and Parnaby (2018) suggest that the lack of engagement may have to do with the fact that the TPS cannot control or properly manage the counterclaims and interpretations of events that Twitter users level against them. Therefore, on social media platforms, "the police are not *forced* to acknowledge criticism at all" (Kudla & Parnaby, 2018, p. 10). Instead, the image work by the police on these platforms involves strategically choosing what tweets to ignore and what tweets to address.

The TPS also rarely directly replied to other tweets, even when many tweets were directed at the service to catch their attention. When the organization did reply, it was often in response to other TPS Twitter accounts (Kudla & Parnaby, 2018). The TPS most often directly replied to Tweets that praised the organization, were related to community events or outreach, or involved public service announcements or crime prevention information. While both non-TPS users and TPS users used the platform to publicly praise the TPS, it was the TPS who did this most and took advantage of the platform in order to promote their organizational image (Kudla & Parnaby, 2018).

A final source that deserves attention is Bullock (2018). Bullock (2018) argues that while social media platforms offer new ways for police organizations to promote a positive image, they also present the police with new opportunities to undermine or damage the image they are seeking to present. She points out that in presenting themselves to the public, "institutions and individuals must *give* engaging expression which concurs to a dominant cultural script, whilst simultaneously, avoid *giving off* expressions which threaten individual and institutional efficacy, reputation and legitimacy" (Bullock, 2018, p.345). According to Bullock (2018), it is challenging for the police to achieve their presentational goals in a medium that is not easy to control and to address an audience that does not exist in a physical setting. The kind of stage management that

exists in physical settings does not suit performances on social media as well and behind the scenes performances are more difficult to put together. Rigid direction in the performance can hinder the performance as the culture of social media tends to emphasize an openness and freedom of expression. Bullock (2018) concludes that it is not so easy for police to manage the impressions they give and give off.

Undermining their organizational image is not the only problem social media presents. Wood and McGovern (2021) argue that, ironically, social media platforms can also present a type of invisibility problem for police since there are built-in algorithms that prioritize content and determine who the content will reach (Wood & McGovern, 2021). If algorithms deem the content that police are posting as relatively unimportant, the audience for those messages is limited (Wood & McGovern, 2021). Nonetheless, O'Connor and Zaidi (2020), Walby and Wilkinson (2021), and Wood and McGovern (2021) all agree that social media platforms have provided police with a greater measure of control over their image as they allow police to bypass traditional media outlets where messages can be manipulated and to reach out to audiences directly.

Several authors have also noted that social media allows the police to construct a "sanitized image" of the organization or its practices (Schneider, 2021; Walsh & O'Connor, 2018; Wood & McGovern, 2021). By highlighting accomplishments, demonstrating effectiveness and ties to the community, the police are able to construct an image of professional crime fighters and community minded public servants (Walsh & O'Connor, 2021). The use of humour and memes[12] can serve as a distraction to divert audience attention away from

[12] On social media platforms, memes are "images, videos and/or text, usually humorous, that are copied and spread by individuals with slight variations" (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2018 as cited in Wood & McGovern, 2021, p.322).

problematic policing practices (Wood & McGovern, 2021). Schneider (2021) argues that media entertainment produced by the police serves not only as a form of bureaucratic propaganda, but to reproduce formal social control and legitimation of the use of force. Essentially, social media allows police to curate their identity through "myths" while "excluding images of them toiling at their day job" in an attempt to foster legitimacy (Walby & Wilkinson, 2021, pp.915-916).

Cheng (2021) specifically notes that during times of heightened public scrutiny, social media offers an unfiltered avenue for the police to manage information. Routine posts, similar to those also found by O'Connor (2017), where police are communicating how they are meeting public safety demands and discussing organizational news and events allow the police to "strategically represent police actions – regardless of whether they are representative of officer practices or not" (Cheng, 2021, p.401). These posts allow the police to develop an audience and socialize them to their perspectives and worldview (Cheng, 2021). Additionally, Cheng (2021) found that police can use social media to their advantage in the aftermath of police violence – particularly in cases that are contested by the public and the media – to release curated information to legitimize the violence. Overall, social media provides the police with a tool that can advance institutional interests in an era where they are experiencing heightened scrutiny (Cheng, 2021).[13]

Studying TPS responses to controversy, as this dissertation does, offers an opportunity to explore how one police organization is handling the presentational dilemmas that a social media mediated environment has generated. In examining the kind of messaging that the TPS used, the

[13] For additional discussions of how the police use social media see: Schneider (2016a) and Trottier (2012)

analysis provides insight into the organization's efforts to balance the expressions it both gives and gives off in its efforts to maintain legitimacy.

Legitimacy Crisis

In this final section, I elaborate on some of the literature on legitimacy that I referred to in introducing the dissertation. At the core of the presentational strategies police organizations employ is the need for legitimacy. The public needs to buy into the authority of the police. That buy-in hinges critically on trust (Tyler, 2004). Trust has been defined as "the belief that a person occupying a specific role (such as a police officer) will perform that role in a manner consistent with the socially defined *normative* expectations associated with that role" (Miles-Johnson, 2013, p. 687). To the extent that the public trusts the police and sees the police as legitimate, they will be more inclined to comply with the law, report crimes, cooperate and/or assist the police in their work (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Public trust in turn empowers the police. The regard that the public holds for police impacts "the degree to which the police have discretionary authority that they can use to function more effectively because the public is likely to give them more leeway to use their expertise" (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003, p. 524).

But as Goldsmith (2005) observes, trust is not something that police organizations can assume or take for granted. "Trust is fragile," Goldsmith (2005) writes, "due to its highly contingent character in most social relations. Its extent and very existence depends upon a range of factors both within and outside police control" (p.444). Goldsmith (2005) adds:

> There are various behaviours that the police might engage in that can impact public trust including neglect, indifference – which includes not taking citizens concerns seriously - incompetence, venality, extortion, discrimination, inconsistency, intimidation, excessive force, and brutality. (p.444)

The spread of social media has made many of the police misdeeds that Goldsmith (2005) enumerates more visible and in so doing have eroded public trust in the police, especially within marginalized and racialized communities (Deuchar et al., 2021; Greene et al., 2016), creating what many have called a legitimacy crisis (Greene et al., 2016, Lum & Nagin, 2017; Nix, 2017; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Skogan, 2019).

The response to the legitimacy crisis has taken two directions. Reformists believe that public trust in the police can be restored if police organizations are responsive to their critics, implement change, and reform themselves (Akbar, 2020; Lum & Nagin, 2017; Nix, 2017; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Rogers, 2020; Skogan, 2019). Often perceived as the more extreme response, the abolitionist perspective holds that the institution of policing itself is the problem and needs to be significantly curtailed if not abandoned altogether (Barlow & Barlow, 2018; Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2021; Davis, 2003; Maynard, 2020; Vitale, 2018; Yang, 2021). Over the last four decades, the focus has clearly been on reforms (Willis, 2014). But with controversies mounting, the voice of abolitionists appears to be growing.

Police Reform

As Akbar (2020) notes, from a reformist perspective, "police are taken as a necessary social good: they ensure our safety, maintain law and order, protect us from violence and anarchy, and prevent crime in a socially valuable way" (p.1802). If there are problems with how police services are delivered, they need to be addressed and changes need to be made. As early as the 1970s and 1980s, there was growing recognition that traditional police practices were declining in their effectiveness and were failing to "deliver the goods" (Brogden & Nijhar, 2013, p.27). Fundamental changes in police policies and practices were needed (Brogden & Nijhar,

2013). This recognition led to a shift in the operating principles guiding police, with a push to implement procedural justice models and community policing philosophies.

A procedural justice model of policing involves changing the way officers interact with citizens, moving away from aggressive and fearful tactics towards a more respectful and courteous approach (Schulhofer et al., 2011). This model of policing argues that "the police can build general legitimacy among the public by treating people justly during personal encounters" (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Procedural justice focuses on fairness during interactions and contacts with the police or other authorities (Weisburd & Braga, 2019; Worden & McLean, 2017). Schulhofer et al. (2011) explain that citizen's perceptions and beliefs are influenced by police displaying "attributes of *procedural justice*" which are practices that "generate confidence that policies are formulated and applied fairly so that regardless of material outcomes, people believe that they are treated respectfully and without discrimination" (p.338).

The assumption behind the procedural justice approach to policing is that citizens do not respond favourably to the threat of consequences or force. Instead, the degree to which citizens cooperate and obey police and the law is largely influenced by their perceptions and beliefs that the police are legitimate (Schulhofer et al., 2011). The threat of force becomes a strategy of last resort, not the primary means of addressing situations for the police (Schulhofer et al., 2011). Officers are trained to approach every interaction with a citizen as a chance to garner police legitimacy (Schulhofer et al., 2011). From the first moment of contact through to the end of the interaction there is an emphasis on respect, neutrality, trustworthiness, and voice (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). Respect includes officers always treating citizens with dignity (Murphy & Tyler, 2017; Tyler, 2004). Neutrality involves officers adopting an unbiased stance towards citizens and relying on objective evidence instead of personal views during decision making processes

(Murphy & Tyler, 2017; Tyler, 2004). Trustworthiness involves communicating to citizens that police are open to hearing their concerns and displaying a level of sensitivity to citizens' concerns when explaining police actions and decisions (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). Lastly, voice involves giving citizens a chance to explain their situations and to provide input before police make their decisions about an appropriate response (Murphy & Tyler, 2017; Tyler, 2004).

Community policing "involves changing decision-making processes and creating new cultures within police departments. It is an organizational strategy that leaves setting priorities and the activities that are needed to achieve them largely to residents and the police who serve their communities" (Skogan, 2019, p.28). The perceived benefits of implementing community policing strategies are that incorporating citizen involvement can aid in rebuilding trust between a police service and the community and can also help garner public support for the service (Skogan, 2019).

The philosophy of community policing is also about addressing the legitimacy that the police have lost particularly among many marginalized and racialized communities (Greene et al., 2016; Skogan, 2019). Community policing is not an outcome but rather a process and does not entail a rigid set of specific programs being enacted by the police (Skogan, 2019). Brogden and Nijhar (2013) point out that many different policing activities can fall under the umbrella of community policing. This can include activities such as officers patrolling on foot, bicycles, Segways, or horses, permanently assigning officers to specific geographical areas, publishing newsletters, canvassing neighbourhoods to uncover local problems, training citizens in citizen police academies, and opening small neighbourhood storefront offices (Skogan, 2019). Programs such as adopt-a-cop programs or community resolution programs can also fall within the community policing philosophy (O'Connor, 2000 as cited in Brogden & Nijhar, 2013). But

according to Skogan (2019) policing is not defined by these programs, and such programs, activities, and projects should continually change as conditions change.

Abolishing the Police

Despite these reforms, or perhaps because they have been tried and are viewed as having failed, there are those who have essentially given up on policing or seriously question whether there is a place for policing in contemporary society (Barlow & Barlow, 2018; Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2021; Davis, 2003; Maynard, 2020; Vitale, 2018; Yang, 2021). Their voices are growing louder and have raised questions about whether the police can ever regain whatever legitimacy they might ever have had.

According to Akbar (2020), "abolitionists seek to counter an ideological framework that is central to police power and legitimacy: that criminalization is for the collective good, and police are agents of public safety" (p.1823). From this perspective, police are not viewed as providing public safety. Rather, they uphold racialized and capitalist social relations, and through violence perpetuate inequality and suffering (Akbar, 2020). Instead of protecting people, the police are perceived to place a greater emphasis on protecting property and maintaining the status quo by inhibiting social change, revolts, and riots (Akbar, 2020). Both police and incarceration have been used by the state to deal with serious social problems such as, mental health crises, unemployment, drug use, and homelessness. As the state divests itself of responsibility for addressing these societal issues, it falls to the police and criminal justice system to control the fallout. Akbar (2020) characterizes the current situation as "state-backed violence as the one-size-fits-all solution" (p.1816).

With respect to the reforms that policing has undergone in recent decades, abolitionists dismiss these as failures. They see the reforms simply as a façade meant to promote the illusion that the police are committed to real change (Maynard, 2020). The shift to "community policing" is viewed as no more than a guise, a move from an "iron fist" to a "velvet glove" (Barlow & Barlow, 2018, p.58). The "iron fist" refers to the idea of the police as "an elite, professional military organization designed to wage war on crime and disorder through the effective and efficient use of physical force" (Barlow & Barlow, 2018, p.58). The "velvet glove" approach is described as having emerged after realizing that the "purely repressive or overly mechanical and distant forms of official control" during the riots in the United States in the 1960s were often counterproductive (Platt et al., 1982 as cited in Barlow & Barlow, 2018, p.58). But, as Vitale (2018) notes, a kinder, gentler, and more diverse war on the socially marginal is still a war on the socially marginal.

Thus, abolitionists reject any effort to increase the scope, authority, or legitimacy of police organizations or prisons (Yang, 2021). Akbar (2020) notes that reform agendas invite "investments in police and, therefore, builds the power and legitimacy of police, including their discretion for violence" (p.1814). Maynard (2020) points out that reforms "have only served to uphold the status quo of racial violence and maintain, extend and even expand the scope of the institution" (p.73). Vitale (2018) argues reforms "leave intact the basic institutional functions of the police, which have never really been about public safety or crime control" (p.33).

The goal for abolitionists is to seek solutions "that decrease the power, footprint, and legitimacy of police while building alternative modes of responding to collective needs and interpersonal harm" (Akbar, 2020, p.1825). Abolitionists decry the amount of money spent on

policing and prison infrastructure and the absence of funding for programs that focus on areas such as health care, schools, jobs, and housing (Akbar, 2020). Maynard (2020) writes:

> moves to defund police – and the prisons that policing makes possible – emerge from a broader political project of divestment *and of investment*: a movement away from prisons and police and toward institutions and initiatives that protect, nurture, and sustain living and all of the richness of human and ecological life. (p.74)

According to Cobbina-Dungy and Jones-Brown (2021),

> …the demand to "defund the police" means that some portion of funds previously earmarked for police budgets will be reallocated to agencies that address the basic needs and general welfare of the public, especially those who live on the margins." (p.11)

After the police killing of George Floyd, public calls to defund the police gained momentum. However, the basis of the "defund the police" message is not new and comes from abolitionist literature. In more recent iterations "defund the police" has come to describe not a single position on what should be done with respect to policing, but a variety of perspectives ranging from reform and a reallocation of funds to full disbanding and abolition (Cobbina-Dungy et al., 2022; Fappiano, 2022). Cobbina-Dungy et al. (2022) propose that the various understandings of defunding can be thought of as existing on a continuum with reform on one end being the most liberal change, with relocating funds, and then disbanding the police in the middle, and abolition on the other end as a more radical change. Davis (2003) suggests that there is not "one single alternative" but encourages those seeking change "to imagine a constellation of alternative strategies and institutions" to remove prisons and police (pp.106-107).

Summary

This chapter has covered three vast and related bodies of literature. I have structured the overview to show that police organizations are now at a nexus, facing a crisis that has been exacerbated by the increased visibility of their practices that advances in communication technologies have generated. Police find themselves having to negotiate their legitimacy and

very existence with the communities they serve in the context of a historical record of persecution against socially marginalized and racialized groups.

At its most basic level, the dissertation offers a picture of what the tensions I have discussed look like in a local context. Each controversy raised questions about the TPS and the marginalized and racialized communities that the organization serves. Each controversy challenged the TPS and represented an attempt to hold the organization accountable. In each case the TPS attempted to counter the negative claims made as well as project the image of a police service attuned and responsive to the needs of the diverse communities it serves.

To date, much of the research exploring how the police manage their organizational image has focused broadly on police services and their behaviours. Manning (1977), Ericson (1982), Bullock (2018), O'Connor (2017), Kudla and Parnaby (2018), and Schneider (2016a, 2016b) are only a few of the scholars who have made valuable contributions to our understanding of police image work by looking at the impression management strategies that police organizations and individual officers *generally* employ. However, less attention has been paid to how police organizations respond to *specific* controversies as they arise for the organization, or to similarities and differences in responses across controversies. In providing a fine-grained analysis of three distinct cases, my dissertation offers the opportunity to take a deeper dive into police impression management and image repair strategies at a critical juncture in the history of policing.

CHAPTER 2: AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

The research I present in this dissertation is informed by a set of inter-related theoretical positions that fall broadly speaking under the rubric of interpretive theory. Interpretive theory is an umbrella term that subsumes several traditions, all of which emphasize individuals interacting to construct meanings and definitions of situations that constitute the basis for their actions (Adorjan & Kelly, 2016). In this chapter I describe those traditions briefly, connecting the threads between them in a way that establishes their relevance to my research and their influence on the questions I am asking. I highlight the conceptual papers that I relied on most heavily in conducting my analysis.

I begin by discussing symbolic interactionism, a perspective that lies at the roots of the other traditions in the sense that it sets down the foundational assumptions about the nature of human action and interaction. I then turn to Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical derivations and some of the conceptual work it inspired, particularly Scott and Lyman's (1968) paper on "accounts," and Benoit's (1997) typology of image restoration strategies. Finally, I discuss social constructionism, another perspective with symbolic interactionist roots (Spector & Kitsuse, 1987) which focuses more on the social processes involved in groups coming together to press claims about how some aspect of social reality, particularly social problems, should be understood. In this section I highlight the work of Benford and Hunt (2003) who merge constructionist concerns with Goffman (1963) to consider strategies that groups use to counter claims that run contrary to those advanced by the group.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-sociological perspective centred around the idea that to understand social life, one needs to focus on social interaction and meaning making (Blumer, 1969). The perspective's roots lie in American pragmatism and the work of John Dewey, Charles Pierce, and especially George Herbert Mead. In his book, *Mind, Self, and Society* – a book pulled together posthumously after Mead's death by his students – the foundations of what would ultimately become the interpretive tradition within sociology were laid (Mead, 1934; Prus, 2003). Mead's work "addresses the matters of speech, objects, and language in order to more accurately conceptualize group life "in the making"" (Prus, 2003, p.31). He believed that human beings are "active agents, creatively constructing meanings and interpreting stimuli using significant symbols (language and gestures)" (Pawluch & Neiterman, 2010, p.174).

However, it was Herbert Blumer (1969) who made Mead's ideas accessible, translated them into a distinct research agenda, and coined the term "symbolic interactionism" to describe the new perspective to studying human and group life. Blumer began by identifying the three premises of symbolic interactionism. The first premise is "that human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them" (Blumer, 1969, p.2). The second premise "is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blumer, 1969, p.2). The third premise "is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things [they encounter]" (Blumer, 1969, p.2). Blumer (1969) notes that a distinct aspect of symbolic interactionism is that the perspective views meaning as a social product, one that occurs through a process of interaction and interpretation (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism also places an importance on social interaction as the perspective maintains that

social interaction forms human behaviour and actions through the interactional process (Blumer, 1969).

In the years since the perspective was first developed, multiple variants and schools of thought have emerged, inspired by the focus on meaning making but taking the perspective in different directions. Meltzer et al. (1975) identify four variants: Chicago School, Iowa School, dramaturgy, and ethnomethodology. More recently, Fine (1990) has generated a longer list that includes structural, dramaturgical, phenomenological, semiotic, behaviourist, postmodern, Simmelian, Marxist, Weberian, and feminist interactionism. There have always been debates about whether one or another of these variants belongs under the rubric of symbolic interactionism. As Pawluch and Neiterman (2010) point out "precisely how many variations there are on the central interpretive theme, which approaches count as variants, the cross-influences and similarities and differences among them have all been subjects of much discussion over the years" (p.176). However, what all these variants share is "the substantive view that human beings construct their realities in a process of interaction with other human beings" (Meltzer et al., 1975, p.54).

Dramaturgy

The variant most pertinent to the research that I have conducted in this dissertation is dramaturgy, developed by Erving Goffman (1959). I referred briefly to Goffman in Chapter 1, noting the influence his work has had on studies of the presentational strategies that police organizations use to project a particular image of themselves, particularly in the face of challenges to their legitimacy. The concept of presentational strategies is part of a broader approach that Goffman took in studying human behaviour. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* Goffman (1959) proposed that the theatre offered a useful analogy of

understanding human behaviour. For Goffman (1959), individuals are social actors constantly engaged in a series of performances. The dramaturgical model focuses on the ways in which:

> …the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them. (Goffman, 1959, p.xi)

Individuals can act alone or together to manage impressions and display versions of themselves (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 2015). There are various means for achieving these displays. Goffman (1959) distinguishes between sign vehicles and sign activities. Sign vehicles are the mechanisms through which social actors present themselves. They include use of social settings, appearance, and ways of interacting. Sign activities are the verbal and non-verbal cues either given or given off. Signs that are given are intentional and planned. Signs given off are cues that are unintended but nevertheless have the effect on influencing the impressions one makes (Goffman, 1959, p.2). Goffman (1959) connects these performances to identity. From his point of view, identity is something that is constantly being "done" by individuals through their performances and interactions with each other (Scott, 2015).

According to Goffman (1959) there are two different regions relevant to this presentational work, a region being defined as "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception" (Goffman, 1959, p.106). The front stage is "where the performance is given"; these events are visible to the public (Goffman, 1959, p.107). Back stage is where performances are regulated and events are kept private, away from public view (Goffman, 1959). As Goffman (1959) notes "the back region will be the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude" (p.113). The secrets of a performance are visible backstage; this is also where performers can act out of character. Strategic use of the frontstage and backstage, along with careful consideration of what information to conceal and

reveal, allows social actors to construct images of themselves and to create the impressions they want to project (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman was particularly interested in situations where individuals are dealing with spoiled identities. In another of his classic books – *Stigma: Notes of the Management of Spoiled Identities* - Goffman (1963) made the distinction between discreditable and discredited identities in relation to stigma. Discreditable identities are those where a stigma "is neither known about by those present nor immediately perceivable" (Goffman, 1963, p.4). Discredited identities are those where a stigma "is already known or is evident on the spot" (Goffman, 1963, p.4). Stigma, for Goffman (1963), "refers to an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (p.3). However, Goffman (1963) notes that the focus of stigma should be on a language of relationships and not on the stigmatized attribute itself, as a given attribute for one person may signal usualness while for another it may result in stigmatization (Goffman, 1963).

Goffman (1963) outlines three different types of stigma an individual may face including, "physical deformities" of the body, blemishes of individual character such as dishonesty, and tribal stigma of religion, race, and nation (p.4). Stigmatized individuals may engage in various strategies to manage their identities in response to being stigmatized, such as passing, covering, or controlling information about themselves and being selective about the information they share (Goffman, 1963). Passing occurs when an individual's stigma is invisible or is not known to anyone but the individual themselves allowing them to "pass" as "normal" (ie: someone without a stigma) in social situations (Goffman, 1963, p.74). Covering is often used by individuals whose stigma is apparent or known to others and involves managing or reducing the influence or effect of a stigmatizing attribute, particularly in social situations (Goffman, 1963). Lastly, the strategy

of information control involves an individual managing information about themselves and their stigma, such as concealing information or revealing information to others (Goffman, 1963).

Scott and Lyman on Accounts

Building on Goffman's (1963) ideas about impression management in the context of potential stigma, Scott and Lyman (1968) elaborated on the responses of social actors when they find themselves encountering interactional trouble that threatens to damage their identity. They suggest that in such situations social actors are typically compelled to offer accounts. An account is "a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p.46). Accounts, Scott and Lyman (1968) argue, offer an opportunity to bridge the gap between "the promised and the performed" and can "repair the broken and restore the estranged" (p.46). There are two types of accounts - excuses and justifications. Both offer "socially approved vocabularies that neutralize an act or its consequences when one or both are called into question" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p.51).

An excuse is an account "in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong, or inappropriate but denies full responsibility" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p.47). The authors distinguish four main types of excuses: scapegoating (shifting the blame to others), appealing to defeasibility (framing the act as unintentional), appealing to accidents (claiming the act was accidental), and appealing to biological drives (claiming the act was the result of natural forces beyond one's individual control).

A justification is an account "in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p.47). Drawing on Sykes and Matza's (1957) classic work on techniques of neutralization, Scott and Lyman (1968)

identify four main types of justifications: denial of injury (no harm was done), denial of victim (the harmed party provoked or deserved it), appeal to higher loyalties (the act served some higher purpose), and condemnation of the condemners (others commit these and worse acts, without consequence).

The difference between excuses and justifications is essentially that making excuses deflects responsibility for an action while justification involves emphasizing the positive aspects of the act even when facing criticism for it (Scott & Lyman, 1968). Each provides "socially approved vocabularies that neutralize an act or its consequences when one or both are called into question" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p.51).

In a recently published paper, Schneider (2022) applied Scott and Lyman's typology to police responses to publicly released body-worn camera footage capturing police violence. Arguing that such footage has the potential to undermine police legitimacy, Schneider (2022) examined official statements issued by the police in news media reports to see what accounts were offered. He found most of the strategies that Scott and Lyman (1968) identified. In some cases, the police justified their actions by claiming that the individuals subjected to police violence or those witnessing the encounter were not harmed (denial of injury) or that the individuals involved were deserving of the police action against them (denial of victim). The justifications stressed the positive outcomes of the police interventions. In other cases, the police relied more on excuses, claiming that the harm they caused was accidental (appeal to accident); that they were working with faulty or incomplete information (appeal to defeasibility); that individual officers had lost control (appeal to biological drives); or that police were simply reacting to the behaviour of others (scapegoating) (Schneider, 2022).

I see my goals in this analysis as similar to Schneider's (2022). However, rather than looking simply at responses to police violence as it is demonstrated in publicly available body-worn camera footage, I am looking more generally at responses to problematic policing as it relates to marginalized and racialized communities. Moreover, while I use Scott and Lyman (1968) in my analysis, I draw on other conceptual work related to impression management that Goffman (1959, 1963) inspired. That work is explored in the upcoming discussion.

Goffman on Team Performances

While Goffman was interested primarily in face-to-face interactions, his writing about team performances suggests that the processes he described have applicability beyond individuals and face-to-face encounters. According to Goffman (1959), a "team" or a "performance team" is a "set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine" (Goffman, 1959, p.79). Through teamwork, a performance by team members is used to maintain a particular collective image. The performance does not necessarily reflect the characteristics of any individual performer. Goffman (1963) gives as an example service personnel, whether in professions, bureaucracy, business, or craft, who "enliven their manner with movements which express proficiency and integrity" (p.77). He leaves open how such groups communicate these messages but goes on to say that "whatever this manner conveys about them, often its major purpose is to establish a favourable definition of their service" (Goffman, 1963, p.77).

An integral aspect of impression management in a team environment is that team members must work together cooperatively to uphold and maintain a favourable definition of the team and its activities (Goffman, 1959). This often involves information control. Anything that is harmful to the organization in that it threatens to disrupt or discredit its members, or their actions is supressed, hidden, or de-emphasized, while any information that puts the organization in an

advantageous position is foregrounded. In making this point, Goffman (1959) refers expressly to decisions organizations make about what information they want to release to the public or their relevant audiences. Though he does not discuss the forms in which such information can be released, his formulations do suggest communication through documents and media interviews or news stories (Goffman, 1959).

Organizational Impression Management

If Goffman (1959) himself does not make sufficiently clear that his conceptual work about processes of impression management has relevance beyond face-to-face interactions, this fact becomes obvious in the empirical work his ideas have generated, including the voluminous literature dealing with organizational impression management. Much of the literature I discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to the image work that police organizations engage in was based on how the police use media interviews and statements to project desired images of themselves. The police are not the only organization that has been studied from an organizational impression management angle. Cain (1994) relied heavily on Goffman to study AIDS service organizations. While some of the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS has been reduced, at the time Cain (1994) studied them, AIDS service organizations experienced significant stigma by virtue of the stigmatized clientele they served – primarily gay men. Such stigma, he maintained affected the organization's operation and its very viability. Therefore, just as individuals take actions to minimize the damaging consequences of being stigmatized, organizations take steps to reduce stigma. The AIDS service organization that he studied presented itself in its public documents and in the media as a "non-gay" organization, emphasized its professionalism, managed the visibility of its clientele, and on some occasions, confronted the stigma directly (Cain, 1994).

There is also a large literature on how corporations respond when they are stigmatized due to their actions or practices and/or when they experience discrediting events such as industrial accidents, environmental spills, and hazardous workplace conditions (Banerjee, 2008; Goosen-Botes & Samkin, 2013; Hearit & Brown, 2004; Lauwo et al., 2020; Pfahl & Bates, 2008; Pozner, 2008; Warren, 2007; Wolfe & Blithe, 2015). Much of this literature relies explicitly on Goffman's conceptual contributions. The literature explores the apologia that organizations and corporations engage in as a form of impression management to avoid stigmatization and repair their tarnished image (Goosen-Botes & Samkin, 2013; Hearit, 1995; Lauwo et al., 2020).

Corporations are motivated to engage in stigma management to mitigate negative organizational outcomes such as loss of investments, drops in stock prices, loss of sales, employee turnover, loss of profit, and reputational damage (Pfahl & Bates, 2008; Goosen-Botes & Samkin, 2013). Hearit and Brown (2004) refer to the image management processes organizations engage in when facing a public relations or legitimacy crisis as "crisis management discourse" others have referred to it as "crisis communication" (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997). Organizations that have been studied from an organizational impression management vary greatly, including mining companies (Lauwo et al., 2020), sports organizations, teams, and oversight bodies (Pfahl & Bates, 2008; Rentner & Young, 2019), financial firms (Hearit & Brown, 2004), legal brothels (Wolfe & Blithe, 2015), airlines (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997), and oil companies (Goosen-Botes & Samkin, 2013).

Benoit on Image Restoration Strategies

A particularly useful approach in the organizational impression management literature offers an "image repair theory" and presents a typology of image restoration strategies. Drawing heavily on both Goffman (1963) and Scott and Lyman (1968), Benoit (1997, 2015) suggests that

an attack on an organization has two components. First, the accused are held responsible for their actions; second, the actions or behaviours are considered offensive. Benoit (2015) maintains that audience perceptions are more important than reality, a fact that organizations need to take seriously even though they consider the claims against them to be unfounded. In many cases, organizations or corporations must address multiple audiences in attempting to restore their image.

Benoit (1997, 2015) identifies five broad image repair strategies that organizations tend to use, including, denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. Many of these overlap with Scott and Lyman's (1968) work on accounts. Denial includes denying "that the act occurred, that the firm performed the act, or that the act was harmful to anyone" (Benoit, 1997, p.179). This strategy may also include shifting the blame to some other organization or person.

Evasion of responsibility includes four different potential organizational responses: Organizations can claim that their actions were a response to another's actions and that their response is reasonable given the provocation; organizations can claim defeasibility (they lack control or information about the situation); organizations can claim that their actions were an accident; and lastly, organizations can claim that their intentions were good (Benoit, 2015).

Reducing offensiveness involves trying to "reduce the perceived offensiveness of that act" (Benoit, 1997, p.180). This can be accomplished by bolstering positive public opinion about the organization to offset negative feelings associated with the negative act; attempting to diminish negative feelings related to the act; differentiating the act from other more offensive actions; employing transcendence in an effort to make the act appear more favourable; attacking accusers; and lastly, offering compensation to victims (Benoit, 1997).

Corrective action involves an effort to correct the problem or issue (Benoit, 2015). Organizations can promise to refrain from repeating the action and to take proactive steps to ensure the action does not recur. They can also promise to restore the conditions that existed prior to the action.

The last restoration strategy, mortification, involves confessing to the offense and begging for forgiveness, or in some way expressing sorrow and regret (Benoit, 2015).

Benoit (1997, 2015) has applied his image repair theory in a broad array of contexts including politics, the corporate world, entertainment, and international affairs. Others have applied the theory to areas such as radio and cable talk shows (e.g., Bentley, 2012; Browning, 2011), health care (Johnson, 2006), and religion (Miller, 2002). The pervasiveness of image repair work that the literature demonstrates suggests the possible relevance of the theory to police organizations, but there do not appear to be any studies that have applied the theory in that context yet.

Social Constructionism

Another stream of theorizing that has emerged out of symbolic interactionism is social constructionism. Social constructionism focuses on the notion that reality is not objectively given but constructed by social actors. The concern for social constructionists is to explore the interpretive processes by which individuals make sense of, construct, and understand the world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Maines, 2000). The constructionist perspective has had a particularly transformative impact on the sociological study of social problems mainly due to the work of Malcolm Spector and John Kitsuse (1987). In their book, *Constructing Social Problems*, Spector and Kitsuse (1987) argued that “the notion that social problems are a kind of *condition*

must be abandoned in favor of a conception of them as a kind of activity" (p.73). They criticized previous approaches to the study of social problems in sociology for focusing on objective conditions that analysts considered to be problematic without establishing what these conditions had in common. This approach generated a sociology of poverty, family violence, drug abuse, etc., but not a coherent sociology of social problems. Spector and Kitsuse (1987) suggested that sociologists shift their attention to the claims-making activities of groups making claims with respect to some putative condition that the group defined as problematic. They encouraged theorizing about how this claims-making process worked (Spector & Kitsuse, 1987).

The constructionist approach has significantly redirected the study of social problems in the years since Spector and Kitsuse (1987) first proposed and generated both an immense empirical literature and lively theoretical debates (see Pawluch, 2019 for a summary). Among the themes that have emerged in this literature are claims-makers' framing strategies. Donileen Loseke's (2003) work has focused on narratives or formula stories, and the symbolic representations of conditions, people (victims and villains), and solutions in public policy, public service, and political discourse. There are clear parallels between Loseke's (2003) formulations about how social actors construct social problems and Goffman's (1959, 1963) notion of the presentational strategies that social actors use in their efforts to manage the impressions of others. How the two come together will become evident in my findings about the TPS presentational strategies.

Benford and Hunt on "Framing"

Goffman's influence is apparent also in the work of Benford and Hunt's (2003) analysis of framing processes of social movements. Benford and Hunt (2003) draw especially from Goffman's (1974) concept of frame analysis to study how individuals frame, counter frame,

reframe in responding to claims made against them. Public problems, they argue, are located in a broader "public problems marketplace" (Benford & Hunt, 2003, p.153). That marketplace is characterized by "interaction between and among numerous collective claims-making agents and audiences, including social movement organizations as well as public agencies, advocacy groups, and media" (Benford & Hunt, p.153). A drama plays itself out between protagonists and antagonists as both groups attempt to construct reality, influence definitions of the situation, and discredit their opponents' claims. Definitions of situations and frames are not fixed but constantly shifting due to the elaborate problems work that goes on among the groups that are part of the drama.

Benford and Hunt (2003) identify several counter framing and reframing/repairing techniques used by social actors as they engage in their social problems work. More specifically, there are four possible ways to counter frame the social problems claims of others. One can simply reject the claims and deny the existence of the problem. One can attack the character of the individual or groups making the claim about a problem. One can propose counter attributions, that is, offer alternative explanations for who or what is to blame. The last counter framing technique - offering counter prognoses - stems from counter attributions. If one is redirecting blame, it follows that different solutions are needed to respond appropriately.

With respect to reframing/repairing, Benford and Hunt (2003) point out that opposing groups may invest considerable time and energy in protecting their collective identities when others' imputations threaten to damage them. They identify five techniques - ignoring, counter maligning, distancing, embracing, and keying. Social actors can choose to not respond (ignoring). They can attack opponents' identity (counter maligning). They can reject negative

imputations about them outright (distancing), embrace them and wear them proudly (embracing) or accept opponents' labels but give them a different meaning (keying).

While Benford and Hunt (2003) are interested primarily in social movement actors, their formulations are nevertheless relevant in my research. I maintain that it is possible to think about the charges to which the TPS found itself responding as part of a claim or narrative about the "policing problem." The TPS response can be understood as "social problems work" in the sense that the organization was engaged in offering alternative narratives and did so by using some of the counter framing and reframing strategies Benford and Hunt (2003) identified.

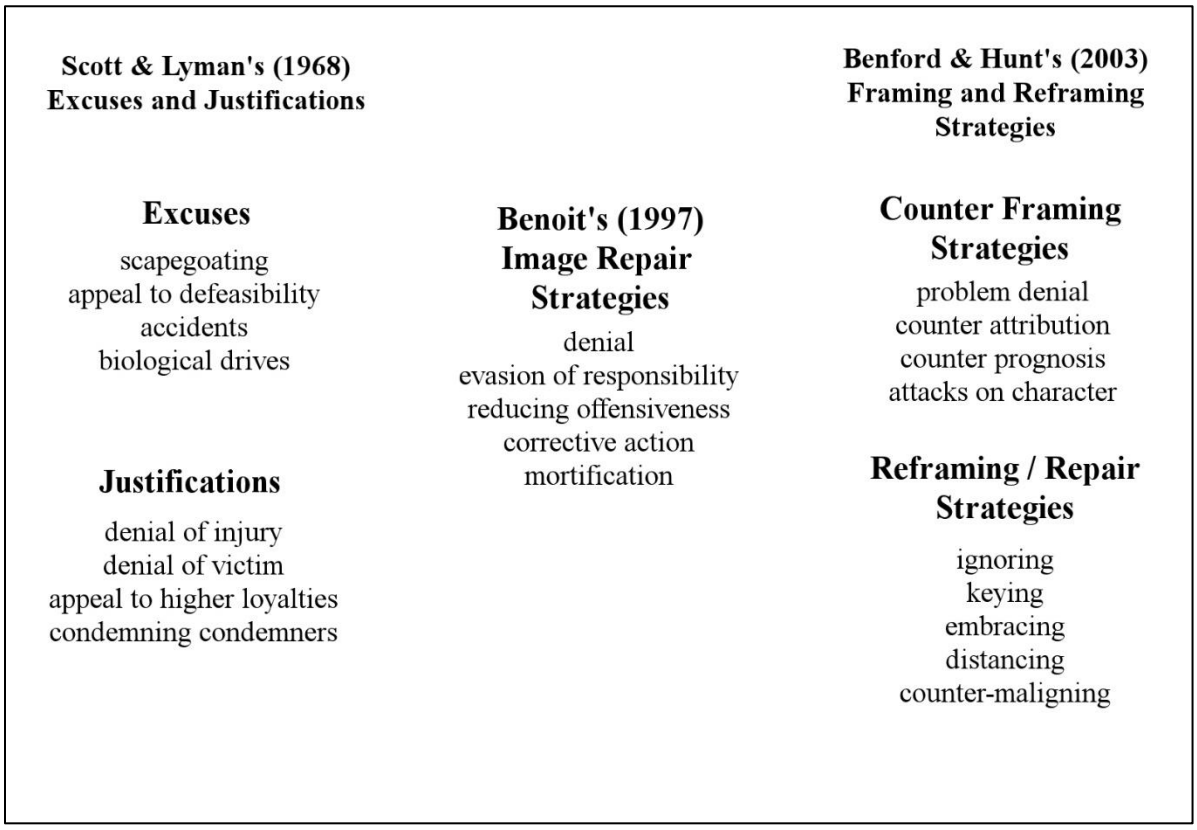
Summary

My goal in this chapter was to present the theoretical and conceptual literature that provided me with a lens through which to look at how the TPS responded to three crises that threatened to undermine its legitimacy and raised questions about how the organization deals with marginalized and racialized communities. I discussed the work of several scholars, showing the complementarity of their ideas. This complementarity is not surprising given that they all stem in one way or another from symbolic interactionist roots. That is why I started the chapter by briefly discussing the main tenets of symbolic interactionism.

I then showed how interpretive sociologists have built on these tenets. I paid particular attention to Goffman (1959, 1963, 1974) whose dramaturgical approach Scott (2015) has described as "incredibly powerful and evocative" (p.20). Just how evocative and fruitful the approach has been is demonstrated in the rich theorizing and empirical research it has generated and is continuing to generate. Focusing on the theme of impression management alone in this chapter I discuss how Scott and Lyman (1968), Benoit (1997, 2015) and Benford and Hunt

(2003) have all elaborated on some of the basic social processes Goffman described. There is considerable overlap among these authors in terms of the presentational strategies they discuss, but each also brings unique nuances that I found helpful in conducting my analysis. Scott and Lyman (1968)'s sociology of talk approach highlights justifications and excuses. Benoit (1997) presents a typology of image repair strategies that includes, but also goes beyond justifications and excuses. Benford and Hunt's (2003) focus on framing processes encourages a more explicit linking of responses with the claims and charges to which an organization might be responding, including collective identity related claims. (Figure 1 presents the three frameworks in chart form.)

Figure 1: Image Management Frameworks



I have suggested in this chapter that while Goffman (1959, 1963, 1974) is known principally as a micro-sociologist concerned with individuals engaged in face-to-face interaction, his attention to team performances opens the door to considering ways of communicating with relevant audiences in ways other than face-to-face interaction. Indeed, much of the empirical work that Goffman has generated, particularly as it relates to service or business organizations dealing with a stigmatized or threatened image, relies on documents and public statements of various sorts. Schneider's (2022) study too, looking at police organization responses to publicly released body-cam video, is based on an analysis of media news stories, not face-to-face performances. Bullock (2018) specifically discusses the relevance of Goffman's work in studying communications via social media, stating that "social media are observable, socially embedded settings which invoke the expectations of others and accordingly generate concern with impression management" (p.348). Even though Goffman's framework focused on face-to-face interaction, "actors have the desire to control the impressions formed by all audiences in all types of social interaction" which includes impressions given on social media (Bullock, 2018, p.348). All of this underscores the fact that human beings can communicate and interact with each other in situations other than face-to-face contexts, giving Goffman's concepts applicability beyond face-to-face interaction.

Still, the emergence of social media represents new and different ways for social actors to communicate messages to and about each other, and in that sense, to interact with each other. In using social media to explore the questions I am asking about the presentational strategies of the TPS (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of my methods), I am demonstrating the on-going relevance of Goffman even in this new communication environment. That can be counted among the contributions of my dissertation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter I discuss the methods that I used to gather and analyze my data. My research was guided by two complementary methodological approaches, constructivist grounded theory as formulated by Kathy Charmaz (2014) and qualitative media analysis (QMA) as developed by Altheide and Schneider (2013). The two approaches are complementary in that they both rest on the same fundamental assumptions about the nature of human behaviour and social interaction. I explained those assumptions in the discussion in the previous chapter about interpretive theory in its various iterations. Both methodological approaches also lend themselves to the qualitative and naturalistic techniques for studying social behaviour that interpretive theory calls for. I begin with a discussion of grounded theory, both in its original formulation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and as it has been modified more recently by Kathy Charmaz (2014), and then present a description of QMA. The latter part of the chapter provides specific details as to how I conducted the study.

A Grounded Theory Approach

Interpretive approaches like symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, and social constructionism have given rise to not only a different set of questions, but a different way of doing research. Once again, it was Blumer (1969) who most clearly outlined the methodological implications of taking an interpretive approach. Blumer (1969) believed that a methodological perspective that respected "the nature of the empirical world that is its object of study" was needed and that symbolic interactionism was a perspective that could address this as the perspective respected both "the nature of human group life and conduct" (p.vii).

Blumer's emphasis on naturalistic methods was reflected in the work of a group of sociologists at the University of Chicago. The Chicago School, as the group came to be known, relied heavily on field observations and interviews as methods of data collection. They "placed social interaction and social processes at the centre of their attention" (Strauss, 1987, p.6). The Chicago School particularly "emphasized the necessity for grasping the actors' viewpoints for understanding interaction, process, and social change" (Strauss, 1987, p.6).

Strongly influenced by American pragmatist philosophy, as well as the work of the Chicago School, and looking to encourage researchers to generate theory derived from their data, as Blumer (1969) insisted, Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss (1967) developed a methodological approach, known as grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) believed that too much sociological research occurring at the time was guided by a deductive logic that aimed simply to verify theories derived from a priori assumptions. Instead, the grounded theory approach that they proposed encourages researchers to leave themselves open to what they find when they go out into the field or observe the social worlds that interest them. Theory, they insisted, should emerge naturally from a researcher's data. Thus, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) developed an inductive, ground-up, approach to generating sociological theory.

The process of generating grounded theory, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), involves constant comparative analysis where the researcher simultaneously engages in data collection and analysis and moves between data collection, coding, and analysis in a fluid back-and-forth manner instead of sequentially. Each of these steps in the research process is intertwined with the others (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers aim for generalizations that capture and subsume all of the observations they make until they reach a point of theoretical saturation where no new insights are emerging from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory approach also encouraged researchers to search for generic social processes unfolding in the worlds they are studying and then to compare how those same processes play themselves out in other social situations (Pawluch & Neiterman, 2010). They advised researchers to carry their observations beyond their immediate case studies and to engage in constant comparisons between case studies slowly building towards broader generalizations and more abstract levels of theory (Pawluch & Neiterman, 2010). In this way, they imagined, formal theory as well as substantive theory could ultimately emerge from the analytical process.

A Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach

Over the years, the grounded theory approach has itself generated multiple variants. Pawluch and Neiterman (2010) describe the rift that occurred between Glaser and Strauss. Glaser (1978; 1992) retained a commitment to what is generally referred to now as traditional or "classic grounded theory," while Strauss joined forces with Juliette Corbin and Adele Clarke to develop an "evolved" version of grounded theory (Mills et al., 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). There are several differences between the two. These have been discussed by Babchuk (1997), Boychuk Duchscher and Morgan (2004), Kelle (2005), and Walker and Myrick (2006), among others. The differences essentially come down to how to apply the approach (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Glaser favoured the simpler and more fluid and creative approach described in the original formulation of grounded theory, emphasizing the importance of keeping close to the data to see what patterns and insights emerge (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Strauss' rendition became a highly complex system of operations and procedures for each step in the analytical process – coding, memo-writing, theoretical sampling, sorting, diagramming, and writing – with each of these steps broken down further still into what Pawluch

and Neiterman (2010) claim amounts to a progressively more rigid, formulaic, and codified system of analysis.

Another variant, known as "constructivist grounded theory," was developed by Kathy Charmaz (Charmaz, 2021, p.153). Charmaz's (2009, 2014) contribution to the grounded theory approach lies in her modification of the theory to take in the epistemological questions raised by social constructionism. In contrast to Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (2014) does not view researchers as "passive, neutral observers" and rejects the notion of a "value-free expert" (Charmaz, 2009; Charmaz, 2014, p.13). Instead, she views researchers as being engaged themselves in meaning-making as they interpret and analyze their data. If "we start with the assumption that social reality is multiple, processual, and constructed," Charmaz (2014) writes, "then we must take the researcher's position, privileges, perspective, and interactions into account as an inherent part of the research reality" (p.13).

Constructivist grounded theory places an emphasis on researcher reflexivity and views research as a construction that takes place under a particular set of conditions that researchers may not choose or be aware of (Charmaz, 2009, 2014). The theory assumes that data and theories are constructed through researchers' interactions with their participants and through their emerging analysis. Data and theories are not simply "discovered" (Charmaz, 2009; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012, 2013). Both researchers and participants take part in co-constructing data and the research process is influenced by factors such as the researcher's academic training, perspectives, geographical locations, privileges, and socio-cultural settings (Charmaz, 2009; Mills et al., 2006; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013).

Qualitative Media Analysis

Documents of various kinds have always been recognized by qualitative researchers as valuable sources of information about social processes. A classic sociological work in the interpretive tradition – W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918) – was based largely on an analysis of personal letters, diaries, brochures, and newspaper articles. Glaser and Strauss (1967) devote an entire chapter to documents, and archival and library materials as a source of data for generating grounded theory. "When someone stands in the library stacks," they wrote, that person is metaphorically

> surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant, or the sociologist's interviewee…The researcher needs only to discover the voices in the library to release them for his analytic use. (p.163)

Nonetheless, there has been a tendency among qualitative researchers to rely primarily on participant observation and face-to-face interviews with individuals in the social groups that are the object of the study (Braun et al., 2017; Charmaz, 2021; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Guest et al., 2013; Winicup, 2017).

This tendency is changing with the rise of the Internet and social media platforms, the use of which has become so pervasive in social life that researchers can hardly afford to ignore them. Initially, content on the Internet consisted mainly in text-based form (Marotzki et al., 2014). But with the development of the World Wide Web a much wider range of virtual material has become available online, including text, photos, videos, radio programming, and podcasts (Marotzki et al., 2014; Salmons, 2016). Quan-Haase and Sloan (2016) note the ease with which individuals can now post content and documents online stating

> the relevance of social media in everyday life continues to grow and this relevance is further increased by the move by citizens toward adopting mobile devices (e.g.,

> smartphones, phablets, and tablets) that provide flexible, on-the-go capabilities to access information from social media apps, as well as to contribute text, images, commentary and opinion. (p.2)

Researchers are no longer restricted to a particular geographical location or to face-to-face communication to conduct research (Marotzki et al., 2014; Salmons, 2016). Moreover, as Favaro et al. (2017) have pointed out, online materials are often easily found, accessible, and are considered "resource-lite" as transcription is often not required (Favaro et al., 2017, p.119).

This proliferation of data available online has led to calls for new methodologies that are tailored specifically to studying, collecting, and analyzing these types of data (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2016). Among the sociologists responding to that call are David Altheide and Christopher Schneider (2013), who recognized that many of the traditional methods for studying documents, particularly those relevant for studying mass media, "were inadequate in dealing with newer information and perspectives about how documents were constructed and the ways in which media were being shaped and used by claims makers, journalist, and different audiences" (p.2). This was particularly true for the changes and growth seen in social media platforms.

Altheide and Schneider (2013) have developed a strategy for studying media-based documents, including newspaper articles, online magazine articles, television newscasts, social media posts such as those on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, comments and responses left on social media posts, and even Internet video games. This methodology, now known as Qualitative Media Analysis (QMA), is intended to address a gap in research methods between traditional methods such as content analysis and qualitative methods such as interviewing. Altheide and Schneider (2013) state explicitly that their process of document analysis is informed by the theoretical and methodological position associated with interactionists like George Herbert Mead

(1934), Herbert Blumer (1969), and social constructionists such as Alfred Schutz (1967), and Berger and Luckmann (1967).

More specifically, they base the approach on three interpretivist principles. First, "social life consists of a process of communication and interpretation regarding the definition of the situation" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.13). Second, "it is the communicative process that breaks the distinction between the subject and the object, between internal and external, and joins them in the situation that we experience and take for granted" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 13). Third, "the notion of process is key because everything is, so to speak, under construction, even our most firmly held beliefs, values, and personal commitments" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.13). They see media documents as depictions of social meaning and as "symbolic representations that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.5). They describe QMA as blending the "traditional notion of *objective content analysis* with *participant observation* to form *ethnographic content analysis*" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.5).

In developing QMA, Altheide and Schneider (2013) emphasize three concepts key to interpretive approaches: context, process, and emergence. Context, they argue, is important in understanding the significance of a document, "even independently of the content of the document" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.14). Process refers to how documents are actually created and put together. Media documents, such as newspaper articles of TV newscasts, they point out, are both products of organizations and are generated according to a routine involving a complex division of labour and tight time constraints. Understanding this feature of media documents is essential to grasping the meaning and message of a document (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). Finally, they emphasize the emergent quality of meaning. The meaning of

documents can only be gleaned through a process of comparison and by examining documents over time, rather than analyzing single pieces in isolation (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). Emergence, according to Altheide and Schneider (2013) is "the gradual shaping through understanding and interpretation" (p.16).

Altheide and Schneider (2013) make a compelling case for the value of media documents as sources of data. They point out the extent to which we live in a news-mediated world. The massive growth and worldwide reach of mass media and other aspects of popular culture industries have led to an ever-deeper penetration of information technologies into everyday life. This, in turn, raises questions about the impact on the symbol systems within which social actors live their lives. "Documents," Altheide and Schneider (2013) write, "are very relevant for the audiences' views, themes, and narratives – or common stories – of the world and for the language and symbolic meanings and images that are associated with certain problems and issues" (p.17). They conclude that studying media documents allows researchers to:

> (a) place symbolic meaning in context; (b) track the process of its creation and influence on social definitions; (c) let our understanding emerge through detailed investigation; and (d) if we desire, use our understanding from the study of documents to change some social activities, including the production of certain documents. (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.20)

Like Charmaz (2014), Altheide and Schneider (2013) are sensitive to constructionist concerns. They recognize that, as with all social interaction, "research is a social activity" and that the research process itself takes place in a historical-cultural context (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.13). This means that research methods are influenced by, and are developed within, particular social contexts. As the world changes, researchers will also change their methods for studying the social world. Elsewhere, Altheide has written that "the social world is an interpreted world, not a literal world, always under symbolic construction" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, as

cited in Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.13). Altheide and Schneider (2013) encourage those who use QMA to follow the "ethnographic ethnic." That is, they urge researchers to be mindful of their role as analysts and to be open about their research process.

Also, like Charmaz (2014), Altheide and Schneider (2013) provide detailed instructions for conducting QMA. The process they outline is very similar to the model that Charmaz lays out but is more focused on media sources. I provide a more detailed description of that aspect of QMA in explaining my own research process.

Methods

I begin with an explanation for why I chose to study the TPS. First, the TPS is the largest municipal police service in Canada, serving the largest city in Canada with a population of almost 3 million people. Second, the TPS sees itself as progressive and at the forefront of policing in Canada, as well as internationally. A recruitment page on the TPS website boasts: "The Service enjoys a well-earned reputation as a world leader in policing and is committed to excellence, innovation, and quality leadership" (Toronto Police Service [TPS], n.d.-k, para.5).

There were also pragmatic reasons for selecting the TPS. Given its size and level of sophistication, the TPS has significant resources to devote to communication and public relations. The main communications branch of the TPS is the Corporate Communications Unit which is responsible for "sharing information with the public through media relations, the TPS website and social media accounts including the @TorontoPolice and @TPSOperations" Twitter accounts (TPS, n.d.-b, para.1). The Corporate Communications Unit is composed of both civilian media personnel and media relations officers. Together, their job involves, among other things, issuing statements on behalf of the TPS to media outlets, and writing blog posts and stories for

TPSnews.ca. They are also involved in organizing TPS press conferences. In Goffmanian terms, the Corporate Communications Unit can be seen as responsible for the organization's front stage presentation. There is, of course, a complementary backstage area where presentational strategies get worked out. But, by definition, backstage areas are more difficult to access. As interesting as it might be to study how the unit operates, those are questions for another dissertation[14].

Given the dramatic development in communications technology described in Chapter 1, it should come as no surprise that the TPS has taken social media seriously. The TPS is the first Canadian police service to implement the use of social media into their organizational structure starting in 2007 (Meijer & Thaens, 2013). In 2010, TPS Constable Scott Mills became the first police officer in Canada to be appointed to a position within a police service expressly dedicated to social media when he became a social media officer (Allen, 2011 as cited in Schneider, 2016). The TPS has official Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts, in addition to multiple websites. On the "Social Media" webpage (torontopolice.on.ca/socialmedia/) on the TPS website, the service highlights its dedication to using social media as a means of communicating with the public. The website states that the TPS is "taking an active role in participating in Social Networks as a means of extending our reach to all members of the community. Service members can be seen regularly tweeting and posting to Facebook and YouTube" (TPS, n.d.-h, para.1). In addition to the service's main official Twitter account, @TorontoPolice, there are many other Twitter accounts run by individuals within the organization. Different TPS units and divisions, such as 11 Division, 14 Division, 42 Division, the Homicide unit, the Community Partnerships and Engagement Unit, all have their own official

[14] For discussions about the trend among police organizations to hire dedicated media relations officers (MROs) see Cooke and Sturges (2009), Lee and McGovern (2014), and Mawby (2012).

Twitter accounts. Additionally, some officers and personnel who work within various TPS units and divisions have their own personal TPS accounts for communicating with the public.

Moreover, given the TPS's location in Canada's largest city, there is no shortage of media outlets keen on reporting on the policies and activities of the TPS. Among the major local outlets are the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun*. All the major national news outlets – *the Globe and Mail*, *the National Post*, *CBC News* – are also headquartered in Toronto. This intense media scrutiny is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the TPS cannot escape the often-critical eye of the media. On the other hand, the broad array of outlets seeking stories about, and statements from, the police give the TPS multiple fora when it comes to presenting their point of view. In a study such as this one, where the concern is primarily with organizational presentational strategies, the combination of the TPS's own strong online presence, as well as the extensive media coverage of TPS positions and statements, gave me an abundance of material to examine.

As for the case studies, as I explain in my introduction, I chose to analyze three case studies that have put the TPS and its practices firmly in the public eye over the past several years. Each of the three cases garnered intense media attention, not only in Toronto, but nationally and even internationally. Each case put the TPS in the position of having to respond to intense public criticism. In tracking and analyzing those responses, I felt confident that I would be able to identify some of the strategies the TPS was using in its effort to defend itself and the kind of vision the service was putting forward for what policing in the current environment looks like.

My choice of case studies aligns closely with what Stake (1995, 2005) calls a multiple case study or collective case study. Stake (2005) notes that using case studies in qualitative research allows researchers to gain depth in their analyses of any particular case. A multiple case

study involves a number of cases being examined "in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (Stake, 2005, p.445). This approach is an extension of an instrumental case study whereby the case "plays a supportive role and facilitates our understanding of something else" (Stake, 2005, p. 445). For my research, each case study I chose helped facilitate an understanding of the strategies the TPS used to defend the organization, repair their organizational image, and foster legitimacy with the public in the face of controversy. Each case study provided insight into how exactly the TPS did this.

Data Collection

Both constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) and QMA as Altheide and Schneider (2013) explain the approach start with the collection of relevant data. For each case study in this dissertation, I collected multiple online documents, focusing on those available through the TPSnews.ca website, official TPS social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube), and other sources, such as newspaper articles, that provided information on TPS reactions and positions. Following suggestions by Altheide and Schneider (2013), I downloaded all my data, excluding YouTube videos, from the Internet for coding and analysis as these posts can be edited, changed, or even removed from the Internet without warning.

The TPSnews.ca site was a particularly important source. TPSnews.ca is an official TPS website that provides up to date information and news about the activities of the TPS and its officers. The website offers stories, blog posts, photos, videos, and news releases about the activities of the TPS. The homepage of the website also displays the organization's most recent posts to both Facebook and Twitter. Information on the website largely focuses on the TPS's community based or philanthropic efforts, but also includes interviews with TPS officers and personnel, information/discussions about TPS practices and policies such as body cameras, and

discussions of community safety efforts such as gun and drug seizures. Additionally, localized content and events sorted by division can be found on the site. I discovered in June 2022, after data collection and analysis was completed, that the TPSNews.ca website no longer exists and it appears that some of the content from this website has been moved onto the main TPS website (https://www.tps.ca).

I searched the TPSnews.ca website for any stories and blog posts concerning the three case studies using the "stories" and "blogs" tabs found on the top of the homepage of the website and then filtered the posts by "year." Following Altheide and Schneider (2013), I converted each blog or story found into a PDF document and then combined the PDF documents into three separate larger PDF documents corresponding to each case study.

For the purposes of this research, I did not analyze the TPS's official main website (https://www.tps.ca). The website's homepage did have an up-to-date feed of the TPS's most recent posts on Twitter, as well as links to stories and blog posts on TPSnews.ca. However, the website mainly consisted of information and documents/reports to assist the public, including but not limited to, information about court services and criminal records, reporting crimes, victim services, phone directories, recruitment information, contact information for different units and individuals, and brief descriptions of the TPS's values. I did review some of the documents provided on the TPS website such as *Action Plan: The Way Forward* and *In the Communities' Words: The Toronto Police Service's Race-Base Data Collection Strategy* and also used some of the webpages to provide additional information and context in each case study but the discussions that the TPS were directly having about each case study were not located on this website. Additionally, in June of 2022 I noticed that the TPS website had been completely redesigned. The new layout differs from the former version of the website, with the creation of

new pages and more information available to the public. However, this has also resulted in the removal of many of the webpages I used to provide additional context in each of the case studies. The original webpage links in the citations for these sources provided on the works cited page no longer work, and instead will redirect to the tps.ca homepage.

In addition to the TPSnews.ca website, the TPS has several official social media accounts, including a Twitter page (@TorontoPolice) and a Facebook page (facebook.com/TorontoPolice). I searched each of those accounts for any posts that related to the dissertation's three case studies. Twitter posts were found using Twitter's *Advanced Search* function. The *Advanced Search* function allows one to search for specific tweets by tailoring "search results to specific date ranges, people and more" (Twitter, n.d., para.2). Fields that can be filled in through the *Advanced Search* function to refine results include the use of words, phrases, or hashtags used in a tweet, tweets from specific accounts, engagement levels, geographical areas, and date ranges (Twitter, n.d.).

To search for tweets made by the TPS I entered their Twitter handle/account, @TorontoPolice, and date ranges into the *Advanced Search*, and used the "latest"[15] function to display results. Using these search parameters provided tweets made by the @TorontoPolice official Twitter account in and around the time of each controversy. Tweets generated by a search are displayed in reverse chronological order. Again, following Altheide & Schneider (2013), I continuously scrolled backwards through the results, taking a screenshot of any posts

[15] The Twitter "Latest" function displays the most recent tweets of a search in reverse chronological order whereas search results filtered using the "Top" Tweets function will only display tweets that the Twitter algorithm deems most relevant to a search (Twitter, n.d.).

relevant to my research. These posts were then combined into a single PDF document for each case study.

Similarly, for posts on Facebook, I continuously scrolled backwards through the posts made by the TPS on their official Facebook page, which loads the posts on the webpage in reverse chronological order. Unlike Twitter, Facebook does not have a search function that allows an individual to search for specific posts made by an account. I took a screenshot of any posts relevant to my research and combined all the posts into a single PDF document for analysis.

I also analyzed videos posted on the official TPS YouTube channel (youtube.com/torontopolice). I located these videos by clicking the "Videos" tab located at the top of the channel's homepage. All videos that the TPS has uploaded and made publicly available are displayed in reverse chronological order with the most recent videos appearing first. I scrolled backwards through the available videos and identified those relevant to my case studies. I watched the videos – many of them several times – transcribing and taking notes as I went along. I saved the transcriptions as Word documents. I was not able to save the videos themselves since YouTube videos cannot be downloaded without using third-party software.

As for news stories, I gathered these from *LexisNexis* (which has since been renamed *Nexis Uni*). The *LexisNexis* data base contains thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, government documents, and legal documents. As Altheide and Schneider (2013) note "in spite of more recent developments, LexisNexis continues to remain one of the most sophisticated and comprehensive data bases to date" (p.75). For the first case study on the TPS's involvement in the Toronto Pride parade and the service's relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community, news articles were collected using the search term "toronto police AND pride parade." For the second

case study, on the Bruce McArthur investigation, I used the search term "toronto police AND bruce mcarthur AND lgbtq." For the third case study, I used the search term "toronto police AND defund police." I downloaded all the news items the search generated and as with my other data sources, created separate PDF files for each case study.

In discussing how to carry out a QMA, Altheide and Schneider (2013) emphasize the importance of appreciating the context within which media messages are issued. They argue that the context is essential to grasping the significance of the documents themselves. The sources that were most valuable in helping me understand the general climate at the time of each case study and the TPS's actions were the news sources. Many of them provided back stories for the more immediate events they were addressing and gave me a fuller picture of what was happening.

In addition, two books provided me with a more solid grasp of the social and political climate surrounding policing in Toronto over the past 20 years: *Excessive Force: Toronto's Fight to Reform City Policing* was written by Alok Mukherjee, a former chair of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), along with Tim Harper. The book discusses Mukherjee's experiences during his tenure (2005-2015) as chair of the TPSB. Among the issues that he addresses are the police shootings of racialized people experiencing mental health crises, police culture and lack of accountability, the debates around carding practices, how police treat their own officers and personnel experiencing mental health distress, the relationship between the TPSB and the TPS, and dealing with a difficult police union while the TPSB pushed for reforms. Mukherjee also discusses the social and political climates leading up to and during these events. While discussing each of these topics, Mukherjee points out the problems with today's policing and offers ways that policing could move forward.

Missing From the Village: The Story of Serial Killer Bruce McArthur, the Search for Justice, and the System That Failed Toronto's Queer Community was written by journalist Justin Ling. In the book, Ling discusses the social and political climate during and leading up to the arrest and investigation of Bruce McArthur. He writes thoughtfully about the relationship between the police and the LGBTQ2S+ community and his own experiences as an investigative journalist reporting on the cases. The book is a statement, Ling (2020) concludes, about "how systemic racism, homophobia, transphobia, and the structures of policing fail queer communities" (para.2).

Finally, my original intention was to supplement the documentary materials I collected with in-depth interviews with TPS personnel and officers who are a part of the TPS media and communications units. I thought that interviews could potentially generate additional insights into how the police approach and think about communicating with the public. I received ethics clearance for this aspect of the study through the McMaster Research Ethics Board. The TPS has its own ethics process which I would have had to go through to proceed with my plan. However, just as I was completing the TPS ethics application in early March of 2020, it was announced that there would be a province wide shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the complications the pandemic introduced, I made the decision to abandon the interviews. I do not feel that doing so seriously hampered me in answering the primary research questions I was asking. While the interviews might have added to my understanding of what the police had to say when asked directly about their communication strategies, they were not essential to exploring the messages they projected and claims they made in their public statements. That said, an interview-based study with those most directly involved in determining police response strategies would be an interesting and fruitful avenue for future research (see Chapter 7).

Before turning to a discussion of how I conducted my analysis, there were a few issues related to data collection worth noting. I was not able to access all the TPS news releases I would have liked to have seen. The TPS Twitter page has an auto-feed that is updated by a bot[16] with links to the daily news releases that are published by the service (TPS, 2020h). However, the news releases are not archived by the TPS and the links provided in these tweets eventually expire. During the time of this study, I could only access news releases that had been published approximately two months prior to any given access date. This was not a problem for my analysis of the BLM case since I was collecting the news releases in real time. But for the other two cases, there were news releases that were no longer available on the Internet.

Moreover, the titles and subjects of news releases posted by the bot on the TPS's Twitter page are abbreviated. The abbreviations are often inconsistent and confusing, making it difficult to determine what they are about. Below is an example of how tweets are abbreviated:

(TPS, 2018b)

As my research proceeded, I became more skilled at deciphering the abbreviations and determining the potential significance of the news releases that were referenced. If the news

[16] Lutkevich and Gillis (2022) describe a bot as "a computer program that operates as an agent for a user or other program or to simulate a human activity," they are often used for automated tasks, and are used by organizations or individuals "to replace a repetitive task that a human would otherwise have to perform" (para.1-2).

release itself was no longer available, I tried to find reporting that filled in the gap. In the end I am confident that I had sufficient information to proceed with my analysis.

Analysis

With all the data organized according to case study, I proceeded with my analysis. In total I analyzed approximately 35 blog posts/articles from TPSnews.ca, 69 Facebook posts, 115 tweets, 28 YouTube videos, and 301 news articles. (The following chart shows the breakdown according to case study).

	TPSnews.ca Blog Posts / Stories	Facebook Posts	Tweets	YouTube Videos	News Articles
Case Study 1: TPS and the Pride Parade	12	26	39	5	62
Case Study 2: TPS and the Bruce McArthur Investigation	9	14	30	8	196
Case Study 3: TPS and the Defund the Police Movement	14	29	46	15	43

While I relied heavily on the recommendations made by Altheide and Schneider (2013) in collecting my data and rendering it in a form that allowed for systematic analysis, in analyzing that data I was guided more by Charmaz's (2014) approach. I found Charmaz's coding strategy particularly helpful. According to Charmaz (2014) "your codes show how to select, separate, and sort data and begin an analytic accounting of them," (p.111). This process allows a researcher to

ask analytical questions about the data (Charmaz, 2014). In doing so, researchers move in the direction of further understanding the problem they are investigating.

Coding is done in two sequential steps – initial coding and focused coding (Charmaz, 2014). Initial coding involves a detailed and careful reading of data with the goal of identifying preliminary categories of meaning present in the data. Researchers focus on simple fragments of their data – lines, words, or short sections – "mining early data for analytic ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis" (Charmaz, 2014, p.114). During this process, Charmaz (2014) points out, "the goal is to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data" (p.114).

Following Charmaz (2014), I started with initial thematic coding. That is, for each case study, I looked through the data, asking myself what messages were being conveyed and looking for discernable themes. This loose form of coding allowed me to gain an understanding of the kinds of criticisms the TPS was facing and to catch my first glimpses of what form their responses were taking. The themes that emerged from this initial process were numerous and broad. For example, with respect to the Toronto Pride and Bruce McArthur controversies, some of the themes on the complaints side were police harassment, systemic bias and discrimination by police, incompetence, apathy with respect to the concerns of the LGBTQ2S+ community, lack of accountability, and lack of transparency. In terms of police responses, there were themes like police participation in previous Pride parades, investigative updates, efforts to build a better relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community, expressing concern, expressing sympathy for victims, and reviewing cold cases.

Once the initial coding was completed, I engaged in focused coding. I moved again through the data – line by line, paragraph by paragraph, and page by page – concentrating on the

themes I had identified. As Charmaz (2014) points out this stage of coding "condenses and sharpens what you have already done because it highlights what you find to be important in your emerging analysis" (Charmaz, 2014, p.138). At this stage, I began to look more at police responses, since these were the themes more central to the questions I was asking. I also began to collapse and re-organize themes under broader rubrics. Many of the criticisms fell under the more general categories referring to sources of tension such as "Police-LGBTQ Tension." In relation to police responses, some of the more focused categories that emerged were "building relationships," "pointing to past projects," "creating trust and confidence," and "institutional progress or change."

Charmaz (2014) notes that moving from initial coding to focused coding is not a linear process. In fact, "some respondents or events will make explicit what was implicit in earlier statements and events" and this may cause a researcher to return to their earlier data to explore what has now been made explicit (Charmaz, 2014, p.141). Both initial and focused coding are emergent processes where the researcher is interacting with their data, and focused coding is a flexible process where decisions about data are not conclusive. Charmaz (2014) notes that it is possible to identify new, more abstract, codes during the focused coding process that explain numerous codes that were earlier identified.

As I moved through the data for each case study, codes were often re-named to better describe what was happening in the data. In some cases, initial codes became focused codes, some codes and their data were combined if I had created more than one code to describe the same thing occurring in the data, and new codes were developed to encompass several codes which were all discussing a similar theme. For instance, in the defund the police case study, I renamed "listening" to "listening to the community," a descriptor I believed more accurately

reflected what was occurring. Once this category was created, I collapsed another similar category, “listening to community feedback,” placing the data from this category under the new “listening to the community” code. Another illustration of the iterative nature of the analytical process as Charmaz (2014) describes it, comes from the McArthur case study. Towards the end of my analysis, I created a new code, “police McArthur investigation” to encompass multiple focused and initial codes that involved discussion of the TPS’s investigation of Bruce McArthur.

Both Charmaz (2014) and Altheide and Schneider (2013) stress the importance of sampling theoretically as one works with one’s data. Theoretical sampling involves going back and gathering additional data to further develop the categories that are emerging in one’s analysis (Charmaz, 2014). As Charmaz (2014) notes, “the main purpose of theoretical sampling is to elaborate and refine the categories constituting your theory” (p.193). As I moved through my data and categories began emerging, I went back and looked for information referenced in what I was reading. For example, numerous data sources I was going through for the McArthur case study mentioned a story written by Tu Thanh Ha that had appeared in the *Globe and Mail* in 2018, so I tracked down Ha’s piece. In some cases, I also transcribed additional videos from news outlets such as the *Toronto Police 2020 Year in Review* interview of TPS Chief James Ramer by Mark McAllister from *CityNews*.

Throughout the entire coding process, I wrote memos. Charmaz (2014) argues that writing memos allows one to “become actively engaged in your materials, to develop your ideas, to fine-tune your subsequent data-gathering, and to engage in critical reflexivity” (pp.162-163). In some cases, my memos took the form of a tentative idea jotted quickly on a post-it note; at other times the memos involved longer reflections on the possible significance of what I was seeing in the data. I tried to note anything I found interesting, curious, or perplexing. For each

case study I created a separate Word document where I kept track of these notes and referred back to them frequently as I began to write up my findings. As the study proceeded, I began to think beyond each case study individually to similarities and differences I was seeing across the case studies in the arguments made and strategies adopted by the police. I made notes about these as well and used those notes in my conclusion.

CHAPTER 4: THE TORONTO PRIDE PARADE CASE

Introduction

On July 3, 2016, the massively large and popular annual Pride parade wound its way through the streets of Toronto, only to hit a roadblock as it approached a major intersection at College and Yonge Street. A group of protestors representing Black Lives Matter Toronto had organized a sit-in and would not allow the parade to move through the intersection until Pride Toronto[17] organizers agreed to a list of nine demands. Among the demands, most of which focused on a more inclusive parade for Black and LGBTQ2S+ individuals, was an insistence that the police be prohibited from marching in uniform and having floats in the parade (The Canadian Press & News Staff, 2016). Black Lives Matter Toronto cited tensions in the relationships between the TPS and both the LGBTQ2S+ community and Toronto's racialized communities (Beattie, 2018; Casey, 2019a; Gillis, 2019f). The protestors stated that some members of these communities did not feel safe participating in Pride with a police presence in the parade (Postmedia Breaking News, 2018c). After a half-hour delay, Pride Toronto organizers signed the list of demands and the parade continued. In the aftermath of the incident, the demand concerning police garnered considerable attention on the part of the media and the public and generated intense debate among community groups.[18] But that discussion has not yet culminated in a decision to allow the TPS to participate in the annual parade.

[17] Pride Toronto is a "not-for-profit organization that supports the LGBTQ2+ communities" of Toronto and is the organizer of Toronto Pride events including the Toronto Pride Parade (Pride Toronto, n.d.-a).
[18] See Cole (2020) for additional discussion of the public reaction to the demand of removing uniformed officers from participating in the parade.

In this chapter I focus on the dialogue that the protest initiated between police and the LGBTQ2S+ community (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of the TPS and Black Lives Matter)[19]. The issue of uniformed police participation in the Toronto Pride parade was only the latest chapters in a history of tensions between Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community and the police. These tensions have been exacerbated in an age when social media has subjected the police to greater scrutiny and diminished authority. I have discussed in Chapter 1 the related legitimacy crisis that has challenged the police in recent years. My concern in this chapter is to use the Toronto Pride parade case to explore the broader question of how the police are responding in this altered environment. What organizational impression management and presentational strategies did the TPS employ in responding to the controversy created by the sit-in and subsequent ban on police participation in the Pride parade? How did the TPS respond to the criticism leveled against the organization about its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community?

In this chapter I will argue that the TPS used a variety of strategies including committing to addressing the problems they had with the LGBTQ2S+ community; highlighting their past record of institutional change with respect to policing the community; focusing on their continuing efforts to introduce changes; personalizing the progress the organization had made towards inclusivity by featuring the stories of service members who were part of the LGBTQ2S+ community; and emphasizing their "police work" - the services the TPS was still providing to the community by ensuring that Pride parades unfolded safely. Taken together, the presentational

[19] It is important to note that racialized communities and LGBTQ2S+ communities are not exclusive from one another, however this chapter focuses on the broader dialogue between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community regarding the participation of uniformed police officers in the parade that occurred after the protest in 2016.

strategies projected the image of an organization that acknowledged past failings, had already taken steps to make changes and was eager to do better still.

Background

In Chapter 1 I discussed the troubled relationship that has always existed between police and the LGBTQ2S+ community not only in other parts of the world, but in Toronto as well. I described the raids of men's bathhouses that the TPS (known then as the Metro Toronto Police) conducted during the 1980s and 1990s and how those raids created a deep sense of mistrust within the LGBTQ2S+ community. By the early 2000s, there were signs that the TPS was seeking a better relationship with the community. The organization had undertaken several key initiatives. In June of 2000, the first police officers walked in the Toronto Pride parade in uniform (TPS, n.d.-i). Two officers marched, one representing the TPS and another representing the Ontario Provincial Police (TPS, n.d.-i).

In 2001, the TPS established a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) for the LGBTQ2S+ community[20], consisting of a TPS representative and members from various organizations within the community (TPS, n.d.-b, para.24). The committee's purpose was to provide insight from the perspective of the LGBTQ2S+ community on broader policing issues such as professional standards, training, and community mobilization (TPS, n.d.-a). Among its activities, the CCC established a bursary program that gave out $1000 awards to LGBTQ youth "achieving excellence in the community" (Fanfair, 2018f, para.11). The bursaries were intended to be used towards tuition costs for post-secondary education (TPS, 2016a). In a statement that acknowledged the discrimination the community still encountered, the TPS described the awards

[20] The LGBTQ CCC was only one of several CCCs the TPS has created. There are CCCs for the Aboriginal, Black, Chinese, Disabled, Jewish, Muslim, South and West Asian communities as well as a CCC for Youth.

are an opportunity to "recognize achievements made by LGBTQ youth in the City of Toronto and support these youth in overcoming the very real challenges they often times face" (TPS, 2016a, p.1).

Also in 2001, the TPS created a dedicated LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer position (TPS, n.d.-i), intended to provide policing support to the LGBTQ2S+ community and to assist with training in relation to the concerns of the community at the Toronto Police College (TPS, n.d.-i). Constable Danielle Bottineau filled that position from 2011 to 2020.[21] Among Bottineau's duties was her involvement in regular meetings that the TPS held with members of the community as a way of keeping channels of communication open.

Other initiatives included the creation of a service-wide LGBTQ+ liaison member program. The program encouraged LGBTQ+ identifying members of the service to "volunteer to be a resource for colleagues and the community" (Fanfair, 2018g, para.17). Another milestone in the history of the relationship between the police and the LGBTQ2S+ community occurred in 2005 when then Chief of Police, Bill Blair, became the first Toronto Chief of Police to ever march in the Toronto Pride parade (TPS, n.d.-i). The tradition of the police chief marching continued until the 2016 parade, when Police Chief Mark Saunders participated (TPS, 2016b). Ironically, in the days leading up to the parade, Chief Saunders issued a statement acknowledging the role the police played in the 1981 bathhouse raid (Operation Soap) and expressed regret about the actions that took place that day. But that statement did not satisfy those who continued to have negative experiences with the police and felt that Saunders' remarks were disingenuous (Fanfair, 2016).

[21] On October 8, 2020, via Twitter, Danielle Bottineau announced that she was leaving the position of LGBTQ2S Liaison to take up another position within the TPS (Bottineau, 2020). Carmen Wong was appointed to the position of LGBTQ2S Liaison for the TPS in November of 2020 and still holds this position as of June 2022 (TPS, 2020q).

Despite these efforts tension between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community remained sufficiently strained to culminate in the 2016 sit-in that stopped the Pride parade. In the aftermath of the incident, Pride Toronto and the TPS began discussions about what to do next. In March of 2018, after more than a year of negotiations between the TPS and the Pride Toronto Board, Pride Toronto invited the TPS to apply to march in the parade to take place later that year. The TPS did so, anticipating a positive response (Ling, 2018). Instead, Pride Toronto asked the TPS to withdraw their application, citing ongoing tensions surrounding the police handling of the Bruce McArthur investigation (Gibson, 2018). The Bruce McArthur case is the focus of the next chapter (Chapter 5) and is explained more fully there. The essential details, however, are these: For years the LGBTQ2S+ community had been trying to get the TPS to take seriously that men were going missing in the Church and Wellesley area of Toronto (known among locals as the Village) and that there might be a serial killer targeting members of their community. Their complaints gained little traction (Grant, 2018).

On January 18, 2018, while negotiations with Pride Toronto were on-going, the TPS arrested Bruce McArthur and charged him with two counts of first-degree murder (Fanfair, 2018a). That number subsequently went up to eight counts (Hayes, 2018) and McArthur was convicted on all eight charges (Gillis, 2019d). Through this period, the TPS came under severe criticism for being dismissive of the community's complaints and for taking so long to solve the cases (Hayes, 2019; Rauhala, 2019; Toronto Star, 2019).

There were two additional cases of under-policing that intensified the tensions between the LGBTQ2S+ community and the TPS. In July 2017, Alloura Wells, a transgender woman, went missing in downtown Toronto. Her body was discovered August 5th in the Rosedale area but was not identified until 4 months later - November 2017 (Bykova, 2017). Wells' family

reported her missing on November 6, 2017 but were allegedly told by the TPS that "the case "was not high priority" because Wells had been homeless for a number of years" (Bykova, 2017, para.6).

At the end of November 2017, a 22-year-old woman, Tess Richey, disappeared in the Village after a night out with a high school friend (Loriggio, 2020). According to Richey's family, the police were slow to act, leading Richey's mother, Christine Hermeston, to travel to Toronto from her home in North Bay, to conduct her own search. She eventually found her daughter's body only steps from where she was last seen. Richey's family filed a lawsuit against the TPS alleging, among other things, that there was a lack of police presence in the Village. That lack of presence, they argued, emboldened predators such as Richey's killer to "commit crimes without the fear of being caught" (Loriggio, 2020, para.5).

Though the TPS was not able to march in the 2018 Pride parade, talks continued. In October 2018, the leadership at Pride Toronto once again invited the TPS to apply to participate in the 2019 parade, stating that "the two sides have made progress on conversations related to policing and institutional power" (Casey, 2018b, para.3). The statement indicated that if police were to apply, "their request will be granted providing they met the event's rules" (Casey, 2018b, para.3). The Pride Toronto Board knew that there would be those within the LGBTQ2S+ community still resistant to police participation, seeing it as an instance of "pinkwashing" (DeGagne, 2020, p.259).[22] Pinkwashing is a term used by those who see government and corporation attempts to appear pro-LGBTQ2S+ in various ways (including participating in or funding Pride parades) as simply a ploy to distract from their discriminatory and often violent

[22] For more about the politics behind police participation in Pride parades and divisions within the LGBTQ2S+ community on this question see DeGagne (2020).

practices against marginalized communities (DeGagne, 2020). The Pride Toronto Board acknowledged that those who felt this way would likely see approval of the TPS application as "premature" and that not everyone would see the same signs of a "mending relationship" (Casey, 2018b, para.16). The statement went on to say: "we acknowledge and respect those who will find this decision a difficult one" (Casey, 2018b, para.17). The statement was meant to appease those who would be disappointed with a vote that the Pride Toronto Board expected would be close, but positive. However, when it came down to the count, the Pride membership voted 163-161 to indefinitely ban uniformed officers from participating in the event (Casey, 2019a).

While many of the discussions between Pride Toronto and the TPS took place behind closed doors, the issue of police participation in the Pride parade garnered considerable public attention and media coverage. Both sides were eager to make their positions clear in an effort to reach some sort of compromise. This feature of the dialogue between Pride Toronto and TPS affords an opportunity to examine in depth how the TPS positioned itself vis-à-vis the LGBTQ2S+ community and the approach the organization took in trying to respond to the criticisms leveled against the TPS.

Findings

Eager to manage the negative attention that the abrupt and dramatic halt to a highly visible and publicized public event focused on the organization, the TPS responded. Their response, at least in connection to the LGBTQ2S+ community, included the following elements:

Committing to Addressing the Problem

Both in the immediate aftermath of the sit-in and through the months and years during which discussions between Pride Toronto and the TPS continued – including the repeated denial

of their applications to join the parade - the TPS was consistent in communicating the message that they understood the basis for the resistance and wanted to work together with the LGBTQ2S+ community to get beyond the impasse. The tone for this response was set at the top. In response to Pride Toronto's request that the TPS withdraw its application to participate in the 2018 Pride parade, Chief Saunders expressed how disappointed he was with the decision but did not push back. "I am conscious of the need to avoid any setback that might undermine the principal objective of coming together and restoring confidence," he said (TPS, 2018d, para.3). Saunders stressed how much the TPS valued its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community and how keen the organization was to demonstrate its commitment to "progress and healing."

> With this very goal in mind, I had hoped to see our civilians and uniformed officers invited back to march in the 2018 Pride Parade. My hope was that it would demonstrate a shared commitment to progress and healing. In particular, I think of the many members of the Toronto Police Service who identify as LGBTQ2S and who wish to meaningfully participate in unity and inclusion. (TPS, 2018d)

It was important to Saunders that officers be allowed to march in uniforms. Parade organizers had no problem with individual officers participating so long as they did not wear their uniforms (Thompson, 2018). At various points in the discussions other options were offered including having only Saunders in uniform (Jones, 2018a) or having uniforms other than their official uniforms (Ling, 2018). But on this point, Saunders stood firm. The uniforms were a visible sign of the TPS presence in the parade and the organization's support for the community. TPS members had to participate as TPS members.

> The importance of inclusion is what defines community safety…Marching in uniform in Pride parade is an important event, not just to show our support for the LGBTQ+ communities, but also to the proud members of the Toronto Police Service ... It really means a lot to us as an organization. (Ngabo, 2018, para.8-9)

In another statement, Saunders said:

> As chief of police, the one thing that I'll never encourage or even remotely optically show

> is that I'm not proud of this uniform…We come as we are, who we are and we should not ever be ashamed of who we are. (Casey, 2019a, para. 8)

Besides pursuing discussions about TPS participation in future Pride parades, Saunders reaffirmed the organization's determination to work on improving relations with the community more generally.

> In light of the concerns expressed in yesterday's letter to me, I will be withdrawing the application we have made to the organizing committee of the Pride Parade. My hope is that this move will be received as a concrete example of the fact that I am listening closely to the community's concerns and I am committed thoroughly to building a better, stronger, relationship between us. Much more work is needed, of course. But hopefully this moment moves us forward in an important way. (TPS, 2018d)

This message of reconciliation was one that Saunders repeated often. A *Toronto Star* reporter wrote the following while reporting on the approval by Pride Toronto for the TPS to apply to march in uniform in the 2019 Pride parade:

> Saunders acknowledged a strain between the community and police but said that the force is dedicated to having the "not necessarily easy conversations" to fix the relationship. (Jones, 2018b, para.17)

At the 2019 Pride flag raising ceremony at police headquarters, Saunders noted that the key to success would be the TPS listening to the LGBTQ2S+ community, and that trust needed to be established to have the conversations that will allow the police to get the work on the relationship right.

> When we talk about the LBGTQ2+ community and the work that has been done, it is safe to say there is a lot more work to do. I know that the keys to our success will be that active listening. If we are going to get it right, it is the ability of continually having those conversations. In order to have them, we have to have that trust. (Fanfair, 2019b, para.6)

The message was echoed by other members of the TPS. Inspector David Rydzik, the officer in charge of the TPS Community Partnerships & Community Engagement Unit, representing the TPS at the Pride flag raising ceremony at Toronto Police headquarters in 2018, underlined how

important it was to the service to create a more inclusive, collaborative, and transparent partnership.

> Those partnerships, admittedly, have been challenged in the past few months, but we are very grateful for those who are willing to come to the table, with mutual trust and respect, to make things better between the service and the community. (Fanfair, 2018e, para.11-12)

Danielle Bottineau, LGBTQ liaison officer for the TPS made the following statement:

> What we need to do is take ownership of our mistakes and move forward from there and get better at our connection with the community…. All I can ask is that the community is open to us. (CBC News, 2018, para.18-20)

These comments displayed an acknowledgement of the strain that existed between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community. They also provided a basis for the TPS to project the image of a service that accepted public criticism directed at its practices and was dedicated to building stronger relationships with the community. The TPS took ownership for its past mistakes and adopted a forward-looking stance. In Saunders' words:

> We needed to figure out how to move forward. We're not going to get policing proper unless we establish relationships…. This is just a start to a much longer journey. We're not where we need to be yet but as chief, I promise you the Toronto Police Service will do anything and everything we can to get to where we need to be. (Casey, 2018b, para.6)

The approach taken by TPS stood out when contrasted with the position taken by others. Mike McCormack, President of the TPA, which represents rank and file officers in the TPS, was incensed by Pride Toronto's decision to sign the agreement in 2016 that banned police officers from marching in future parades.[23] "Shame on Pride organizers" was the message tweeted by the

[23] There is a good example here of a point I stressed in my introduction about the parameters I have drawn around my analysis. While my focus is on the TPS, the TPS is not the only organization that represents and speaks for Toronto police officers. A separate paper can be written, for example, comparing the presentational strategies adopted by the TPS to those employed by the Toronto Police Association. There is also the question about how rank-and-file officers felt about the ban and relations with the LGBTQ2S+ community more generally in comparison to the positions taken by the organizations that represented them.

TPA Twitter account (Toronto Police Association [TPA], 2016a). Another tweet posted by the TPA account said: “Pride Toronto [turned] their backs on Toronto police” (TPA, 2016b).

Similarly, Doug Ford, the Premier of the province at the time, refused to march in any future Pride parades unless police officers were included and allowed to march along with others (Gillis, 2019e). Ford did not say much publicly about the reason for his refusal but an easy inference to draw is that he regarded the ban as inappropriate in some way. Reacting to the Premier’s response, Saunders took a more positive stance, showing respect for Pride Toronto’s right to make the decision, and once again putting the emphasis on the TPS’s relationship-building goals.

> I certainly won't let the parade define what our relationship is going to be with the LGBTQ+ community. It is their parade and who they invite and who they don't invite - it really is up to them. (Gillis, 2019e, N.6)

Saunders went on to reiterate that his attention was on bridging the divide between police and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community who were mistrustful of the police.

> We know that there are concerns of trust and accountability and in order for us to be legitimate it has to be a day-by-day process. (Gillis, 2019f, p.GT2)

There was a similar reaction when a private citizen organized an alternative Pride event in 2017 called the First Responders Unity Festival to coincide with the annual Pride parade. The organizer of the event claimed the festival was to allow police and other first responders to celebrate in uniform (Wilson & McLaughlin, 2017). Saunders refused to let officers participate in uniform, calling the alternative event a “distraction” and “reactive” noting that the event “…is a new event and it has come across as a result of the status of the present [situation]…” (Wilson & McLaughlin, 2017, para.16). In his response, Saunders reaffirmed the TPS’s desire to work cooperatively with the LGBTQ2S+ community:

> I believe my men and women understand what the big picture is here…We've all got a lot of growing and developing to do and hopefully at the end of the day, what we will have is an even better relationship than we already have. (Wilson & McLaughlin, 2017, para. 6)

While the TPS could have opted to push back as others did, or at least to simply step back and do nothing, the service chose instead to address the problems directly and frame their responses to the ban around their desire to establish trust and confidence between the service the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Highlighting Record of Institutional Change

In the conversations that continued between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community, the TPS came back repeatedly to how far the service had come in making changes at an institutional level. I described in the earlier background section of this chapter some of the initiatives that the TPS has implemented over the last 20 years. There were repeated references to these initiatives in TPS communications and to other steps the TPS had taken to create a more diverse and inclusive service that reflected the community - the liaison programs, the programs fostering community engagement, the hiring of more members from the LGBTQ2S+ community, the sensitivity training sessions, etc. A 2018 TPSnews.ca post written about a Pride event held at TPS headquarters highlighted how far the service had come since Saunders was first hired 36 years prior:

> When Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders joined the Service 36 years ago, there wasn't a Pride celebration at headquarters. Much has changed in the last three decades, thanks to a community and Service members dedicated to building a positive relationship. (Fanfair, 2018f, para.1)

In 2019, the TPS held a ceremony to mark the Trans Day of Remembrance where Deputy Chief Barbara McLean, an openly gay veteran of the TPS, spoke. In her remarks, McLean emphasized the progress the service had made, while at the same time recognizing there was more to be

done. She said:

> [The ceremony] symbolizes that the narrative around a position in law enforcement for a person in the Trans communities is changing. We serve everybody and welcome everyone, while we know that, not everyone hears that message. (Masterman, 2019b, para.17-18)

At the Pride flag-raising ceremony at police headquarters in 2019, Toronto Police Sergeant Henry Dyck was invited to help raise the flag. Dyck was a 15-year member of the TPS and gay. In an interview after the ceremony, he noted that while there was still work to do, new officers faced a situation very different from what once existed.

> When I started with the Toronto Police Service, we never would have done this…. I'm just so happy that we've progressed a distance down the road. We're not 100 per cent of the way there, we've still got work to do, but we've progressed so far that new officers coming on today don't face that same kind of stigma. (Gillis, 2019f, p.GT2)

Drawing attention to these and other changes sent the message that the service desired to have better relations with the LGBTQ2S+ community and had already taken significant steps to bring that about.

Committing to Greater Efforts

The strategy of highlighting past actions was supported by a third strategy that involved emphasizing that the TPS was willing to go further towards building a more inclusive and diverse service. In the period after the 2016 controversy, the TPS continued the initiatives it had already adopted, pushing many of them with renewed vigor. Both Deputy Chief McLean and the LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer, Danielle Bottineau, were involved in ongoing discussions with representatives of the LGBTQ2S+ community. A TPSnews.ca article noted about these meetings:

> The Service has also continued its face-to-face meetings with community stakeholders. Attended by McLean [Deputy Chief Barbara McLean] and, the meetings have resulted in meaningful and candid conversations that have helped guide the organization. (Fanfair, 2018g, para.16-19)

The service continued to mark Pride month with an annual reception supported financially by the TPSB. These events were prominently covered on the TPS websites and social media, and hashtags meant to show solidarity were used on some of the posts. For example, two of the announcements read:

> Toronto Police Chief's and Toronto Police Services Board's Pride Reception celebrates inclusion. Read Toronto Police website story: tpsnews.ca/stories/2019/0 … #LoveIsLove #PrideMonth #Pride2019 #HappyPride #ProudToBeYourfriend ^sm. (TPS, 2019e).

> It was a party at HQ to celebrate diversity and what brings us together. (TPS, 2019c)

There were also new initiatives. The TPS began publicly observing various key days that held symbolic importance for the LGBTQ+ community, such as the Trans Day of Remembrance starting in 2017 (TPS, 2017b) and the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia starting in 2019 (Masterman, 2019a). In relation specifically to the trans community, the TPS introduced gender-neutral washrooms in its headquarters and developed a crime-reporting guide for the trans community (Park & Levenson, 2018). In the days leading up to the 2019 Toronto Pride parade (July 19-21st), the TPS hosted the World LGBTQ Conference for Criminal Justice Professionals. At this point, it was only the second time the conference had been held.[24] The conference featured workshops, panel discussions, case studies and lectures, all aimed at sharing ideas and best practices about how to foster a stronger relationship between police and LGBTQ2S+ community. Speaking at the conference, Chief Saunders was forward looking in his commitment to doing better:

> Diversity and inclusion are the cornerstone and foundation of policing in this city…. When we look at our agency and we look at the fact we have diversity, we still aren't satisfied with who we are and the importance of continuous learning become so critical for policing in today's environment. (Fanfair, 2019c, para.2-3)

[24] The first World LGBTQ Conference for Criminal Justice Professionals was hosted in Amsterdam in August of 2016 by the Dutch National Police.

Personalizing Inclusivity

While at an organizational level TPS strategies focused on institutional change, the TPS also made strategic use of personalized accounts of individual members of the service. I noted earlier that the TPS members acting as spokespersons or representatives of the service at key events were themselves members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and open about their sexual orientation. Their very presence as TPS members in positions of authority within the organization served as an indication that the service was changing.

There were other ways in which the TPS highlighted the stories and personal lived experiences of many of the individuals who identified as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. The TPSnews.ca website and official TPS social media pages often featured profiles of TPS members describing what it was like to be both a member of the service and a part of the LGBTQ2S+ community. For example, one TPSnews.ca item featured the story of Myles Glazier, the first openly trans individual hired by the service. The piece covered poignantly the challenges Glazier faced dealing with his gender identity and his dream of becoming a police officer.

> The man in the Toronto police uniform staring back at him in the mirror these days is exactly how Myles Glazier always saw himself…But the first openly trans officer to be hired to wear that uniform knows that the journey to get there was not an easy one, and he would not have been able to get there alone. (Masterman, 2019c, para.1-2)

Glazier wrote that he applied to the TPS "believing that if anyone would accept him it would be one of the most diverse cities in the world" (Masterman, 2019c, para.14). He reflected on why it was so important to him to be a police officer:

> I just wanted to help people and thought it was an amazing career…. I want to use this job as a tool to help the trans communities. (Masterman, 2019c, para.15)

During Pride month in 2019, the TPS uploaded a video series on YouTube called #ChatWithTad where Deputy Chief Barbara McLean had fireside chats with Tad Milmine, a

police officer with the Calgary Police Service, who, like McLean is openly gay. While the series focused largely on Milmine's experiences, McLean too was open about her career path through the TPS as a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community. In a video titled, *#ChatWithTad – Being Out and Being Who You Are*¸ McLean tried to dispel the myth that police organizations are hostile to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and stressed the desire of the TPS to reflect in its membership all the communities served by the service.

> I've met people who don't think they can be LGBTQ2S+ and be a member of the police service and that is so far from the truth these days. We want everybody and all their lived experiences because that's what we need to police the cities that we are in […] we need all of everyone's lived experiences, what they bring, because that means that we are serving our communities in the very best way that we can. (TPS, 2019d, 2:12)

McLean's comments echoed the words in a TPS video description used to describe the service:

> The Toronto Police Service believes in being inclusive and having our members bring their lived experiences to the table so we can serve our communities to the best of our abilities. (TPS, 2019d)

These personalized accounts, and many more like them, allowed the TPS to project the image of an organization at least striving for representativeness, diversity, and inclusivity.

Highlighting "Police Work"

A final strategy that the TPS adopted involved highlighting their commitment to ensuring the success of the Pride parade by deploying enough officers to make sure the event unfolded smoothly. Several news sources noted the strong TPS presence at the 2018 parade:

> Although uniformed police officers did not march in the parade, they were on hand as the streets flooded with onlookers. (Alphonso, 2018, para.9)
>
> This will be the second-year uniformed officers have been excluded from the parade, but police will be on hand as the streets are expected to be flooded with as many as a million spectators. (Postmedia Breaking News, 2018d, para.7)

There were similar observations about the 2019 parade:

> Crowds lined more than a dozen downtown blocks of Toronto to revel in the annual Pride

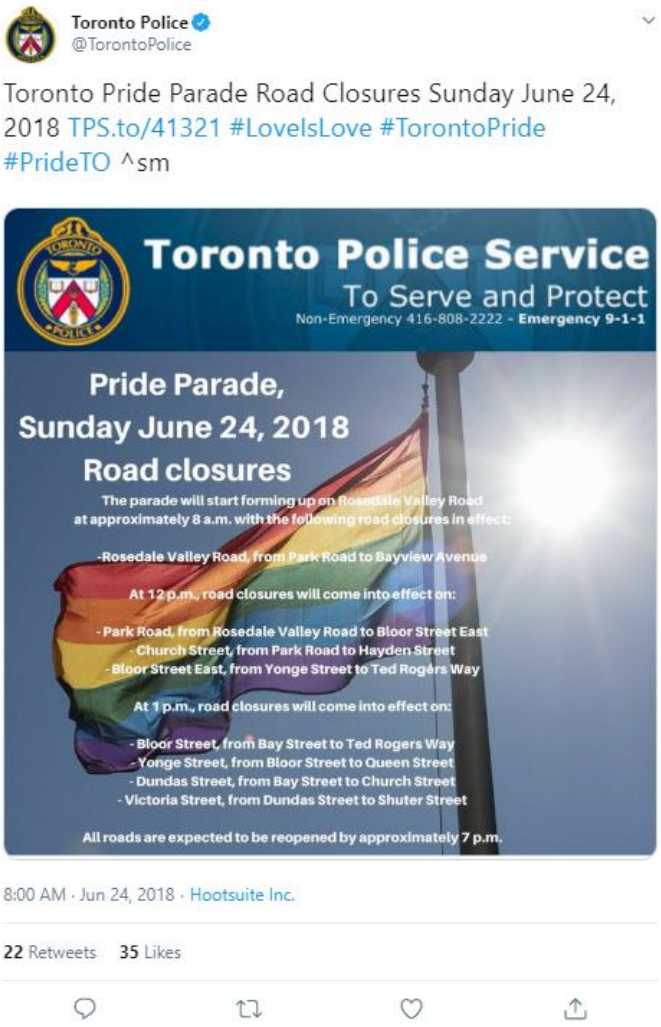
> parade, which featured a noticeable police presence even if Toronto Police Service officers were not invited to march. Police provided security on the edges of the parade route down Yonge Street, which was packed with dancing, flag waving and bead-throwing celebrants. (Friesen, 2019)

The commitment to ensuring the safety of the parade was reflected as well in statements that came out of the TPS. When their 2019 application was turned down, and as the parade date approached, Chief Saunders was quoted as saying:

> My role, my responsibility, it's number 1: Make sure we keep everybody safe, so at the parade, you will see our officers out there, doing what they do best, which is making sure that it is a fun event and that it is also a secure event. (Gillis, 2019e, p.N.6)

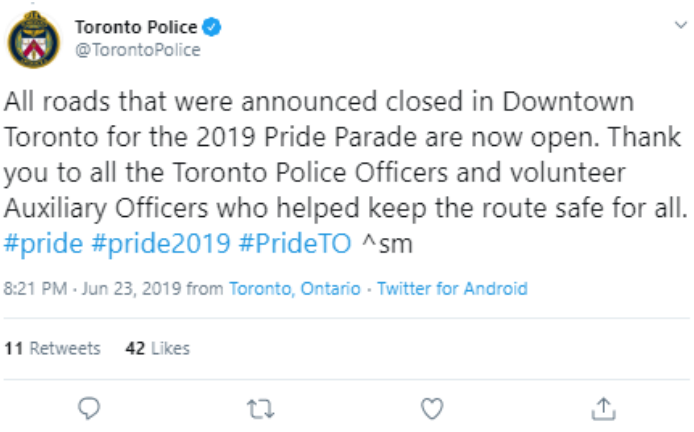
The comment focused not on the controversy but on the role the service would be playing in managing the large public gatherings and ensuring public safety. By shifting the focus and framing their organizational response in terms of the safety and security issue, the TPS projected an image of a service doing its job efficiently and making the welfare of every part of the community it served a priority.

In addition to providing safety measures at the Pride parade, the TPS's Twitter and Facebook pages provided safety information to the public regarding road closures and parade and event routes. The following image captures a 2018 message regarding road closures:



(TPS, 2018h)

Similar messages were seen on TPS social media sites again in 2019:



(TPS, 2019f)

While it may be standard for the TPS to post safety and road closure updates on their social media platforms during large public events, these posts nevertheless helped to reinforce the image of an involved, concerned, and dedicated police organization, as committed to applying its motto "Serve and Protect" to events within the LGBTQ2S+ community as it was to meeting the needs of the larger Toronto community.

Discussion

I started this chapter by suggesting that the case of police participation in the Toronto Pride parade allows for an examination of the strategies police use to negotiate their legitimacy and organizational image with a marginalized community with which they have historically had a problematic relationship. The chapter identified several presentational strategies used by the TPS in the aftermath of the 2016 sit-in that ended TPS participation in the annual Pride parade.

First, the TPS presented itself as an organization committed to addressing problems in the relationship with the city's LGBTQ2S+ community. This involved acknowledging not only failures of the past, but also the fact that from the perspective of the LGBTQ2S+ community there were ongoing issues that needed to be addressed. The TPS rhetoric after the sit-in repeated several prominent themes including an understanding of why there were tensions in the relationship and so much mistrust of police among members of the LBGTQ2S+ community; an acceptance of responsibility for the problematic relationship; a willingness to talk to representatives of the community and to listen seriously to what they had to say; and a desire to work together with the community to fix the damaged relationship.

Taking this tact immediately separates the TPS from organizations who respond by justifying or excusing (Scott & Lyman, 1968), denying, evading responsibility for, or minimizing the offensiveness of their actions (Benoit, 1997). One might say that the TPS "owned" the

problem from the start and indicated that the organization was ready to face the criticisms head-on. This strategy also separated the TPS from how others (i.e., the TPA and Premier Ford) responded. There was nothing in the TPS response that challenged how activists had framed the sit-in or their justifications for it. On the contrary, the TPS started from a position of acknowledging and accepting that their relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community was fraught, even though it was damaging to the image of the organization.

There were even elements of "mortification" (Benoit, 1997) in the TPS response, in the sense that the organization expressed regret about past actions. This was most evident in Chief Saunders explicitly mentioning the humiliation of Operation Soap in 1981. But there were also tones of mortification in almost any reference TPS statements made to the bathhouse raids of the 1980s, and incidents involving the LGBTQ2S+ community where the police had behaved badly. In fact, one news source described the TPS statements after the sit-in as a "*mea culpa"* response (Warmington, 2016, para.1).

But rather than dwelling on the past, the TPS response tried to shift the focus to the present. The second strategy I discussed was the effort to highlight the many initiatives the TPS has taken since the early 2000s and what the organization saw as a growing record of institutional change. References to these initiatives, particularly those that had to do with community consultation and liaison activities, served to support the message that the TPS was trying to be responsive to the community's needs and win the community's trust. Even though these were references to steps the TPS had already initiated by the time the parade ban was imposed, it is possible to categorize them under what Benoit (1997) would call corrective actions. Corrective actions are an image repair strategy where an organization "promises to correct the problem" for which they are facing criticism (Benoit, 1997, p.181). This can include

actions or commitments “to prevent the recurrence of the offensive act” from taking place in the future (Benoit, 1997, p.181). Drawing attention repeatedly to recent and ongoing steps the TPS was taking in its efforts to repair its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community fits the description of corrective action. In focusing on these actions, the TPS added credence to their claims that they wanted to correct past wrongs and build a more diverse, inclusive, and responsive service that had the confidence of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The third strategy - committing to greater efforts - is a clearer example of corrective action (Benoit 1997). The TPS communicated repeatedly that while the organization had taken what they saw as significant steps in the right direction, they knew that there was still much more to be done. This position was evident in the persistence Chief Saunders demonstrated in continuing the conversation the sit-in had started about what it would take to get the TPS back into the parade. It was clear that the TPS considered the presence of the organization in the Pride parade, in the form of uniformed officers marching or a TPS float, important. TPS participation in a parade that celebrated an accepting and inclusive community gave the organization the kind of visibility it sought. The absence of the TPS, particularly because members of the city’s LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities did not feel safe in the presence of the police, was not a good look for the organization. The TPS was keen to turn this around.

Apart from the negotiations about parade participation, however, the TPS demonstrated an eagerness to do more to address the broader concerns of the LGBTQ2S+ community. The organization ramped up its outreach initiatives and internally, looked for ways to reflect more deeply on how the TPS could improve on the job it was doing. For example, taking on the task of hosting a major international conference (World LGBTQ Conference for Criminal Justice

Professionals), the express purpose of which was to explore ways of better serving the LGBTQ2S+ community, served this purpose.

I described the fourth strategy - having LGBTQ2S+ identifying TPS members share their stories publicly – as a personalizing strategy. This strategy resembles what Schneider (2016a, 2016b) discovered about how individual TPS officers use their department-issued Twitter pages (see Chapter 1). Schneider (2016a, 2016b) observed that the officers he studied made efforts to share personal information about themselves and details about their routines on the job. In doing so, Schneider (2016a, 2016b) argued, they "personalised" the police and projected an image of the police as approachable. My findings show that in the same way, the TPS tried to blunt the image of an organization that oppressed marginalized communities by presenting itself as made up of individuals, many of whom were themselves members of marginalized groups like the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Beyond putting faces to the TPS, the profiles were a demonstration of how successful the TPS was in diversifying the composition of the service. In Chapter 1 I discussed literature that shows that LGBTQ2S+ officers still have varying levels of comfort in disclosing their sexual orientation to their colleagues (Parent & Parent, 2019). This may be as true for the TPS as it is for other policing organizations. The profiles do not speak to this point. But they did show that the TPS had officers among its ranks who identified as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community, were prepared to say so publicly and to share with others how rewarding they were finding their careers with the TPS.

The personalizing strategy also served to subtly challenge, if not break down, the "we/they" divide between the police and the LGBTQ2S+ community. In putting forward the voices and experiences of members of the service who are part of the LGBTQ2S+ community,

the TPS was in effect challenging the narrative of a police service pitted *against* the LGBTQ2S+ community. Instead, the strategy reinforced the image of organizations and individuals working towards the common goal of making the service more responsive to the needs of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The final strategy was the emphasis that the TPS put on "doing what we do best," as Chief Saunders put it (Gillis, 2019e, p.N6). In other words, despite the ban and ongoing tensions, the organization communicated that it would continue to contribute to the success of the parade by providing police services and ensuring that everyone was safe. This theme in the rhetoric of the TPS projected the image of a professional, responsible, and competent organization fulfilling its mandate and doing its best to serve the community, including the LGBTQ2S+ community. In doing so, the TPS affirmed what it saw as one of the central functions of policing – community safety.

Looking at the TPS response more holistically, what stands out is its conciliatory tone and both the direct and indirect emphasis on one resounding theme – corrective action (Benoit, 1997). There was little in the way of push back. The TPS did not criticize the Pride Toronto Board for signing the agreement that allowed the 2016 parade to continue only if the TPS was banned from participating in future parades. Instead, the TPS conceded the Board's right to make that decision. In subsequent years, when they were invited to apply to march in the parade, only to be turned down, they respected the outcome. The emphasis was very much on talking, partnering, and working together with Pride Toronto and the LGBTQ2S+ community to change the dynamic and build trust in the police. The TPS presented itself as a progressive, forward-looking organization that sought a harmonious relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. As

the next chapter will show, this approach differed somewhat from the strategy the TPS adopted in another controversy involving the LGBTQ2S+ community – the Bruce McArthur case.

CHAPTER 5: THE BRUCE MCARTHUR CASE

Introduction

There is a second controversy that presents an opportunity to examine the presentational strategies of the TPS in relation to its troubles with the LGBTQ2S+ community. On January 18, 2018, the TPS arrested and charged Bruce McArthur with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Selim Esen and Andrew Kinsman, two men who went missing in 2017 and had connections to the Village (Fanfair, 2018a). In the following weeks, the TPS laid an additional six first-degree murder charges against McArthur for the deaths of Majeed Kayhan, Dean Lisowick, Soroush Marmudi, Skandaraj Navaratnam, Abdulbasir Faizi, and Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam (Fanfair, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d). The arrest and charges came after years of complaints from members of the LGBTQ2S+ community about a potential serial killer operating and targeting men in the Village. The consistent response on the part of the police was that there was no evidence of a serial killer (Casey & Loriggio, 2019; Rauhala, 2019; TPS, 2017c). The announcement of the arrests confirmed the community's worst fears.

Relations between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community were already tense. In Chapter 4, I analyzed how those tensions came to a head in 2016 over the issue of whether the TPS should be included in the community's annual Pride parade. These debates were ongoing as the McArthur case unfolded, heightening the strain. Questions were raised by residents of the Village and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community about how thoroughly the police had investigated the disappearances and why it took so long to identify McArthur as a suspect, especially since McArthur was known to the TPS (Hamilton Spectator, 2019a, 2019b). There were also questions about why the community's concerns about the missing men and a serial killer operating in the Village had not been taken seriously by police (Hayes, 2019; Rauhala,

2019; Toronto Star, 2019), and charges that the police response demonstrated the systemic bias in the service (Gillis, 2019c; Strange, 2018; Toronto Star, 2019).

This case was different from the Pride parade case in the sense that it focused not generally on the bias in policing when it came to the LGBTQ2S+ community, but specifically on claims of under policing, that is, claims that members of the LGBTQ2S+ community could not trust the TPS to protect them. The case was also different in that the basic competence of the TPS was much more directly called into question. Perhaps this explains why the TPS response in this case had a more varied tone to it.

As this chapter will show, there were certainly expressions of sympathy and sensitivity, and positive overtures to the LGBTQ2S+ community. There was also a demonstrable effort to show that the TPS was committed to seeing the investigation through to its conclusion and providing a full picture of McArthur's crimes. But other strategies were more defensive. The TPS defended their actions in the investigation, attempting to deflect some of the blame for the length of time it took to apprehend McArthur to the community. The TPS also put great effort into demonstrating transparency and showing that the organization was prepared to be held accountable for its actions.

Background

Suspicions about the possibility of a serial killer lurking in the Village first arose as early as 2010. Residents of the Village, walking down Church Street, began noticing posters of missing persons, all of them men, many of them bearded, and many of them racialized individuals (Miller Llana, 2019). Tom Hooper, a York University historian and resident of the area, recalled:

> You would hear people talking about it in the Starbucks, and you'd hear your friends and your neighbors talking about it… It felt like an uncomfortable joke at first. I don't think we were really in a space to believe that this would actually happen in our community." (Miller Llana, 2019, para.8)

Concern in the Village escalated to a point where residents began to change their behaviours. Many carried pepper spray when they went out. Others minimized their outings and informed friends and neighbours when they expected to return (Farzan, 2019). Michele Lenk, another resident of the area, summarized the mood: "people were in fear" (Gillis, 2019a, p.GT1).

It took until November 2012 for the TPS to launch a targeted investigation. By that time, three individuals with connections to the Village had disappeared - Skanda Navaratnam, Abdulbasir Faizi, and Majeed Kayhan. The police probe was named Project Houston (Casey & Loriggio, 2019; Farzan, 2019). When evidence was found that suggested that Skanda Navaratnam might have been murdered, TPS homicide squad investigators joined the Project Houston team, but they stepped off when that evidence proved inconclusive (Gillis, 2018d). After June of 2013, the officers who remained on the project discovered that McArthur had connections to the missing men (Gillis, 2018b; Ling & Ha, 2018). On November 11, 2013, the TPS brought McArthur in for an interview as a witness, and confirmed he knew both Skandaraj Navaratnam and Majeed Kayhan. However, no charges were laid (Gillis, 2018b; Ling & Ha, 2018). With no evidence to tie McArthur to the disappearances, investigators concluded he was not a suspect (Gillis, 2018b). In June of 2014, 18 months after it was first launched and having found nothing concrete, Project Houston was shut down (Strange, 2018).

McArthur came to the attention of the TPS again in 2016, after a man called 911 to report McArthur for trying to strangle him during a sexual encounter (Gillis & Syed, 2018). After the encounter McArthur went to the TPS to provide his account of the incident (Goldfinger & Rodrigues, 2021). In his interview with police McArthur claimed that he and the victim had

known each other for two or three years, and that their numerous sexual interactions in the past had never been problematic. McArthur also claimed that the victim had tried to choke him (Goldfinger & Rodrigues, 2021). Persuaded by McArthur's version of event, the police once again released him without laying charges (Gillis & Syed, 2018).

The list of missing persons connected with the Village grew longer. On April 20, 2017, Selim Esen was reported missing (Fanfair, 2018a). On June 28, 2017, Andrew Kinsman was reported missing (Fanfair, 2018a). These disappearances and the alarms they raised led in August of 2017 to the creation of another task force - this one called Project Prism – to investigate the cases and to see if there were any links to the disappearances investigated by Project Houston (Gillis, 2018d). When McArthur's name emerged once again as a person of interest, police began to focus on him (Gillis, 2018d). But while they collected evidence, TPS Chief Mark Saunders, was still publicly making statements refuting the community's assessment that a serial killer was operating in their midst and targeting men from the community. At a news conference on December 8, 2017, Saunders stated:

> We follow the evidence, and the evidence is telling us that that's not the case right now, so if the evidence changes, if the evidence changes, that's another day but the evidence today tells us that there is not a serial killer based on the evidence involved. (TPS, 2017c, 45:15)

Approximately one month later, on January 18, 2018, Bruce McArthur was arrested and charged with first degree murder in the deaths of Selim Esen and Andrew Kinsman (Fanfair, 2018a). Eleven days later, police charged McArthur with three more counts of first-degree murder, this time in the deaths of Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Marmudi, and Dean Lisowick (Fanfair, 2018b). Eventually, a total of eight charges of first-degree murder were filed against McArthur (Hayes, 2018). On July 29, 2019, McArthur pled guilty to all eight charges (Rankin & Gillis, 2019). The plea meant that there was no public trial (Rankin & Gillis, 2019). On

February 8, 2019, McArthur was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years (Rauhala, 2019). The reaction of family and friends of McArthur's victims shows just how devastating the news was for the LGBTQ2S+ community. Nicole Borthwick, a friend of three of McArthur's victims, commented:

> Having a life sentence isn't enough…This community is broken and it will be broken for a long, long time. (Hamilton Spectator, 2019c, para.33)

Gab Laurence, who knew some of the victims through working at a local community group, stated:

> Ultimately, there is really no sentence that is going to bring peace to the losses that occurred in the community. So it's really a bittersweet ending for everyone. (Hamilton Spectator, 2019c, para.35)

After the McArthur arrest criticisms levelled against the TPS intensified. There were accusations of incompetence and inefficiency, particularly in relation to missing persons cases. But the more serious charges had to do with how the TPS had ignored the concerns of the LGBTQ2S+ community and how that spoke to how the police were under policing the marginalized communities they had a mandate to serve. Nicki Ward, an LGBTQ2S+ community advocate, suggested that the TPS had been indifferent to what was happening and only acted in the end because of community pressure:

> The fact is the initial investigations only (happened) after constant, a constant outcry by the community, and at every step of the way, the official TPS position had been to dismiss the concerns of the community as groundless fears. (Blatchford & Faris, 2019, para. 22)

Various community members made similar statements. The following represent only a few of the reactions reported in the media. Michael Reyes commented:

> When you have an entire community of people saying, 'Hey, we noticed this' ... and then police released a statement a few weeks ago saying what we reported at the time was true, it's a little concerning. (Moon, 2018, para.8)

Dave Oh said:

> I'm glad McArthur pleaded guilty, but we have been pleading with police to take our safety concerns seriously while all these men went missing. (Casey & Loriggio, 2019, para.20)

Michael Erickson, co-owner of the Glad Day Bookshop located in the Village, expressed his frustration:

> I think many of us in the LGBT community are experiencing an ongoing disappointment with the Toronto Police Services…It didn't feel like a lot these cases were being taken as seriously or that the response (was) as swift or as quick as it could have been. (Cruickshank & Doherty, 2018, para.5-6)

Alphonso King told an interviewer:

> I don't know what to think of what the police work is at this moment because the community tried to tell them we think it's a serial killer, we think the cases are related, we think that there's a possibility it's all tied to one of these (dating) apps, there has to be a link…And they assured us that there wasn't. (Mandel, 2018, para. 10)

John Allan, King's husband, added more forcefully:

> They flat-out completely dismissed that notion…They guaranteed us the cases weren't related. They guaranteed us there wasn't a serial killer around and that's exactly what it turned out to be. So that's why we're pissed off. (Mandel, 2018, para. 11)

John Thornton, pointed a finger specifically at Chief Saunders:

> Even the chief didn't seem to appreciate what we had to say about a serial killer in our midst. (Casey & Loriggio, 2019, para.22)

The criticisms had to do with more than the McArthur case. There was a strong suggestion of police racism, discrimination, and homophobia in the comments as well. Most of McArthur's victims were racialized men of South Asian or Middle Eastern descent, and either refugees or immigrants. Some victims struggled with substance abuse, and homelessness. A few had not revealed to their families that they were gay (Farzan, 2019; Rauhala, 2019). An editorial in the *Toronto Star* raised the question: "And would [the police's] response have been swifter or more thorough had the victims not been, as they all were, gay or people of colour, homeless or

addicted to drugs?" (Toronto Star, 2018b, para.6).

Some commentaries claimed that it took the disappearance of Andrew Kinsman, a white man, to get the TPS to take the case seriously (Farzan, 2019; Moon, 2018; Paradkar, 2018). An open letter to the TPS from the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention stated:

> It is saddening and unacceptable that it took the disappearance of Andrew Kinsman to reopen public interest in the cases of the missing South Asian and Middle Eastern men. (Paradkar, 2018, para.10)

Andrew Stewart, a resident of the Village, stated "All of a sudden this white guy goes missing, and then (police) start to put out warnings, and get more involved" (Moon, 2018, para.4). An editorial in the Toronto Star emphasized the extent to which the TPS, and police more generally, appeared to have a problem not only with the LGBTQ2S+ community, but with all marginalized communities.

> Canadian police have a history of institutional bias against marginalized communities, including Black people, the LGBTQ community, Indigenous people, and sex workers. The investigation into the disappearance of gay men in the Church and Wellesley area has been an embarrassment and is further proof of the inept leadership of Chief Mark Saunders. (Toronto Star, 2018a, para. 5)

The editorial was particularly hard-hitting because of its targeting of the TPS Chief of Police, Mark Saunders and the description of his leadership as "inept."

Findings

TPS responses to these charges were more varied than the position the organization took in reaction to the Pride parade controversy. While the TPS continued to show that it wanted a better relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community, the organization was not prepared to concede that there were deficiencies in their handling of the investigation.

Displaying Sensitivity

After McArthur was arrested and the grisly details of his crimes came to light, the TPS displayed sensitivity. The organization acknowledged the traumatic impact McArthur's crimes had on the family and friends of his victims, but also on the community. In a statement issued just prior to McArthur's sentencing, Chief Saunders offered sympathetic words:

> First off, our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and family of the men that we lost. The impact of loss of life in this city is something that has tremendous impact on all of us, so we always look to move forward and try to figure out what we need to do to best help in every way. (TPS, 2019b, 00:21)

Beyond words, though, Saunders announced that the TPS was reaching out specifically to the LGBTQ2S+ community with special sessions, the purpose of which was to keep the channels of communication open:

> In addition, a robust community plan has been launched including in-person presentations by Deputy Chief of Police Barbara McLean and LGBTQ liaison officer Danielle Bottineau. It is my hope that such efforts can help to foster closer ties with the community and build an even more constructive relationship going forward. (Saunders, 2018, p.A17)

In her references to the community plan, TPS Communications Manager Meaghan Gray acknowledged openly the trauma that the community was experiencing:

> We are trying to provide as much information as we get it to members of the community without divulging information that might jeopardize the investigation. We know they are struggling, in light of the incident, and we know our relationship has ebbed and flowed over the years with the community. (Park & Levenson, 2018, para.9)

Gray mentioned the fact that the TPS's LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer, Constable Danielle Bottineau, had been asked to connect with the community and to attend the multiple vigils that were held for McArthur's victims (Park & Levenson, 2018). Bottineau herself commented on the heightened outreach efforts that she and her colleagues were engaged in:

> Yeah, we've been doing community consultations with organizations that have invited us into their space. Myself and Deputy Chief McLean have been going in there, and it's not

> about us talking, it's about actually listening to the voices and their needs and their concerns. And we haven't you know, highly published that but the work has been done. We also have the neighbourhood officers in 51 [Division] that have been put into the Village, and they're doing some great work down there and having some conversations with the community. So, there's a few concrete things that have taken place but there's still a lot more to do. (TPS, 2019b, 31:06)

Sensitivity was displayed also by some of the officers involved directly in the McArthur case. On the day McArthur's guilty plea was entered in court, one of the junior investigators, Detective David Dickinson, attended the trial and said:

> It has been a long and traumatic process, and many made the difficult decision to attend in person today. Our thoughts are with the victims, their loved ones, and the community as a whole. (Fanfair, 2019a, para.8)

As the TPS continued to pull together a fuller picture of how McArthur had operated and how he disposed of the bodies of his victims, the *Toronto Star* featured a story about Dickinson and his role in the case. The reporter was accompanying Dickinson as he walked the grounds of a house in Leaside where McArthur had worked as a landscaper and where the remains of several victims were found in planters. The story emphasized how dedicated Dickinson was to the investigation and his motivations for pursuing the facts with such zeal. Dickinson said that he was driven by his compassion for those who knew and loved McArthur's victims. He wanted to give them a sense of closure. The reporter wrote:

> His goal, he said, is just to give answers to the communities involved. He believes that even when the trial is over, there are families of missing folks who will wonder whether Mr. McArthur was involved…"Part of this is humanitarian," he said. He tapped the black-leather folder on the passenger seat, which he kept close at hand as he ventured up and down the ravine throughout the afternoon, saying he'd keep updating his notes until they had explanations. (Gibson, 2018, para.14-15)

Detective Sergeant Hank Idsinga, the lead investigator in the case and head of Project Houston while it was running, was similarly sensitive. At one point in the investigation, the TPS made the unusual decision to release the photo of an unidentified man who appeared to be

deceased. The police had found the image among a cache of photos on McArthur's computer and suspected that the man was one of his victims. Idsinga took great care in setting up the release, explaining slowly and patiently why the TPS was taking this unprecedented step. In doing so, he cautioned the media to be equally mindful:

> I would also ask the media to be mindful that by broadcasting this picture a family member or friend not realizing that their loved one is deceased may come to that realization the moment they view that picture ... we need to put a name to his face and bring closure to this man's loved ones. (Casey, 2018a, p.A7)

Defending the Investigation

Displays of sensitivity notwithstanding, the TPS was not prepared to admit that it had done anything wrong in the handling of the investigation. The organization strenuously defended the work they had done leading up to the apprehension and charging of Bruce McArthur, insisting that they were as thorough as could possibly be expected. Chief Saunders frequently made statements such as the following:

> I can tell you from what I know, things were done properly. (Hamilton Spectator, 2019d, para.25)
>
> This was not a case of police didn't think anything was going on. We knew something stunk and we did everything we could to find it. We just didn't. (Casey, 2019b, p.A5)

As the criticisms persisted, Saunders became more precise, explaining the various steps the TPS had taken and the resources the organization had expended on the investigation:

> As a police service, we put resources into Project Houston - a dozen full-time investigators did thousands of hours of work canvassing the community, posting flyers, issuing news releases, interviewing witnesses, and still those activities did not yield any results. (Goffin, 2018, para.5)

At times, the usually calm and collected Saunders became defensive. Asked by a reporter yet again about whether the TPS had taken the LGBTQ2S+ community's suspicions about a serial killer sufficiently serious, he became testy, saying:

> No, what I said is what I stand by and I'll keep to that, if you want to keep mixing it up you can go ahead. We had put our investigators at the forefront and not only investigators, I put specialized people when we started Project Houston to look at, to work with the community, interview as many people as possible, this was not taken lightly and it's still not taken lightly…. (TPS, 2019b, 7:53)

Others connected to the TPS repeated Saunders' point. At a press conference TPS spokesperson, Meaghan Gray, brought up Project Houston:

> We created that task force so we could dedicate additional resources to help find those men…We took those disappearances very seriously and tried to resolve those cases as quickly as possible. (Park & Levenson, 2018, para. 10-11)

In defending the organization, the TPS stressed how important it was to bring a temporal perspective to the matter, arguing that it was easy to look back and criticize the police after the fact. "Hindsight is always 2020," is how Idsinga put it, adding "but I'm quite content with the job that was done" (Ha & Ling, 2018, p.A4). The suggestion in this statement is that the TPS could only be fairly judged based on what they knew at the time. Saunders said that he welcomed scrutiny of the case and an examination of how the police had acted:

> …so that there is a clear understanding of law, a clear understanding of everything that we had, and the true test is what did we do with the information at the time, and I can tell you what I know and from what I've experienced in this case, things were done properly and the messages that were put out there were accurate in the time. (TPS, 2019b, 7:53)

Saunders expressed confidence that when considered through the lens of what police knew at the time and what the organization was within their rights to do, the service would be vindicated.

Deflecting Blame

The defensive tone in some of Saunders remarks came through as well in his comments about the role that the LGBTQ2S+ community played. Pressed in a *Globe and Mail* interview in February of 2019, Chief Saunders turned the table on those critical of how long it had taken the TPS to make an arrest. He suggested that perhaps McArthur would have been arrested sooner had the public been more cooperative and come forward with information earlier (Ha, 2018a).

Saunders argued that the lack of information provided to police made the investigation more difficult. He went further still in suggesting that the lack of cooperation allowed McArthur to continue victimizing individuals. “If things are not reported, it emboldens the suspect,” Saunders said (Ha, 2018a, para.19). If the community had cooperated, he added, the killings could have been stopped sooner:

> We knew that people were missing, and we knew we didn't have the right answers. But nobody was coming to us with anything. (Ha, 2018a, para.5)

These remarks contrasted sharply with other statements that TPS spokespeople made about the role of the community. In fact, they contrasted with many statements that Chief Saunders himself had made. Shortly after McArthur’s arrest, Chief Saunders acknowledged and thanked the Wellesley-Church community for all their efforts. In the opening remarks of the TPS press conference on the day of McArthur’s arrest Saunders stated:

> …at this time, I want to say a special thanks to the Wellesley-Church community for all their help, their assistance, and their awareness to give us the opportunity to conduct a thorough investigation. It’s their level of cooperation and information sharing that has allowed us to reach this conclusion. (TPS, 2018a, 00:47)

Idsinga publicly thanked by name an activist in the LGBTQ2S+ community who was instrumental in helping to sharpen the picture of the unidentified victim that the TPS circulated.

> The original photograph that we originally released has been further enhanced by a member of the community and we are releasing it today. I would like to thank Nikki Ward for her efforts in enhancing the photograph. Nikki is a very well-known member of the LGBTQ community and has used her experience as a graphic artist to enhance the photograph. (TPS, 2018e, 04:11)

Dickinson stated in the media interviews he gave on the day McArthur entered his guilty plea in court:

> We would not be here if not for the assistance provided during this investigation by all of [the family and friends of the victims]. (Fanfair, 2019a, para.8)

Messages posted on the TPS’s Twitter account emphasized the cooperation between police and

the community in bringing the McArthur case to a resolution was posted. For example, one post read:

> The success of the McArthur investigation was a result of the community working with the police. We will always continue to work on developing our relationships with our communities and make every effort to be as transparent as possible. (TPS, 2019a)

The LGBTQ2S+ community reacted swiftly and with outrage to Saunders' comments. Nicki Ward, the activist Idsinga had expressly thanked for her assistance, pointed out that if individuals in the community had been reluctant to come forward, that reluctance was due in large measure to the mistrust that existed between police and members of the community:

> It's beyond disingenuous.…If you don't have an organic connection with the community, how can you possibly communicate? The barrier is ridiculously high. (Ha, 2018a, para.10)

One member of the LGBTQ2S+ community who spoke at a TPSB meeting accused the TPS of "victim blaming" in suggesting that the community should have done more (Perkel, 2018, p.A9). Another member of the community, Brian De Matos, also spoke during the meeting stating: "You [the police] are not innocent in any of this" (Perkel, 2018, p.A9).

In time, Saunders softened his position somewhat. In an interview with Toronto news channel *CP24*, he repeated his point, though less bluntly and apologized to anyone who might have taken offense at his remarks.

> I don't think there's anything I said about 'civilian fail,' 'community fail' or victim-blaming… [If anything I said was] misconstrued or taken in the wrong context, then I definitely apologize for that. (Poisson & Wallace, 2018, p.A1)

Later still, he hinted that the media had misconstrued his remarks. A reporter who interviewed Saunders in 2020 noted:

> He won't say he was misquoted but is adamant he would never have tried to shift blame onto the victimized community. It's a lie, he insists in uncharacteristically blunt terms. (Perkel, 2020, para. 20)

Demonstrating Accountability

Another strategy in the TPS response to the controversy surrounding the McArthur case was to demonstrate that the organization was prepared to answer for how it handled missing persons cases. The TPS launched its own internal review of missing persons procedures in December of 2017 and displayed enthusiasm for an external review when that was announced a few months later, in March of 2018.

The internal review was launched on Chief Saunders' instructions a month before the McArthur arrest (Goffin, 2018)[25]. In announcing the review, Saunders said: "I do want to make it clear for the record…that I want to take an approach to expedite the findings as soon as possible" (Gillis, 2018a, p.GT1).[26] Despite the strong defense of his organization's handling of the McArthur case after the arrest, prior to the arrest Saunders was prepared to concede that there might be room for improvement in the TPS missing persons procedures:

> In a news conference in December, Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders announced an internal review into the way his service handles missing person reports, acknowledging his officers could have responded better to disappearances and deaths linked to the Village. (Hayes et al., 2018, p.A1)

According to reports, the TPS was already considering setting up a unit specifically dedicated to handling missing persons rather than having front-line officers handling such investigations (TPS, n.d.-e). But as criticism of the TPS after McArthur's arrest intensified, the TPS fast-tracked their plans (Gillis, 2018c; Masterman, 2018). The creation of the new unit was given considerable media attention, with Saunders anxious to be seen to be acting decisively.

[25] The internal review concerned not only the cases ultimately tied to McArthur, but also the cases of Tess Richey and Alloura Wells. These cases were discussed in Chapter 4. They concerned two women who went missing in 2017 and were later found dead. Both cases strengthened claims of police indifference and ineptitude in how the cases were handled.

[26] The internal review into how the TPS handled missing persons cases ordered by Chief Saunders cannot be found published online as of July 2022.

Noting that there were about 3,300 such cases currently in the TPS files, both historic cases and new reports, Chief Saunders said: “This is an area where action need not – and should not – await additional consideration” (Saunders, 2018, p.A17). Many of the members of the service assigned to the unit made similar statements publicly. Detective Sergeant Stacy Gallant, one of the officers charged with heading the unit, explicitly acknowledged the role that the negative media attention played in TPS plans:

> Obviously, there’s a lot of media play on missing people right now and pressure to do things and we’ve recognized the need to step up our game, globally, and making sure that everything is done properly. (Gillis, 2018c, para. 31)

Another TPS member of the newly created unit, Staff Superintendent Myron Demkiw, admitted that while there had been ongoing discussions about the unit, “in 2018 of course, the conversation around that gained greater traction and urgency” (Gillis, 2018c, para. 31). Detective Mary Vruna, also assigned to the unit, made an even more direct link when she said that community feedback had helped to inform the direction of the missing persons unit, and would continue to do so as the unit evolved.

> We are listening to the criticism…and we're going to learn from previous criticism on how to do things better. (Gillis, 2018c, para.36)

The external review was announced by the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), the civilian body that oversees the police (Hamilton Spectator, 2019a) in response to objections largely from the LGBTQ2S+ community that the TPS internal review procedure was inadequate since it amounted to the police essentially reviewing themselves (Gillis, 2018a). The external review was to be conducted by an independent third party. A retired Ontario Court of Appeal judge, Gloria Epstein was appointed to head the committee (Gillis 2019a; Gillis, 2019b). Initially, the committee’s mandate was limited to looking only at how the TPS handles missing persons cases. The committee’s mandate did not include a consideration of the McArthur case

because at that point the investigation had not wrapped up and the case was still before the courts (Warren, 2019). However, once McArthur pleaded guilty, the TPSB expanded the scope of the review to include the McArthur case, and more decisively, to examine "whether systemic bias or discrimination played a role in the investigation of missing persons and whether the current policies and procedures adequately protect against such bias or discrimination" (Warren, 2019, p.GT1).

The announcement of an external review was greeted publicly by the TPS with a forceful statement indicating that the organization agreed that a review was needed. In an opinion piece he wrote for the *Toronto Star*, Chief Saunders (2018) indicated that the TPS intended to cooperate fully. Indeed, he claimed to have himself raised the need for such a review with the mayor and the chair of the TPSB.

> These are legitimate questions and there must be a process to provide the public with clear and accountable answers. Indeed, I first raised the suggestion of an external review in late February with the mayor and the chair of the Toronto Police Services Board because I had personally reached the conclusion that key questions could not be credibly answered without such a process. (Saunders, 2018, p.A17)

Saunders went further in inviting scrutiny into the question of whether there was systemic bias in how the TPS operated, stating that a full and comprehensive review was the only way to assure public confidence.

> I have gone so far as to suggest such a review must consider not only investigative processes but also systemic issues of bias. For all these reasons, I strongly support the motion submitted by Mayor John Tory to be considered at Thursday's meeting of the Police Services Board concerning the need for an independent and external review of matters related to missing persons. I want the community and the public to know that the command leadership of the Toronto Police Service stands firmly behind this push for an external review. (Saunders, 2018, p.A17)

The organization's endorsement of an external review of its actions while it was already making changes to its procedures internally was affirmed in a statement issued by TPS spokesperson, Meaghan Gray:

> The chief has always said we are open to a public inquiry into these investigations and Chief Saunders has already taken steps to consider what areas can be reviewed right now, during the ongoing investigation. (Gray & Ha, 2018, p.A1)

In endorsing the independent review, Saunders made specific reference to community frustrations with the police and framed the review as evidence of the fact that the TPS was listening and prepared to make changes.

> It has become increasingly frustrating for the community to not get the answers they are looking for. I want to provide reassurance that we are taking their concerns seriously, that we see this as an opportunity to improve our police service and build our relationship with the community. (Ha, 2018b, p.A3)

When asked during a TPS news conference about the benefits of a public inquiry Saunders made specific reference to wanting to build bridges with the LGBTQ2S+ community:

> …we have to build relationships, we don't solve crimes without relationships to communities, all communities across the city and the LGBTQ+ community plays a very strong role in the relationship piece with crime solving with all of those things so that is a continuous work that will go and continue regardless of whatever forum, whatever format, we have that public ability or platform to articulate what we did so collectively we all want to get it right, no ifs ands or buts about it, if we can learn from this then we will capitalize on that because I think it's important. (TPS, 2019b, 23:14)

That same theme was reinforced by Constable Danielle Bottineau, the TPS LGBTQ Liaison Officer, who stressed that bridge-building was not her job alone, but a goal for the entire service.

> I think it's important to note that I'm not the only one who has been doing the work out there to build those bridges back. The conversations I've continued, we've acknowledged um, what the community is going through and they are hurting, and they are grieving and hopefully this is this first stepping stone to move forward, not only by themselves but with us. Um, our priority has been the community going through this entire process and we are going to continue to have them as the priority but it's going to take time, right. And we're just going to continue to have those conversations and build bridges. (TPS, 2018c, 30:10)

Displaying An Ongoing Commitment to the Case

If the upshot of the criticisms in the McArthur case was that the TPS had not done enough, the service pushed in the days and months after McArthur's arrest to show that it was following through in a thorough and rigorous way to discover the full extent of McArthur's

crimes. The TPS solicited the public's assistance. A TPS Facebook post announcing the eighth murder charge laid against McArthur included the following information:

> Anyone with information is asked to call the Project Team at 416-808-2021, Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477), online at www.222tips.com, or text TOR and your message to CRIMES (274637). Download the free Crime Stoppers Mobile App on iTunes, Google Play or Blackberry App World. (TPS, 2018f)

The post made clear that the request was targeting the LGBTQ2S+ community specifically in identifying Constable Bottineau as a contact person for anyone interested in the special pamphlet the TPS had prepared about the case:

> The Toronto Police Service has created an information pamphlet for the community. Hard copies can be requested by calling LGBTQ Liaison Officer Constable Danielle Bottineau at 416-808-7263. (TPS, 2018f)

Through this period, the TPS had a high media presence as it reported on and explained developments in the case, often in unusually detailed ways. This included statements about mounting charges against McArthur, the recovery and identification of victims' remains, and the precise techniques and technology police were using to find answers to their questions. Idsinga often served as the face of the TPS at the press conferences. It was Idsinga, who on January 29th, 2018, updated the public on additional charges laid against McArthur:

> On Thursday January the 18th, Mr. McArthur was arrested by members of Project Prism. He was charged with two counts of first-degree murder in relation to Mr. Kinsman and Mr. Esen. Today Mr. McArthur was brought back before the courts, Mr. McArthur has now been charged with an additional three counts of first-degree murder. These new charges are in relation to the murders of Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Mahmudi, and Dean Lisowick. (TPS, 2018c, 03:57)

He made additional announcements on April 11, 2018, when McArthur was charged with murdering Abdulbasir Faizi (TPS, 2018e) and then again, on April 16, 2018, when McArthur was charged with murdering Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam (TPS, 2018g).

Some announcements included details about the human remains that the police had found and identified, and the role played by forensic specialists connected with Ontario Forensic Pathology Services. For example, at the April 11th press conference, Idsinga explained:

> One of the focuses of the investigation has been on human remains found within planters from Mallory Crescent. As I have stated before these remains are of individuals who have been dismembered. They are in various stages of decomposition and doctors from Ontario Forensic Pathology Services have been doing some very difficult and time-consuming work in attempts to reconstruct these remains and identify them. I have previously stated that the remains of at least seven individuals have been located within these planters. The remains of Andrew Kinsman, Soroush Mahmudi, and Skanda Navaratnam, had previously been identified. I can now add that the pathologists have identified the remains of Selim Esen, Dean Lisowick, and Abdulbasir Faizi. At least one set of remains have yet to be identified. And the remains of Majeed Kayhan have not been identified. (TPS, 2018e, 00:47)

Idsinga went to great lengths to highlight just how extensive the investigation was, but also to point out its complexity and the broad range of police resources involved. He shared with the public that the TPS had been in contact with other police departments within Ontario and even internationally to see if McArthur had connections to any cold cases (Postmedia Breaking News, 2018a). Speaking to media outside of the house in Leaside, Idsinga underlined the point that the investigation was "unprecedented" in its scope and magnitude:

> The farm in Fenelon Falls, Ont., where he grew up is not currently of interest…We are definitely going to look at his past and take a look at where he's been and if we can link any outstanding homicides or missing persons to him then we'll pursue that when we get there. (Postmedia Breaking News, 2018a, para.16-17)

Idsinga went on to say that the police planned on combing through "literally hundreds" of missing persons cases in search of potential links to McArthur (thespec.com, 2018, para. 14) and on "any case that may be connected to the Gay Village or the LGBTQ community" (Ha & Ling, 2018, p.A4). Idsinga explained that the TPS was "taking a detailed look at McArthur's extensive digital presence, sifting through devices and social media profiles for evidence" (thespec.com, 2018, para.15). Hundreds of officers were involved in the investigation, Idsinga said, "adding

that cadaver dogs from neighbouring forces had been called in to relieve local canines exhausted from their efforts" (thespec.com, 2018, para.16). McArthur's apartment was being examined: "…inch by inch. Floors, ceilings, walls, furniture, inside furniture, dresser drawers – literally inch by inch" (TPS, 2018e, 16:50). The descriptions evoked a vivid picture of just how exhaustive the investigation into the McArthur case had become.

Demonstrating Transparency

In continuing to pursue the McArthur case, the TPS also attempted to demonstrate transparency. In March of 2018, the organization filed a report with its Professional Standards Unit (Gison, 2019). The Professional Standards Unit investigates cases of both criminal and non-criminal complaints made against members of the organization (TPS, 2009). It is responsible for "promoting and supporting professionalism throughout the organization, which includes practices, conduct, appearance, ethics & integrity of its members to strengthen public confidence, and co-operation within the community" (TPS, n.d.-f, para. 1).

The report was filed by Idsinga, lead investigator in the McArthur case. Idsinga reported that through the course of his work on the case, he came across "concerning information" (Gison, 2019, p.A4). "I saw something I felt needed to be investigated further," he told the *Canadian Press* (Gison, 2019, p.A4). What Idsinga discovered was that a citizen had come forward in 2016 claiming to have been assaulted by McArthur after a sexual encounter with him. A TPS investigator, Sergeant Paul Gauthier, conducted an interview and took a written statement, but failed to follow protocol when he neglected to video record the complainant's statement or take photographs of his injuries (Gillis, 2019c; The Canadian Press, 2019).

It is not clear whether this break in protocol would ultimately have made a difference. The significance lies in the public attention the TPS gave the breach and in the statements

various TPS representatives made about the case. Idsinga was questioned frequently about the matter and always stressed the standards to which the TPS holds itself. Explaining to a reporter what he said to the internal investigators, Idsinga said:

> I think you should take a look at this because we're accountable for what we do…I'm not the one to decide whether mistakes are made or not, but I think it's something that certainly needs to be investigated. (Waterloo Region Record, 2018, p.A3)

In another interview, Idsinga said:

> When I was reviewing some of the files I came across something and said I don't think this has been handled properly… If something comes to my attention where I think things could have been done better - I'll do my best to correct it. (Postmedia Breaking News, 2018b, para.3)

The investigation resulted in a charge of insubordination and neglect of duty at a Toronto police disciplinary tribunal against Gauthier under the Police Services Act[27] (Gillis, 2019c; Gison, 2019). In commenting on the outcome, Chief Saunders stressed the importance that the TPS placed on transparency and emphasized how keen the organization was to have its officers learn from missteps. Describing the tribunal process, Saunders said:

> …it's an opportunity for the officer to explain what he or she did. That's the purpose of a tribunal. I have never ever said that there is an assumption of guilt. It provides the opportunity for the transparency in a forum where you'll be scrutinized to certain questions and say what did you do and what were your responsibilities. And that's it. (TPS, 2019b, 18:36)

Discussion

The findings show that the TPS exhibited a range of strategies in their responses to the controversy created by the Bruce McArthur case, some similar to their responses in the Pride parade case, some different, and not all necessarily consistent with each other. As in the Pride parade case, the TPS did not push back on claims that there was work to be done in overcoming

[27] In 2021, Gauthier was found not guilty of the disciplinary charges of insubordination and neglect of duty by the TPS disciplinary tribunal (Draaisma, 2021).

mistakes of the past and repairing their relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. As in the Pride parade case, the TPS continued to promote an image of itself as an organization keen to be responsive to community needs and strongly committed to building bridges. In acknowledging the trauma the community was experiencing and treading with great sensitivity, the TPS used a strategy of mortification (Benoit, 1997), though in a way that differed from the use of that strategy in the Pride parade case. Benoit (2015) argues that mortification can take one of two forms. The phrase "I'm sorry" - at least in English - has an ambiguous meaning. It can mean "I'm sorry I did this" or "I'm sorry this happened to you" (Benoit, 2015). In the first instance one is accepting responsibility for the action; in the second, the phrase carries no such admission of guilt. These statements often serve the dual purpose of expressing sorrow for the situation that has occurred and to also minimize the organization's responsibility for the wrongdoing that occurred (Hearit, 1994).

In the Pride parade case, the TPS apologized for past actions against the LGBTQ2S+ community. Their apologies were offered in the first sense of the phrase. In the McArthur case, the apologies and expressions of sympathy were offered in the second sense – in recognition of the community's suffering, but with no admission that the TPS was in any way responsible for that suffering because of how the organization had handled the case. The organization would go only so far as to say that they had done the best they could with the information they had. According to Scott and Lyman (1968) this strategy involves an appeal to defeasibility: one acknowledges that harm was done but offers the limitations one was working around as an excuse.

But as the controversy continued, it appears that the TPS decided that the charge that the service had mishandled the investigation because of the systemic bias against the community

was one that the organization could not allow to stand. In fact, the organization was not ready to concede that it had mishandled the case at all. Instead, the organization's leadership defended at every opportunity the steps the TPS had taken, providing the public with detailed chronologies and the particulars of many aspects of the investigation. This was clearly a strategy of denial (Benoit, 1997), a way for the organization to claim that it has "done nothing wrong" (Hearit, 2006, p.124).

In its readiness to defend the service, the TPS was willing to antagonize and even scapegoat the LGBTQ2S+ community, as it did when Chief Saunders suggested that the community bore some responsibility for the lack of progress in the investigation. Scapegoating, according to Scott and Lyman (1968) is an attempt for social actors to "slough off the burden of responsibility for their actions and shift it on to another" (p.50). That Saunders could have made such a statement after the community had been pressing the TPS for years to act on the community's suspicions that a serial killer was on the loose in the Village is an indication of how much the organization felt was at stake. Defending the reputation of the TPS appeared to have taken priority over all other goals.

The differences between the two cases in the overall tone of the response (conciliatory versus defensive) may well have to do with the time frames involved. It is one thing to apologise for actions of the past that involved different circumstances and other players. It is quite another matter to have to account for relatively recent events. In the Pride parade case, the TPS framed its acknowledgement in terms of recognizing mistakes of the past. The organization apologized for those and tried to shift the conversation to what it had done in recent decades and what it was still willing to do to ensure a healthier and more respectful relationship with the LGBTQ2S+

community. In the McArthur case, the TPS was dealing with claims about the current functioning of the TPS, and more specifically about the competence of Chief Saunders himself.

The difference may also be attributable to the fact that the organization's reputation as a police service was on the line. The claims made against the TPS in the McArthur case involved more than how the TPS was policing the LGBTQ2S+ community. They involved charges that the entire community was being ill-served by their police service and that Chief Saunders himself, as head of the organization, was incompetent. If the service had so badly mishandled the McArthur case, how could it be trusted to protect the community? In other words, these claims come closer to what Benford and Hunt (2003) would describe as a threat to the group's collective identity. The claims hit in a fundamental way at who and what the TPS was, prompting the TPS to engage in identity repair work. The organization used what Benford and Hunt (2003) identify as a distancing strategy with respect to the claim that the service was inept.

The TPS's concern with trying to protect an image of the service as competent also explains why the organization put so much energy into informing the public about how they were following up on the McArthur case after the arrest. It was an attempt to counter the claim that the TPS had moved slowly and ineptly in getting to the bottom of missing persons cases. If the criticism was that the TPS had not done enough to apprehend McArthur, it seemed the goal after his arrest became to show that the service was prepared to be exhaustive in their investigation into finding out exactly what had happened to McArthur's victims.

While the intense attention the McArthur case received after his arrest was about demonstrating competence, the launching of the internal review and clear endorsement of the external review were largely about demonstrating accountability. In inviting a thorough investigation into the TPS handling of the McArthur case, Chief Saunders was sending the

message that there was nothing untoward about how the TPS had proceeded.

Similarly, filing a report against Sergeant Paul Gauthier with the Professional Standards Unit was an effort to display transparency. The case, and more specifically, the public way the TPS chose to handle a case that could otherwise have been handled as a private, internal, employer-employee matter, is significant because it communicated that in defending its action in the McArthur case, the TPS had nothing to hide. Where there had been missteps, the message was, individuals within the organization were responsible for those missteps and the organization was ready to hold them accountable. In emphasizing that he acted as soon as he stumbled across the "concerning" information, Idsinga displayed not only how conscientiously he took his job as head of the investigation, but also that the service he represented had been quick to follow up when its policies and procedures had not been properly followed.

The case against Gauthier can also be seen as another effort to scapegoat (Scott & Lyman, 1968). Though the TPS never explicitly asserted that Gauthier was to blame for the length of the investigation, the insinuation was that the TPS might have been able to make vital connections sooner were it not for his failure to follow TPS protocols. After he was found not guilty, Gauthier himself charged that the TPS was making a scapegoat out of him in its effort to cover for other mistakes in the investigation, and to deflect attention away from the controversial remarks that Chief Saunders had made about the role of the LGBTQ2S+ community (CBC News, 2019, para.16). The latter charge is especially ironic in that it describes a strategy of scapegoating in an effort to deflect from a previous strategy of scapegoating gone wrong.

But the strategies the TPS employed in the McArthur case do more than demonstrate presentational or image repair strategies identified in the literature and shed light on the circumstances under which they might be used. My analysis shows that in reacting to the

controversies that threaten their image, organizations will employ strategies fluidly, pivoting from one strategy to another depending on the audience they seek to reach and as cases develop, events unfold, or audiences react to previous efforts to mitigate damage. Eager to defend the integrity, efficiency, professionalism, and trustworthiness of his organization vis-à-vis the public, Chief Saunders used a deflecting strategy. He criticized the LGBTQ2S+ community, arguing that they could have done more to help the police. But at other times, eager to reach out to the LGBTQ2S+ community and to project the image of an organization partnering and working cooperatively with the community, Saunders and other TPS spokespeople commended the community for the part it played in bringing about McArthur's apprehension. In one case, Saunders appeared concerned with the public at large and maintaining public confidence in the efficacy of its police service; in the other Saunders was concerned with containing the damage done to the TPS's relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Moreover, messages need not be consistent, as the example above illustrates. Another example of a contradiction in the TPS stance was its argument that the investigation was in no way mishandled, while at the same time the organization was initiating – and talking publicly about – changes it was making to its missing persons procedures. Why the urgency to make changes when everything had been handled as it should have been? And why discipline one of its officers (Paul Gauthier) if no mistakes had been made? The mixed and conflicting messages once again make sense only when considered through the lens of what the TPS was trying to accomplish. On the one hand, the organization wanted to be seen as competent and capable of doing the job entrusted to it. On the other hand, the organization also wanted to be seen as accountable, self-reflective, and always open to changes that would improve its performance. That the arguments in the McArthur case can be seen as contradictory becomes relevant only if

the audiences for those arguments found the messages contradictory and used that as a basis for challenging the credibility of the TPS. But there is no evidence to suggest that this happened. In other words, no one called the TPS on the contradiction. The lesson here may be that organizations take a risk in making arguments that are not consistent with each other. They open themselves up to accusations that they are cynically saying anything they think will help their cause. But to the extent that their audiences do not make an issue of contradictions, an organization may succeed in getting multiple messages out.

Postscript

The results of Judge Epstein's external review of the TPS did not come out until April of 2021, in the form of a 1,100-page report titled *Missing and Missed – Report of the Independent Civilian Review into Missing Person Investigations* (TPS, n.d.-g). The report concluded that there were serious investigative flaws in how the TPS had handled the McArthur case. Epstein wrote that important earlier opportunities to identify McArthur as the killer had been lost. But Judge Epstein's report also commented on how the TPS relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community factored into events, stating that she believed that systemic bias, discrimination, and differential treatment were involved and that some officers "had misconceptions or stereotypical ideas about the [LGBTQ2] communities" (Westoll, 2021, para.16). The report concluded with 151 recommendations.

By the time the report was published, Chief Saunders had stepped down and had been replaced by Interim Police Chief James Ramer. Reacting at a press conference after the release of the report, Ramer described the shortcomings that Epstein identified as "inexcusable (Brockbank, 2021, para.8). He said he found the report "difficult to read" and "humbling" (CBC News, 2021, 0:04). Ramer went on to say that he regretted the missteps and committed to

implementing as soon as possible all recommendations that the TPS had not already acted upon[28]. Addressing the LGBTQ2S+ community specifically, Ramer said:

> We know that many in Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ communities felt, and still feel, that our communications deepened a sense of mistrust between us. That was not the Service's intention, and we apologize for the anger, hurt and damage that caused. Others have said we were not hearing them, that their fears were not taken seriously and even that they were blamed for the victimization they experienced. None of this is acceptable. None of this should have happened. (Westoll, 2021, para.58)

The statement represents an almost complete reversal in the TPS's previous position. In Ramer's statement there was an acceptance of the criticisms, a complete avowal of responsibility, an expression of mortification in the form of an explicit and fulsome apology, and a commitment to further corrective action. The only defense, or what Scott and Lyman (1968) would classify as an excuse, was the appeal to defeasibility. Appealing to defeasibility, Scott and Lyman (1968) argue, occurs when a social actor "invokes a division in the relation between action and intent, suggesting that the latter are malfunction with respect to knowledge, voluntariness, or state of complete consciousness" (pp.136-137). In his statement, Ramer admitted to the problems with the investigation, but tried to salvage some modicum of face for the TPS by saying that the organization had not acted intentionally. In fact, he noted that this had been Judge Epstein's conclusion as well:

> Although, as Judge Epstein states, the deficiencies were neither overt nor intentional, there were too many times that we did not live up to what is expected, and in some cases required of us to keep you safe and the consequences were grave, affecting lives in the most profound ways. (Westoll, 2021, para.57)

[28] One year after the release of the report, 60 recommendations were in progress, 91 had not been started, and none were fully implemented (CBC News, 2022). As of February 2023, the TPS indicated that 103 recommendations are in progress, 33 have not been started, and 15 have been implemented (TPS,n.d.-d) Updates on the implementations can be found at: https://www.tps.ca/chief/chiefs-office/missing-and-missed-implementation/

This final chapter in the Bruce McArthur case demonstrates even more clearly the fluidity of presentational strategies and the extent to which organizations will pivot and modulate their responses based on changing circumstances and new developments. In discussing denial as an image repair strategy, Benoit (1997) notes that if an organization denies allegations that are later deemed to have been correct, there can be serious repercussions for the organization's credibility. Ramer was put in a difficult situation when the Epstein report was issued. There was little he could do but accept responsibility and show remorse. The TPS dropped all denials and justifications and pivoted entirely to emphasizing corrective action both in terms of changing its missing persons procedures and repairing the damage that had been done in its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

CHAPTER 6: THE BLACK LIVES MATTER CASE

Introduction

On May 27, 2020, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a 29-year-old Afro-Indigenous woman living in Toronto fell to her death from a 24th floor apartment balcony while the TPS were attempting to enter her residence (Gillis, 2020d). It is hard to predict what the public reaction might have been had the incident not occurred two days after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in a grocery store parking lot in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Floyd's violent death sparked a national and global outcry, as protesters in cities across the world condemned police brutality and anti-Black racism (Altman, 2020; BBC, 2020; D'Amore, 2020). As a reporter put it: Korchinski-Paquet's death occurred "amid an international reckoning over policing and race" (Gillis, 2020d, para.2). In Toronto, as elsewhere, Floyd's death brought to a head tension between the police and racialized communities, especially Black communities, that had been building for decades. Korchinski-Paquet's death added fuel to an already raging fire. Entangled with the Korchinski-Paquet case were tensions around how the TPS handled mental health calls, particularly those that involved racialized people.

Thousands of Torontonians took to the streets in the aftermath of the two deaths in marches, demonstrations, and vigils, demanding greater transparency and action against anti-Black police violence (Hayes et al., 2020). Much of this activity was led by Black Lives Matter (BLM) Toronto, a group founded in 2014, after the murder of Michael Brown at the hands of police in Ferguson, Missouri. On June 19, 2020, protesters staged a massive sit-in in front of the TPS headquarters on College St. By the following morning a giant message of DEFUND THE POLICE had been painted in bright pink lettering on the road in front of the TPS headquarters (CBC News, 2020b; Freeman, 2020).

In previous chapters I focused on the TPS response to two controversies concerning the LGBTQ2S+ community. In this chapter, I am interested in how the TPS responded to the public outrage and BLM demonstrations that erupted in the summer of 2020. While the LGBTQ2S+ cases, particularly the McArthur case, dealt largely with under policing, claims in the BLM case dealt with a myriad of issues related to the over policing of racialized communities. But I begin once again by providing some background.

Background

The protests of the summer of 2020 were the culmination of many years of conflict between Toronto's racialized communities and the TPS. In the two decades prior to that summer, tensions galvanized around the police practice of carding and racial profiling (see Chapter 1 for an explanation for the TPS's official carding policy). Controversy around carding dates to the late 1980s when several public inquiries showed that Indigenous people were overrepresented in the criminal justice system (Jones, 2014; Rudin, 2005). The practice came under scrutiny again in 2002 when the *Toronto Star* released the results of its investigation into the practice in a series the paper published called *Singled Out* (Rankin et al., 2002). Following up on that reporting, the *Toronto Star* published two additional series in 2010 and 2012 on TPS carding data titled *Race Matters* and *Known to Police* (Gillis, 2020a). The series reinforced what previous reporting showed, that racialized people were much more likely to be stopped and carded by police than white people (Gillis, 2020a). The 2012 report showed that Black individuals accounted for 25 percent of the cards filled out (of a total of 1.25 million cards) during this time while making up 8.3% of Toronto's population (Rankin & Winsa, 2012a).

Demonstrating the point that Chapter 5 makes about how fluid impression management strategies can be over time, the TPS response to these reports had evolved. Julian Fantino, TPS

Chief when the 2002 report came out, used a strategy of denial (Benoit, 1997), claiming that the TPS did not engage in racial profiling and defending the carding policy as an essential tool for effective policing. “We don’t do profiling at this police service – we never have and we will not do it,” Fantino is reported to have said (Rankin et al., 2002, para.43). Turning then to a “bad apple” strategy, Fantino conceded that a minority of individual officers might be overzealous. “I have never denied that there are instances of inappropriate conduct by a small number of our members, some that have been viewed as discriminatory and racist,” he said (CBC News, 2002, para.9). But he maintained that the relationship between the TPS and racialized communities was good and that “we’re [the two groups] working well” (Rankin et al., 2002, para.19).

Fantino had stepped down by the time the 2012 report came out, replaced as Chief by Bill Blair. Chief Blair took a less definitive approach, a sign perhaps that outright denials no longer worked as a response and that rhetorical adjustments were required. He did not dispute the findings and strongly decried racial profiling, stating: “It’s an abhorrent activity. We do not in any way tolerate it in our organization” (Winsa, 2012, para.14). However, during his tenure Blair did not end carding as a police practice. It was the TPSB, the TPS’s civilian oversight board, that stepped in after the 2012 report was published to push the TPS to at least increase oversight of carding practices (Winsa, 2012). Measures included an independent review of the race-based statistics the TPS collected when stopping citizens, providing citizens stopped by police a copy of the card with the reason they were stopped, a request that Chief Blair report carding statistics, and watching for and addressing any discriminatory practices (Rankin & Winsa, 2012b; Winsa, 2012). Despite the increased oversight, carding continued to generate controversy. Ultimately, the carding issue came to a head in 2017, when the provincial Liberal government, responding to

pressure to do something about the situation, enacted legislation that banned police from conducting random street-checks.

As the debates about racial bias in the TPS unfolded at a public level, tragic incidents involving police encounters with racialized individuals continued to occur with disturbing regularity. Many of them involved cases of individuals experiencing mental health crises. All of them sparked public outrage and mass condemnation. In February 2012, Michael Eligon, a 29-year-old Black man, was fatally shot by a TPS officer on Milverton Blvd. in the east end of Toronto (Kane, 2013). Eligon, still in a hospital gown, had just fled from Toronto East General Hospital where he had been admitted for a mental health assessment (Kane, 2013). He had secured two pairs of scissors and was attempting to enter a home when police caught up with him (CBC News, 2014; Kane, 2013). At the inquest following Eligon's death, evidence was presented that Eligon lived with delusions and depression (Kane, 2013).

In July 2013, 19-year-old Sammy Yatim, a Syrian immigrant, died after he was shot nine times by a TPS officer on an empty TTC streetcar. The incident was recorded on a cell phone by a passerby and the video was later uploaded to YouTube (Mukherjee & Harper, 2018). In 2016, Constable James Forcillo, the TPS officer who shot and killed Yatim, was convicted of attempted murder (CBC News, 2020a).

In July 2015, Andrew Loku, a Sudanese refugee, was shot and killed by a TPS officer in the hallway of his apartment building after he advanced on the officer with a hammer (Fraser, 2017). Loku was living in a unit leased from the Canadian Mental Health Association which provides subsidized housing for individuals experiencing mental health challenges (Gillis, 2017). It was later revealed Loku lived with both depression and post-traumatic stress disorder

connected to the torture and abuse he experienced in Sudan prior to coming to Canada (Fraser, 2017; Gillis, 2017).[29]

The details of George Floyd's brutal death are well known (for an overview, see McKelvey, 2021). The details of the Regis Korchinski-Paquet case briefly are these: On the day of the incident, Korchinski-Paquet's mother and brother, and Korchinski-Paquet herself, had made the calls to the TPS after an altercation between the siblings involving knives (Gillis, 2020d). Several police officers arrived and attempted to keep the two siblings apart in the hallway outside of the apartment. Korchinski-Paquet's mother explained that she wanted Korchinski-Paquet taken to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) (Gillis, 2020d). At one point, Korchinski-Paquet re-entered the apartment to use the washroom (Gillis, 2020d). When she came out of the washroom, and as police began to approach her, she backed out on to the balcony, where she appeared to be attempting to climb on to the neighbouring balcony (Gillis, 2020d). She slipped and fell to her death (Gillis, 2020d).

Apart from the public protests, there was a swift reaction from local politicians to the Korchinski-Paquet and Floyd deaths. Reflecting similar calls elsewhere, two councillors, Josh Matlow and Kristyn Wong-Tam, put forward a motion at Toronto City Council to cut at least 10% from the TPS budget for 2021 (Pagliaro, 2020b). The motion was rejected. The Council voted instead in favour of a series of motions put forth by Mayor John Tory. The changes Tory recommended were a series of reforms, included asking city staff to work with the TPS to establish "alternative models of community safety response," that is, non-police response strategies for calls involving individuals experiencing mental health crises and where no

[29] There have been many more instances of civilian deaths at the hands of police in Toronto. For a fuller list dating back three decades, see Gillis (2020a).

weapons are involved (Pagliaro, 2020a, para.25). Tory also recommended equipping approximately 2,350 TPS officers with body-worn cameras by the fall of 2021 (Gillis, 2020c), making a line-by-line breakdown of the TPS annual budget publicly available (Gray, 2020), and moving faster to fully implement recommendations from past coroner's inquest reports (Gillis, 2020c; Gray, 2020; Pagliaro, 2020a).

The TPSB also reacted with a report that recommended: the immediate expansion of the TPS's Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT) program while the board examined how to create a new response for people experiencing mental health crises; directing the Chief of Police to develop a line-by-line approach to reviewing the budget to look for opportunities for improvement and efficiencies; immediately implementing anti-Black racism training as a permanent part of annual training; looking for ways to make officer misconduct and disciplinary tribunal proceedings more transparent to the public (Gillis & Kopun, 2020).

The reports and recommendations did little to appease community activists. Rodney Diverlus, one of BLM Toronto's cofounders, wrote:

> We as a society have actually over relied on a carceral system to actually fix a lot of our societal issues. We're not targeting poverty. We're actually sending cops just to raid communities. We're not targeting mental health and homelessness. We're actually just using the police as a band-aid solution for these broader societal issues that we know need attention. (Nakhavoly, 2021, para.8)

Sandy Hudson, another cofounder of BLM Toronto, called the report "theatrics" (Gillis & Kopun, 2020, para.15). A tweet on the BLM Toronto Twitter page accused local politicians of moving too slowly:

> Today the TPS and the mayor are getting up in front of the media to tell us that they are responding to our calls by doing more of the same…We demand better. We demand our lives. (Armstrong & Lorinc, 2020, para.4)

A speaker at a town hall that the TPSB hosted (virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic), stated:

> I truly don't understand why we're holding this virtual town-hall meeting when you've all just increased the police budget by $15 million, while we've been chanting to defund the police…Will this meeting actually change anything? Are you finally listening? (White & Hayes, 2020, para.3)

"Defund the police" was a prominent theme in the reaction of the Toronto Police Accountability Coalition as well, a coalition created in 2001 to address issues related to policing in the city. Chris Williams, a member of the coalition, said about the proposed changes:

> Nothing they propose constitutes fundamental change: the police still have all of their money, all of their guns and all of their power. (Gillis & Kopun, 2020, para.3)

John Sewell, another member of the coalition and former mayor of the city, criticized the TPSB for not listening to calls to defund the police, insisting that "if the board was listening…you would have seen that reflected in this report" (Gillis & Kopun, 2020, para.21). Even Jagmeet Singh, leader of the federal New Democratic Party, weighed in, tweeting,

> We need: systemic change, overhaul of use of force, full review of police spending, emphasis on de-escalation, investment in community programs instead of police. (Singh, 2020)

Thus, the TPS found itself at the centre of a maelstrom in the summer of 2020 revolving around the racial bias in its practices. An indicator perhaps of the pressure the organization was under, is the fact that in the middle of the crisis Chief Saunders announced his retirement effective the end of July 2020, just eight months shy of his contract end-date. The Chief cited a typical reason – wanting time with his family (TPS, 2020d). Nevertheless, the timing was odd.

Findings

The TPS adopted several strategies in responding to the BLM protests that occurred during the summer of 2020 including: making use of a strategic messenger; acknowledging the problem of racism and displaying solidarity with the protesters; highlighting the progressiveness

of the TPS and its commitment to transformational change; demonstrating a commitment to transparency; addressing specifically the mental health component of the claims made against the organization; and diffusing the responsibility for bringing about change.

Making Use of a Strategic Messenger

An observation that will become obvious in subsequent sections of this chapter relates to who spoke for the TPS. Most of the statements made during the crisis were made by, or issued through, the office of the Chief of the TPS, Mark Saunders. While he was still in command, Saunders was in a literal sense the face of the service as the organization responded to the BLM controversy. It was typically Saunders who stood at the microphone to make statements and answer questions. He wrote opinion pieces for local newspapers. He participated in numerous interviews with TV reporters and print journalists. Judging simply from the preponderance of Saunders statements and quotes that arose in the data collected about the TPS responses to the BLM controversy, it appears that Saunders played a more prominent role in the response to the crisis than he did in either the Pride Parade or McArthur controversies. For example, during the McArthur investigation many of the statements delivered to the public providing updates on the case were made by individuals from the TPS's homicide unit, Saunders presence was less prominent. For that reason, Saunders' prominence through this period could in and of itself be considered a presentational strategy.

First, in taking the lead Saunders signalled how seriously the TPS was taking the situation. The TPS has a massive Corporate Communications Unit (see Chapter 3 for more about this unit) whose function it is to handle information-sharing with the public. Major incidents demand a statement from top leadership, but Saunders' persistent presence in the media indicated

that BLM crisis was a priority. He was often accompanied at news conferences by members of his command team.

Second, it is not irrelevant that the Chief was Black. Saunders was born in Britain to Jamaican parents (Ross, 2015). His family immigrated to Canada when he was still young. He grew up in Milton, Ontario, one of six children. His father was a metal worker and his mother a nurse's aid. Saunders started his career with the TPS right out of high school, receiving a degree from the University of Guelph-Humber in Justice Studies shortly before becoming chief (Ross, 2015; Slack, 2015). When he was appointed TPS Chief in 2015 – as a 34-year veteran of the service - he became the first Black individual to hold that position and only the second Black individual in Canada to lead a police service (the first being Devon Clunis of the Winnipeg Police Service) (Humber College, n.d.; Slack, 2015; Toronto Metropolitan University, n.d.). Saunders brought impressive credentials to his position,[30] but it would be reasonable to wonder whether his appointment as Chief also reflected a desire on the part of the TPS to appear to be responding to race issues.

What Saunders had to say is important, but his role as messenger was also key. Saunders, who up to this point was said to "give up little of himself" (Perkel, 2020), drew from his own personal experiences as a Black man with children. In a piece he contributed to the *Toronto Star* in June of 2020, Saunders wrote:

> The tragic incidents of the past few weeks, and too many similar incidents in the past, should make all of us angry. I am angry, as a Black man, a father, a husband, a brother, a son and police chief. There are no words to describe the anguish of the lived experiences of some members of our Black, racialized and vulnerable communities. I have experienced it myself. (Saunders, 2020a, para.1)

[30] For a resume see Ross (2015).

In an interview, Saunders admitted:

> When I graduated from my class, I was the only Black person in the class at that time, so that kind of speaks to what the ratio looked like…. At the start, there was some comments that were made (but) my parents taught me that I should never be ashamed of who I am, so I would deal with it right then and there. (Perkel, 2020, para. 5)

Saunders' race allowed him to speak with an authority that a white spokesperson might not have had. The relevance of Saunders' race was acknowledged in the remarks of a Toronto city counsellor when Saunders stepped down:

> What a huge disappointment that Toronto's first Black chief ever is leaving eight months early – just when a bridge is so badly needed between the police force and the black community and their allies who are in motion for change. (Nickle, 2020, para.18)

Apart from his race, Saunders' demeanor might also have played a part in his spearheading the public response. Saunders has been described as "unassuming," "soft-spoken," "low key" and "circumspect" (Ross, 2015, para.9-20). A former partner said of Saunders: "He'll think before he talks" (Ross, 2015, para.40). According to media accounts, his thoughtfulness, innate calmness, and ability to reassure people and put them at ease were among the qualities that got him the job as chief in the first place (Ross, 2015). Those qualities served the TPS well through the first several intense weeks of the BLM crisis.

Finally, there is the fact that Saunders was a sympathetic figure. As a new chief of police and the organization's first Black chief, Saunders attracted a lot of media attention. In the extensive coverage of Saunders' 2015 swearing in, local media shared details of his personal and family history. Two years later, Saunders' personal life once again made news when he had to take a two-month leave for a kidney transplant (Pelley, 2017). The coverage included details about how Saunders had been born with only one functioning kidney and how that kidney was failing. Saunders had spent the previous year going home each night to spend seven hours on a

dialysis machine. When his doctors discovered that his wife Stacey was a match, she donated part of her kidney for the transplant (Pelley, 2017). These rare but poignant glimpses into Saunders' life humanized him in a way that may well have made a difference in how his words were heard. Those who followed the news at least, saw more than a uniform or an official representative of the TPS standing behind the microphone. When Saunders stepped down at the end of July 2020, one of the TPS' deputy chiefs – James Ramer – was appointed as interim chief. Ramer is not a racialized person. In contrast to Saunders, Ramer kept a relatively low public profile as Chief.

Acknowledging Racism and Displaying Solidarity

At the height of the crisis, while public reaction to the deaths of Korchinski-Paquet and Floyd was intense and feelings were running high, the most obvious theme in the TPS response was to acknowledge the community's sense of outrage and validate it by displaying solidarity with those who were calling for change. On June 4, 2020, in the first TPS news conference after the deaths, Chief Saunders started by saying:

> I want to thank the citizens of Toronto and the surrounding areas for the tremendous patience, tolerance, anger, and despair that you've all shown. (TPS, 2020b, 0:00)

He was sympathetic to the mass gatherings, saying he understood what was propelling people to take to the streets. Saunders stressed the idea that the TPS was "listening" and that the organization was determined to address the issues the protesters were raising. "They were there to make a statement," he said. "They wanted to make sure that we heard loud and clear" (TPS, 2020b, 18:42). He reassured them: "We have heard loud and clear," adding: "and we really want to get this right and we want to move forward" (TPS, 2020b, 18:47).

Saunders was quick to acknowledge that racism was as much a problem in Canada as it was in the United States. He validated the lived experiences of racism among Torontonians, including members of his own police service.

> The death of George Floyd at the hands of members of law enforcement has brought these issues into clear view and make no mistake, these sentiments and these lived experiences are experienced by our citizens in Toronto and by our own colleagues here at the Toronto Police Service. This is not an American phenomenon. It is real, it is powerful, and we need to address it. (TPS, 2020c, 0:31)

There was also an acknowledgment in Saunders' remarks that the deaths of Korchinski-Paquet and Floyd had dealt a critical blow to the public trust that he saw as pivotal to the relationship between the police and the communities they serve. He vowed to try to rebuild that trust:

> We will listen, we will continue through words and actions to help restore any public trust that is fractured, especially when it comes to anti-Black racism. (TPS, 2020b, 0:38)

On the same day, the TPS posted a YouTube video titled *Toronto Police Service Chief Mark Saunders on Anti Black Racism*. In one section of the video, Saunders directed his comments to members of his own service, reiterating again how dependent the police are on public trust.

> The Toronto Police Service is about communities, all communities. Their trust is paramount to us. We need it and they need it. Regardless of how they feel about us, when they need help, they call us. They need to know that we are going to be bringing calm to help and to assist people when sometimes they are at their lowest moments. This is the job we are trained to do to help keep our city safe. (TPS, 2020c, 3:28)
>
> …we will work together to learn and to grow and to serve all our communities. (TPS, 2020c, 4:41)

A similar video discussing anti-Black racism featuring Chief Saunders and command members, was posted on the TPS Facebook page, accompanied by the following quote from Saunders:

> We are examining our biases and asking ourselves the difficult questions…. I want you to know that we are listening, discussing, reflecting. We want to learn and understand more so that we can continue to strategize on we can create meaningful and sustainable change. (TPS,

2020f)

These messages were accompanied by two highly symbolic gestures of solidarity with the community. On June 5, 2020, Saunders and his command team met with protestors along Yonge St. and joined them in "taking a knee" (Masterman, 2020a). By this time "taking a knee" had become a powerful symbol of solidarity with those aiming to draw attention to racial bias. A picture of the gesture appeared on TPSnews.ca under a headline that read: "Show of Respect for Peaceful Protests." The following tweet from Saunders accompanied the picture:

> My Command and I met protesters today and we took a knee. We see you and we are listening. The @TorontoPolice fully supports peaceful and safe protests this weekend and always. We have to all stay in this together to make change. #Toronto #PeacefulProtests." (Masterman, 2020a, para. 2-4)

Saunders' message of solidarity was reinforced at other levels in the TPS. Shawna Coxon, Deputy Chief in charge of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Command, made a statement indicating that all rank-and-file members of the TPS were also free to do "take a knee" (Masterman, 2020a, para.5). A journalist called the gesture "a historic moment in Toronto's history" (Warmington, 2020, para.5) adding that it was a day that Toronto police officers decided to be "not just police officers, but active participants in change as well" (Warmington, 2020, para.15). What made the gesture particularly significant is that only a few years earlier, in March of 2016, Saunders had refused to meet with BLM activists at a protest camp they had set up in front of TPS headquarters demanding action in response to the police shooting of Andrew Loku (CBC, 2016).

The second gesture came when Saunders announced that he and his command team had participated in a special training session on anti-Black racism on June 9th, 2020. According to a TPS YouTube video, the session had tackled topics such as "societal and structural effects of anti-Black racism, the Black employee experience, anti-Black racism in the community in its

relation to policing" (TPS, 2020e, 0:36). After the session the Chief and his command team committed to taking eight minutes and 46 seconds each day – the precise amount of time that Derek Chauvin's knee pressed against George Floyd's neck – to reflect on what else the service could do to combat racism. Saunders invited all his officers to do the same.

> Command and I have also taken on this challenge, and I invite each and every one of you to join us. Everyday for the next month we'll be taking eight minute and 46 seconds per day to dedicate to learning about racism and anti-Black racism and to think about how we can address this as individuals as well as leaders. (TPS, 2020e, 7:07)

In the quote above there are indications of the TPS framing of the issue, elements of which appeared in other TPS statements. There is no question but that the TPS took responsibility for racism in policing and within its own ranks. The organization explicitly acknowledged its troubled past with Toronto's racialized communities and accepted the part it had played in generating tensions. Chief Saunders made numerous statements to this effect. At a TPS news conference posted on YouTube at the height of the crisis, Saunders emphasized that the critical first step towards doing something about a problem is to acknowledge the problem:

> … the intersection between anti-Black racism and policing is an on-going issue, but one that I say that we are not shying away from and that we are tackling as an organization. It is extremely important for us to acknowledge it. It will help us serve those communities at this time when it may get harder before it gets better. (TPS, 2020c, 2:55)

But the TPS characterized its own problems with racism as reflective of a more generalized problem of racism within society. In remarking on the historical significance of the moment, Saunders said:

> We are living through a historic period. We are in a moment of time that will change the course of history. Not only our history as members of the Toronto Police Service or law enforcement as a whole but as a society in Canada and North America. Over the last week we have been witness to the angst, the despair and chaos that has happened in the United States. The anger that systemic anti-Black racism, discrimination, and violence often by police has triggered. (TPS, 2020c, 0:00)

In an interview with the *Toronto Star* in his last week as Chief, Saunders was asked if he was worried "that there's ongoing discrimination within the police service" and whether he thought the service was doing enough to address this (Gillis, 2020b, para.19). In response, Saunders admitted to the problems the service had with racialized communities, but also pointed out that policing was not the only institution grappling with racist attitudes and practices. If every other institution exhibited racist biases, how could the police be held to a higher standard?

> Listen, racism is in the world, so for me to say that the police are going to be excluded would be naive on my part, and I've publicly said that it does exist. (Gillis, 2020b, para.20)

The point was a common theme in Saunders' comments. In other statements Saunders said:

> Racism exists in the service as it does elsewhere in society, so it's logical that undercurrents flow through the organization. (Perkel, 2020, para.9)

> There is no mystery to that; it's built in everywhere… We hire from the world, so of course the answer is yes; there's nothing unique to that. (Perkel, 2020, para.10)

That theme was echoed by others in leadership positions within the TPS. At one of the community report back sessions aimed at sharing the TPS's race-based data collection strategy, Deputy Chief Peter Yuen discussed the service's mistakes and its role in perpetuating systemic racism.

> Yes, you know…, every time we speak about race is a very difficult journey, a difficult conversation and this is not something new to policing or to public institutions such as child welfare and education. We should, we've been having conversations for the last 30, 40 years. The public has asked for it and the Toronto Police Service certainly acknowledged that we have not had these honest and candid conversations. So, we, in fact, we're part of the problem causing systemic racism or, to a certain extent. So, this is important for the command, for the chief and the command team. (TPS, 2020s, 1:00:35)

Highlighting Progressiveness and Commitment to Transformational Change

Another key strategy in the TPS response was to attempt to shift the conversation from a troubled past to changes that the TPS was committed to making in the present and future. Saunders stressed the progressiveness of the TPS and its commitment to "transformational

change." That term came out of an initiative that Saunders had introduced in February of 2016 - the Transformational Task Force (TPS, 2017a). The task force was made up of members of the TPS and TPSB, and community members, in equal numbers. The mandate of the task force was to "look beyond the way policing is currently done in Toronto to propose a modernized policing model for the City of Toronto" (TPS, n.d.-j, para.2). The very name of the Task Force was significant in that it suggested the service's commitment to radical change. After a year of extensive consultation with service members, community groups, academic experts, experts in shared services and business leaders with expertise in technology and large-scale change, the Task Force issued its report - titled *The Way Forward* – in January of 2017.

The report's recommendations were broad ranging, but their central thrust had to do with promoting community policing. The report called for a major shift in approach – away from a paramilitary structure towards a model that was intended to close the gap between officers and citizens. The proposal included getting police officers out of their cars and on to the streets. Another recommendation involved having dedicated officers embedded in every neighbourhood, with neighbourhood assignments running for a minimum of three years. An entire chapter was devoted to culture change. The chapter started with the following observation:

> Organizations that continually demonstrate excellence do so first and foremost because of their culture. Some view the Service as already excellent. Some believe it's good but could be better. Others think it's out of touch and systemically biased. Regardless, it must be – and be seen to be – where it is needed most, working in partnerships, and responding to our city's complex needs. It must serve all neighbourhoods and all residents with respect and dignity as expressed in the Ontario Human Rights Code. This includes all marginalized and at-risk populations regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, colour, race, and disability. (TPS, 2017a, p.34)

Another important element of the plan was its accountability features. As the report put it: "what gets measured gets changed" (TPS, 2017a, p.17). The report proposed a modernization scorecard

that required quarterly reporting to the TPSB and both process and outcome measures that would be accessible to the public.

Not all agreed with the new direction recommended[31], but Saunders took great pride in the modernization plan and its emphasis on building community partnerships. In his exit interview with local media, he cited the initiative as something he wanted to be remembered for:

> It was giving the community equal ownership of what the Toronto Police Service should look like. No one has ever done that before and it was one of my most uncomfortable moments of picking a team half of my best players and half of the community, different lenses, different colours, different mindsets, and we built from a blank page. That has never been done before. (TPS, 2020d, 8:52)

Saunders referred to the modernization plan several times during the summer of 2020, using it to demonstrate the TPS's eagerness to make some of the changes protesters were calling for and its innovativeness in that regard:

> This is the only urban city that I can think of in North America that sat down half of the community and half members of the Toronto Police Service from a blank canvas to say "what does Toronto want? What can we do to add value to make sure that we get it right?" (TPS, 2020b, 6:26)

Saunders also made frequent reference to a particular recommendation in the modernization plan that he had implemented. In 2019, he oversaw the setting up of an Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Unit in the TPS. The first of its kind in a Canadian police organization, the unit was "designed to spearhead best practices in community policing to develop a world-class system, culture and practices for a progressive and modern Toronto Police Service" (TPS, n.d.-c, para.1). As Saunders described it, the express purpose of the unit was "to help us to evolve, to strive for bias-free services, and to offer all members guidance to learn and practice diversity and inclusion. (Saunders, 2020a, para.10). The TPS commitment to the work of the unit was reaffirmed when James Ramer took over. At his first press conference Ramer

[31] There was vocal and public resistance to the modernization plan on the part of the TPA, largely because of the anticipated cuts to the TPS budget as a result of a shift to community. For more on this, see Doucette (2018).

identified the work of the unit as a priority and declared: "[We will] continue our commitment to identifying and eliminating systemic issues of anti-Black racism…" (TPS, 2020i, 4:23).

There were other TPS initiatives that Saunders highlighted that summer in response to the protests. He spoke about the TPS's efforts to implement the recommendations of PACER. PACER was an acronym for the Police and Community Engagement Review that took place in 2012 while Bill Blair was the TPS Chief. Precipitated by the carding issue, the review culminated in a report that included 31 recommendations aimed at delivering bias-free policing services (TPS, 2013). Among the recommendations was mandatory training on anti-Black racism and providing police services to Indigenous peoples. "Here at the Toronto Police Service, we are one of the first services to offer [this training]", Saunders pointed out (TPS, 2020c, 1:20). In another statement, Saunders described the newly developed program as "best-in-class."

> We are in year two of a best-in-class training program that goes beyond what most public sector organizations have offered. It was developed with academics, external experts, community partners, and our own members. We are learning what anti-Black racism is, about implicit and explicit bias, and about the experiences that affect the Black community in relation to systemic discrimination and policing. Implicit bias training is mandatory for our officers. (Saunders, 2020a, para.16)

One of Saunders' colleagues, Deputy Chief Peter Yuen, also touted the training program, while discussing training programs related to the RIBDC strategy, at a community meeting:

> We will roll out the training across the entire Service to enable transformation from within," he said. "We have implemented multiple training delivery methods because we know this topic is too important for just online learning. We have delivered technical briefings for those members and supervisors who need to understand the legislative requirements in a deep and meaningful way. We have implemented Indigenous experiences, Anti-Black racism, and implicit bias training into the yearly requirement for all police officers. (Fanfair, 2020d, para.18)

There were references to the TPS's new race and identity-based data collection (RIBDC) strategy. In truth, the initiative came not from the TPS but was mandated from higher up. The strategy had been developed to comply with the *Anti-Racism Act* that the government of Ontario

passed in 2017, requiring all public sector institutions to collect data based on race (TPS, 2020p). But in making reference to the initiative, the TPS presented itself as embracing it fully. The TPS used the new requirement to engage in extensive community consultation. Between October 2019 and February 2020, the TPS became involved in what the organization itself described as the "largest community engagement endeavor ever to raise awareness about this strategy and gather public feedback" (TPS, 2020p, p.5). Engagement opportunities included community engagement sessions, town halls, and focus groups (TPS, 2020p) and included a promise to come back to the community with the outcome of those consultations. That promise was honoured. Through the fall of 2020, the TPS sponsored a series of "report back" sessions with community groups throughout the city. The spirit in which these sessions were offered was captured by Deputy Chief Yuen when he said at one of them: "We're here because we want to get rid of systemic racism in policing" (TPS, 2020r, 14:34). Describing the significance of the data, Saunders said:

> We are collecting and analyzing race-based data and information, including about our public interactions and our members' perceptions of those interactions. We will analyze it to identify systemic racism and trends and to develop mitigation strategies and evolve training. (Saunders, 2020a, para.13)

These were among the initiatives that Saunders was referring to when he was asked at that first press conference after the protests started in the summer of 2020 how the TPS intended to rebuild trust between the service and the Black community. Saunders said:

> We'll do what we continue to do. From the moment I took the seat there are a whole host of things that we have done operationally by enhancing our training not just through the technical and operational perspectives but also understanding the lived experience of all the members of the community, understanding how we add value, if we have better understanding, if we can work compassionately together. (TPS, 2020b, 5:10)

Saunders' basic message was that the TPS was taking the relational problems it had with its racialized communities seriously and was attempting to address it. In this sense, the organization

claimed it was well ahead of other police organizations:

> Are we perfect? No, we are not. Is there room for improvement? Always. There is room for continued learning from our Black and other racialized communities for dialogue and for improvement. (TPS, 2020c, 3:54)

> Well, one of the things that, the more informed the community becomes about the things that we have done, you will see is that our starting point is going to be much higher than other organizations. (TPS, 2020d, 10:54)

Demonstrating a Commitment to Transparency

Another initiative that received focused attention in TPS communications was the service-wide roll out of body cameras for all frontline officers and making the TPS budget available publicly. With respect to body cameras, the TPS committed to a firm deadline, promising to have the roll out completed by the end of 2021. According to Saunders, the initiative was a natural "next step" in a process that the TPS had already started.

> Tackling systemic racism requires a multi-faceted approach… For one thing, police cameras are now ubiquitous in booking halls and cruisers, while officers wear microphones. Body cameras are the next step. (Perkel, 2020, para.10)

Many of his statements emphasized the increased transparency the cameras would provide. Chief Saunders made this comment at one of his news conferences:

> This adds to transparency between police and community and having those body worn will help give an objective account of that situation in those moments and it's critical. (TPS, 2020b, 15:06)

When asked by journalists if the effectiveness of the cameras justified the costs, Saunders brushed the questions aside, emphasizing that in implementing the program the TPS was responding to what the community wanted:

> This is why we've been aggressively looking for and making sure that this is something that's added to this organization from a value perspective, when you listen to the public, when you look at the petitions. This is something that people are demanding have happen. (TPS, 2020b, 17:53)

James Ramer reaffirmed his commitment to the program when he took over after Saunders' resignation. In a 2020 year-end interview with Mark McAllister from *CityNews,* Ramer stated:

> You know what, I think one of the, the major steps we have taken with that is continuing with the body worn camera project. I mean, I think that is the ultimate test really in accountability and transparency. (CityNews, 2020, 2:28)

The same messages were echoed across TPS social media platforms. On Facebook, a post accompanied by two photos of officers wearing the body-worn cameras and a link to a TPSnews.ca story stated:

> Introduction of #bodyworncameras will help strengthen accountability measures for officers; provide unbiased evidence in court and will create savings in time and money in sharing of electronic records rather than paper-based notes http://tpsnews.ca/stori…/…/08/body-worn-cameras-rolling-out/ (TPS, 2020n)

On Twitter, the official TPS twitter account promoted the roll out and re-tweeted Deputy Chief Shauna Coxon who used the hashtags "#transparency" and "#accountability" with an accompanying graphic discussing body worn cameras (TPS, 2020j).

There were multiple posts on YouTube and TPSnews.ca that provided detailed information about how body worn cameras operate and the rules and regulations around their use. A blog post on TPSnews.ca provided information on when a civilian can ask for the camera to be turned off.

> The only time a request to turn off a camera will be actioned is when a police officer has been given permission to enter a private home and the person granting permission makes the request. This can occur before the officer enters the residence or at any time during the officer's presence in the home. (Fanfair, 2020b, para.10)

Multiple short informational videos about the cameras were posted on YouTube with officers discussing the different functional aspects of the camera, such as how the cameras operate, and how the videos are stored. In one video Sergeant O'Brien explains:

> How will the video be stored? At the end of every shift an officer will remove his body worn camera and place it in the upload dock at every police station. The video will then be uploaded to the cloud. The video is secure and cannot be altered or deleted. (TPS, 2020l, 0:00)

Addressing Mental Health Calls

Since many of the cases that the TPS found itself having to answer for involved mental health as well as race, TPS messaging paid particular attention to this aspect of police work. A prominent theme was that these cases had started to constitute an ever-growing proportion of police work and that they were uniquely challenging. The messaging provided information about the training that the TPS provided its officers in de-escalation techniques and emphasized how often these such cases were resolved peacefully. Posts about specific instances of these resolutions began to appear frequently on the service's various social media pages. On Facebook, the TPS posted about a situation where officers engaged in de-escalation while responding to a call involving a man on the street who was armed with a knife. The post encouraged users to click on the links provided in the post to see how the situation unfolded. This incident happened

to be recorded on a cell phone by a bystander. In a rare move, the TPS included a link to the cell phone footage in the bystanders' post.

> What goes through officers' mind when responding to a man armed with a knife in the middle of a busy street?
> Read & watch here: http:/tpsnews.ca/stori... /2020/.../relying-training-disarm-man/
> TL;DR? Watch the original video on Facebook:
> https://www.facebook.com/dino.defrancesco/videos/10207214423194135/... (TPS, 2020g)

On Twitter, the TPS retweeted a post by Kevin Masterman, a TPS media and communication coordinator, who tweeted about the skill and patience TPS officers exhibited while negotiating with an individual in crisis (Masterman, 2020b).

TPSnews.ca featured a story about how a Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT) made up of Constable Paul Regan and mental health nurse, Sivi Joachim, had successfully responded to a call outside of Old City Hall involving an upset woman in possession of a knife (Fanfair,

2020c). In the news story Constable Regan emphasized the role of time, establishing trust, and officer empathy.

> It took us about 25 minutes to gain her trust and our empathy before I was able to get her to put the knife down and slide it over to me… We continued talking to her for about another 20 minutes. Paramedics were called to help support her getting to a hospital for treatment. (Fanfair, 2020c, para.6-7)

The MCIT program was touted in December of 2020 when the TPS held an award ceremony to acknowledge and honour the work done by the crisis intervention teams. Speaking at that ceremony, Deputy Chief Yuen emphasized the important personal qualities MCIT officers need in this line of work.

> We receive over 30,000 personal crisis calls yearly and the MCITs play a critical role. When you look at some of the special qualities of the MCITs, you see they are good at communicating, they show a lot of compassion, and they are very good at de-escalating. These are the things that we as a Service want to achieve and will achieve. (Fanfair, 2020e, para. 5)

At the same time as it promoted the skill and compassion of its MCIT officers, the TPS committed to improving and expanding the program. With reference specifically to the MCIT program, Chief Saunders said:

> We continue to look for best practices around the world, we continue to modify and tweak and add necessary tools on a regular basis, we continue to scrutinize what we can do to get better when it comes to de-escalation. (TPS, 2020a, 11:42)

Within weeks of the summer protests, the TPS announced an expansion of the service with the addition of more MCIT teams and an extension in the hours during which MCIT teams were available to respond to calls. The announcement was made in a post on the TPS Facebook page. It was accompanied by a statement by Deputy Chief Yuen:

> We are planning to expand our Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams in partnership with Toronto hospitals. The program pairs a police officer, with a mental health nurse to help serve people in a mental health crisis in the best way possible, including simply reconnecting them with community resources. It's part of a broader conversation about mental health response. (TPS, 2020o)

The same message was relayed after the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) issued its report on the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet. The Police Service Act requires in any case where an SIU investigation has occurred, that the Chief of Police review the "procedures, policies, governance, and all other relevant matters associated with a case" (Toronto Police Services Board, n.d., para.3). By the time the SIU report came in, Ramer had taken over as interim chief. He was asked for a reaction. Ramer made a statement indicating that the TPS was going to be reaching out to mental health professionals in determining what additional changes the service could make to how it did things.

> And as I indicated earlier for the first time, we're going to look at having a mental health professional work with us on that review to see if with a different lens we can get some recommendations that we, that might help us to do even better in this type of situation in the future. (TPS, 2020m, 8:54)

Diffusing Responsibility for Change

While the TPS presented itself as an organization ready to change, the service also made clear that the problems that the protests were highlighting could not be solved by the police alone. It was in this context that the TPS addressed the demands to defund the police. Saunders said of the term itself [defund the police], that he viewed it "sloganeering in response to complex problems" (Perkel, 2020, para.1). Asked at a news conference if he would be open to having current police funds going towards programming that deals with the "symptoms" of the unrest – poverty, racism, injustice - Saunders took the position that this was something he had always championed, but only once such programs were in place. In the meantime, he stressed, the TPS still bore the burden of dealing with many societal problems and needed the resources required to do so effectively. Responding to a reporter's question, Saunders said:

> When we talk about the budget right now, Wendy, if you look at the numbers of gun violence that's there, the numbers are high. When we talk about the symptoms, when we talk about mental health, the volumes for every single year for the past 12 years, the

> Toronto Police Service has been the *de facto* go-to, anytime after 4 o'clock until 6 o'clock in the morning. The fact that when we talk about the gun violence and the number of handguns that are here and the number of guns that are being used. Right now, we've got a responsibility, we've got a role, and that role is to keep the community safe. (TPS, 2020b, 12:05)

Saunders went on to say that the entire community had to take collective responsibility for dealing with problems of poverty, racism, and injustice, rather than "dumping" or laying those problems at the feet of the police:

> Now we need other agencies to help offload those responsibilities of helping the at-risk, of helping the high-risk. Then we can start talking about the reduction but until then it would be naïve to reduce police officers who right now, when you look at the numbers versus the calls, we're not near where we need to be as a community and so it is a product that everybody has to be involved in. You can't just dump it in front of the law enforcement and say here deal with it. It has to be dealt with collectively. (TPS, 2020b, 12:05)

Again, during the news conference announcing his retirement, Saunders came back to the demands to cut the police budget. He said that he did not rule out such cuts but emphasized that cuts would simply not work if other community agencies were not in place to take on the functions that the TPS was currently serving:

> When we talk about the taking funds away from, from the law enforcement…um, if we get it right, if we get it right, then there needs to be other agencies that satisfy the needs of the community. In the absence of that, things will not work. It's as simple as that. (TPS, 2020d, 14:07)

As the debate continued, the TPS announced on Twitter the publication of line-by-line budget information in response to requests from the community (TPS, 2020k). But Saunders concentrated on presenting the reality behind the numbers and trying to elicit an understanding of the challenges that the police faced. The police had a mandate to keep the community safe, he stressed. That was their "lane" (TPS, 2020d, 14:28). Saunders pointed out that the TPS responded to over 32,000 mental health calls alone every year (Perkel, 2020). If community agencies were ready to deal with those cases, he said, "that would free up our existing resources

to be more focused on some of the more violent type of offences. [In the absence of community services] we're the only ones that are doing it the vast majority of time" (Perkel, 2020, para.3). Until society found ways, through education, poverty reduction programs and social support programs, to reduce if not eliminate some of the threats, it fell to the police to try to do so, and if that was the case, Saunders concluded, the TPS had to be adequately funded.

> Whether I like it or not, or whether you like it or not, the amount of shootings that are out there are high and the numbers of guns that are out there are high. When we look at all of the various issues across this city, this urban city, and we talk to the symptom and the causes again, we're talking about housing issues, we're talking about economics, we're talking about education, we're talking about schooling, a whole host of things that need to be put in place and it's not just programs, it's the right programs. My stream, my lane, deals with gun violence, deals with street gangs, and right now until that gets under control and there are hardly any programs that speak to high-risk criminality, high-risk symptoms, and so just the cut isn't necessarily the best thing. However there needs to be much fulsome discussion. (TPS, 2020d, 14:28)

At his exit interview, Saunders hinted that in his post-TPS life he would be looking for ways to involve himself in tackling the problem at a broader level, saying:

> I see a lot of young Black boys getting killed by young Black boys. Law enforcement deals with those symptoms and I want to help the cure for the disease. (TPS, 2020d: 6:50)

Saunders remarks on the question of police responsibilities seemed to be trying to evoke an appreciation for what he saw as unreasonable expectations on the part of the public. Police officers were being asked to deal with a myriad of social problems that was really up to the entire community to address.

Discussion

The findings in this chapter offer several important insights into organizational image repair work. The first is that while messaging in times of organizational crisis are important, so too are messengers. Mark Saunders' role as Chief of Police and primary spokesperson for the TPS during the summer of 2020 was far from inconsequential. His race, family background,

history, demeanor, and the details of his personal life all factored into making him a uniquely positioned representative for the service at a critical juncture in its history. In the seminal work in which he first presented his theory of impression management – *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* - Goffman (1959) distinguishes between sign vehicles and sign activities. Sign vehicles are the mechanisms through which social actors present themselves They include use of social settings, appearance, and ways of interacting. "Sign activities" are the verbal and non-verbal cues either given or given off (Goffman, 1959, p.2). Signs that are given are intentional and planned. Signs given off are impressions created based on unintended cues. Applying these concepts at an organizational level, Saunders can be seen as serving as a pivotal sign vehicle in the TPS response.

In terms of the messages themselves, the findings show overall that the TPS was quick to acknowledge the problem of racism, including racism within its own ranks. This position contrasts sharply with what earlier studies have found about police responses to charges of racism. For instance, Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011), writing about anti-Black bias in Canadian policing, wrote: "…allegations of racial bias have, in most cases, been vehemently denied by Canada's major police services" (p.395). Not that much earlier, Tator and Henry (2006), in their book *Racial Profiling in Canada*, devoted an entire chapter to "The Dominant Discourses of White Public Authorities: Narratives of Denial, Deflection, and Oppression." The chapter identified several strategies used by police, public officials and the media in response to the racial profiling problem in Toronto specifically. The discourse denied systemic racism; rationalized the status quo; adopted a rhetoric of reverse discrimination (police were being discriminated against and their efforts disparaged); used a 'political correctness' label to ridicule, discredit and dismiss demands for fairness and equity; and polarized the debate by constructing a

we/they divide – responsible citizens versus the deviant other (Tator & Henry, 2006, pp.123-150). Tator and Henry (2006) concluded that these strategies were the mechanisms by which the police and other public authorities constructed a dominant racialized discourse "to deny that racial profiling of [Black people] takes place and to deflect attention away from the general issue of racism in policing" (p.150). Using Benford and Hunt's (2003) typology, these strategies involve an almost total rejection or denial of the disparaging frames offered by critics and a maligning of those critics and their motives.

None of these strategies were evident in the TPS's responses in the summer of 2020. In Saunders' own words the TPS was "totally in alignment" with the demonstrators' views (Perkel, 2020, para.17). Indeed, in many of its communications that summer, the TPS echoed the very language that protesters were using to frame their claims. The references to "racial bias," "systemic racism," and "systemic discrimination," were frequent and all the more significant given that at about the same time, the head of the RCMP, Commissioner Brenda Lucki, denied even knowing what the terms meant (Beattie, 2020). The highly symbolic gestures of "taking a knee," and committing to devoting eight minutes and 46 seconds (the time Officer Chauvin's knee pressed on George Floyd's neck) a day to reflect on ways to combat racism were also significant.

The difference in findings between the analysis offered in this chapter and previous research may have to do with the currency of this case. It would be nice (though arguably naïve) to think that in the decade or so since Tator and Henry (2006) and Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011) conducted their studies, there is an increased understanding of how racism works, a recognition of its persistent presence in our social institutions and the flourishing of a collective

desire to eliminate the problem. At the very least, the difference may indicate that a rhetoric of outright denial no longer works and will not be tolerated by the public.

Another explanation for the differences is the self-image that the TPS appears to have adopted over the last decade or so as a leader not only in Canada, but North America. The TPS sees itself at the forefront of a movement to rethink policing. The search process that resulted in Saunders' hiring in 2015 had highlighted the fact that the city was looking for a police chief ready to "lead transformation" and "drive change" on two main fronts: the TPS relationship with marginalized and racialized groups and policing costs (CBC, 2015). Change was key to Saunders' brief. When his contract was renewed for a second term in 2019, the TPSB emphasized that it looked forward to seeing Saunders "cement the Toronto Police Service's reputation as a world-class leader in progressive community policing and innovative law enforcement" (Goodfield, 2019, para.6). The Task Force on Transformational Change and the modernization action plan that came out of its deliberations figured prominently in the TPS's response to the BLM protests. To take a position that challenged claims of racism would have been inconsistent with that image and TPS goals.

Rather than denying the claims made against the organization, then, the TPS pivoted to a rhetoric of transformational change, focusing on the recent initiatives they felt demonstrated the organization's commitment to addressing the problem of racism. Like in the Pride parade case and to some extent in the Bruce McArthur case, two of the most significant presentational strategies deployed by the TPS in the summer of 2020 were mortification and corrective action (Benoit, 2015). The TPS went out of its way to reach out to the protesters, acknowledge their anger and despair, and persuade them that the organization was listening. At the same time the TPS drew attention to the many ways in which the organization had diversified and changed, and

to the multiple initiatives it had taken to address racism. The metaphor of a journey was often used to communicate that the service had further to go. Corrective action specific to the protesters' complaints was taken with the expansion of the MCIT units, the development of new training programs and the speedy roll-out of body-worn cameras[32]. The changes the TPS highlighted had many dimensions to them, but the overall thrust of the message was the opposite of what Tator and Henry (2006) found. Rather than constructing a we/they divide, TPS statements signalled a desire to break down that divide, to get police officers out of their cars and on to the streets, to create partnerships and to work collaboratively with community groups to establish priorities and goals.

Their avowals of responsibility notwithstanding, there were also elements of counter attributions and counter prognoses (Benford & Hunt, 2003) in the TPS strategy. As Chapter 2 explains, these counter framing strategies involve responding to antagonists' claims by offering alternative accounts of the etiology of a social problem (counter attributions) which then suggest alternative proposals for solutions (counter prognoses). The TPS was ready to concede that there was a problem of systemic racism in policing, but the organization's statements diffused both its causes and solutions. The TPS took the position that the service was simply a reflection of a broader societal problem and that the solution was a societal or community responsibility. One of the image repair strategies Benoit (1997) described is evasion of responsibility. Organizations can evade responsibility by appealing to defeasibility – alleging "a lack of information about or control over important elements of a situation" (p.180). The TPS did not entirely evade

[32] There is an ongoing debate in the literature about the extent to which body-worn cameras increase accountability or simply give the illusion of greater police accountability (see Lum et al., 2019 for a review). My concern is not so much with this question as it is with how police organizations use the perceived accountability benefits (Babin et al., 2017) to deal with crisis situations such as the one I have analyzed in this chapter.

responsibility, but it did spread responsibility for the problem and its solution around, and in so doing may have been trying to mitigate damage to its organizational reputation.

It was in the context of this framing that the TPS responded to demands to defund the service. The TPS aligned itself with the protesters even on this sensitive question, but with a significant proviso – that any cuts to the TPS budget be implemented only after programs in such areas as poverty reduction, housing, education, and mental health services had been set up to deal with the root causes of many of the problems left for the TPS to handle. Taking this position projected the image of an organization not only willing, but eager to relinquish some of the areas for which it now had responsibility. Saunders' references to "dumping" problems in front of law enforcement have elements of a "condemning the condemner" strategy (Scott & Lyman, 1968) to them, where those accused of wrongdoing respond by turning the tables and making attributions of wrongdoing against their critics. There are also elements of scapegoating (Scott & Lyman, 1968) – not the TPS scapegoating others, but suggesting that the organization was being asked to take the fall for a problem that was a collective responsibility.

At the same time, the disavowal strategy made clear what the TPS did see as the appropriate purview of the police. The upshot of statements about letting go of responsibility for problems that had nothing to do with policing was that the police would be feed up to do what only the police could do – fighting crime, dealing with gun violence and street gangs, and ensuring community safety. For problems that fell into its "lane" (TPS, 2020d, 14:53), the TPS proclaimed its eagerness to take full responsibility, arguing that it would be better able to fulfill the functions required and expected of the organization if it were unburdened of a load that was not for the police to carry. In carefully delineating what constituted *proper* police work, the TPS

defended the need for an effective police service. Framing the discussions of responsibility in this way provided an opportunity for the TPS to further foster legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

Summary

In this dissertation I undertook to study three controversies involving the TPS – the participation of the TPS in Toronto's annual Pride parade, the TPS's investigation of the Bruce McArthur case, and the BLM demonstrations that took place in the summer of 2020 in the aftermath of the violent deaths of Regis Korchinski-Paquet and George Floyd. Each case involved claims made against the organization's record of troubled relationships and questionable policing practices with respect to marginalized and racialized communities that threatened its legitimacy. To date, much of the literature exploring how the police manage their organizational image has focused on the strategies that police organizations and individual officers *generally* employ. There has been less attention given to how police services respond to *specific* controversies as they arise for the organization, or to the similarities and differences in responses across controversies. My concern in each case was with the TPS response to the claims made against the organization and with the repairing and counter framing strategies the service used to mitigate damage to their organizational image. In other words, I was interested in how the TPS managed its appearance in its efforts to foster public trust and repair damage to the legitimacy of the police.

In the Pride parade controversy (Chapter 4), I identified five main strategies. 1) The TPS presented itself as an organization committed to addressing problems in the relationship with the city's LGBTQ2S+ community. This involved acknowledging mistakes of the past, but it also involved validating that the LGBTQ2S+ community's position that there were ongoing issues that needed to be addressed. 2) The organization highlighted the many initiatives the TPS has taken since the early 2000s and what the organization saw as a growing record of institutional change in relation to how it attended to the needs of the LGBTQ2S+ community. 3) The TPS

committed to going further still in making changes they believed would build a more inclusive and diverse service and one that more clearly met the needs of the LGBTQ2S+ community. 4) Using a strategy that I called "personalizing inclusivity," the TPS tried to blunt the image of an organization that oppressed marginalized groups by presenting itself as a service made up of diverse individuals, many of whom were themselves members of marginalized groups like the LGBTQ2S+ community. 5) In spite of the ban on their participation in the Pride parade, the TPS committed itself to contributing to the success of the parade by providing police services and ensuring that everyone was safe. This theme in the rhetoric of the TPS projected the image of a professional, responsible, and competent organization fulfilling its mandate and doing its best to serve the entire community, including those who identified as LGBTQ2S+. It also reinforced the role and need for police in society for public safety, thus creating an opportunity to foster legitimacy for policing in general.

The TPS response in the Bruce McArthur case (Chapter 5) was more complicated as the service was dealing with both a troubled relationship with the community and claims made by the public that specifically targeted the TPS's competence and efficiency as a service. In that case, I identified six main strategies. 1) The TPS did acknowledge how traumatizing the serial killings and the length of time it took to apprehend McArthur were on the LGBTQ2S+ community as well as the family and friends of the victims. They treaded sympathetically, reaching out with displays of concern and renewed commitments to try to improve the organization's relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. But they would not avow the claim that there had been problems with the investigation or apologize for mishandling the case. On the contrary, they 2) defended the investigation, 3) deflected blame, suggesting that with greater cooperation from the LGBTQ2S+ community the case might have been closed sooner, and 4)

demonstrated a readiness to be held accountable for their actions by launching an internal review of missing persons procedures and by cooperating in an external review of their handling of the case. At the same time, they 5) displayed thoroughness and efficiency in following through on the McArthur arrest and 6) found ways to display transparency as the investigation continued.

In the BLM case (Chapter 6), six strategies were identified. 1) I started by focusing not on TPS messaging but on the messenger – Chief Mark Saunders. I suggested that using Saunders - the TPS's first Black Chief of Police - as the primary spokesperson for the TPS can itself be viewed as a strategy. Saunders' presence and position as head of the TPS sent a message about the organization's commitment to diversity. Moreover, as a Black man, Saunders could speak to issues of racism with an authority a white chief might not have had. As for the messaging, the TPS' strategies were more like the Pride parade case than they were to the McArthur case as both the Pride parade and BLM cases mainly focused on the TPS's troubled community relationships. The TPS 2) openly and unequivocally acknowledged racism within the organization, 3) highlighted the organization's progressiveness and commitment to transformational change, 4) demonstrated its commitment to transparency by highlighting the speedy roll-out of the TPS's body-worn camera program, and 5) highlighted their attentiveness to the challenges of mental health calls by discussing de-escalation techniques and expanding the MCIT program.

The chapter also identified a 6th strategy. It also showed that that while the TPS acknowledged the problem of racism in the police service, the organization offered counter frames for both the problem and its solution. The TPS diffused responsibility for racism by projecting an image of itself as merely a microcosm of the larger society of which it was a part. Racism was constructed as a systemic problem plaguing all social institutions. Its solution

required changes at all levels and not simply within the TPS. Particularly in relation to demands that the police budget be cut and that some of the service's responsibilities be offloaded to other community organizations, the TPS positioned itself as in agreement in principle. But the organization rejected that approach as a realistic solution in the present given what citizens currently expect of police. In making the argument, TPS statements went so far as try to evoke sympathy for the police and the overwhelming demands being made of the organization.

However, claims about the problems for which the TPS would not accept total responsibility were framed in terms that reaffirmed where the organization was willing to take responsibility. Part of the vision that the TPS presented for the kind of police service the organization aspired to become include a more circumscribed, but still critical role for police. Only the police could deal effectively with such issues as crime, guns and gun violence, street gangs, and general community safety. This was where there was a legitimate and vital need for an effective police service. The TPS embraced the role, but also argued that the service could do a better job of meeting demands attached to the role if allowed to concentrate its energies in areas that fell within its proper purview. By framing the discussions of responsibility in this way, the TPS created an opportunity to address their role in society and foster legitimacy.

Similarities and Differences in Strategies

The TPS responses were in each case context specific. The organization spoke directly to the claims being made against them. Both the Pride parade case and the BLM case focused on troubled community relationships between the TPS and marginalized and racialized communities, while the Bruce McArthur case focused on both a strained community relationship and police competence. But there were many common themes in TPS messaging across the cases as well as important differences.

Acknowledging a Problematic Past

In each case, the TPS acknowledged the relational problems they had with some of the city's marginalized and racialized communities and expressed regrets. The expressions of regret were most explicit with respect to actions the organization had taken in the past – the bathhouse raids of the 1980s and the high-profile cases of violence against members of Toronto's racialized communities. I suggested in my discussion in Chapter 5, that apologies might be easier for organizations to offer when they relate to actions that have taken place in the past with other players in charge. All the same, the TPS also acknowledged that the tensions were ongoing and needed to be addressed.

Benoit (2015) calls such acknowledgements and expressions of regret a mortification strategy. A mortification strategy contrasts with other routes that organizations can take when they find themselves in the middle of controversies, including outright denial, evasion of responsibility and reducing the offensiveness of their offending actions. Another contributor to image repair theory (Hearit, 2006) notes that organizations will often claim to have done nothing wrong as an image-repair strategy, or opt to simply stay silent and not address criticisms levelled against them in the hope that the issue will go away. Similarly, Benford and Hunt (2003) identify problem denial as one of the strategies groups use when confronting damaging claims made about them or ignoring the claims altogether so as not to legitimize them.

While the TPS took some of these approaches in the past, in each of the controversies I examined in the dissertation the organization rejected them in favour of avowing the relational problems they were experiencing. Hearit (1994) notes that many times corporations will "wait until a public relations problem reaches a "crisis" status before they respond," only addressing the issue "when it becomes clear, for example, that their actions have hurt people, have cut into

profits, or have damaged their carefully crafted images" (p.114). It can be argued that each of the cases I examined did represent such a crisis point for the TPS given the tensions that had been building up historically and that the organization responded to these long-standing issues only when there was an immense amount of public pressure being placed on the institution. Nevertheless, the fulsome acknowledgements and expressions of mortification do stand out in light of past responses.

Committing to Corrective Actions

In explaining mortification strategies, Benoit (2015) notes: "It may be wise to couple this strategy with plans to correct (or prevent recurrence of) the problem, but these strategies can occur independently" (p.26). Corrective actions as a strategy involves "restoring the state of affairs existing before the offensive actions, and/or promising to prevent the recurrence of the offensive act" (Benoit, 1997, p.181). In the three cases the dissertation examined, the TPS used just such a coupling. The organization was eager in each case to shift the debate to corrective actions that the TPS had taken and additional steps the organization was still willing to take to address the concerns of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities.

In the case of the LGBTQ2S+ community, the TPS highlighted their recent record of institutional change – the celebration of Pride events at police headquarters, the establishment of the TPS LGBTQ Community Consultative Committee (CCC), the creation of the CCC bursary program, the creation of a dedicated LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer position, and the public observance of days and events important to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. The persistence of the organization in continually re-applying to join the parade, despite the multiple rejections, signaled the significance the TPS attached to being included. The publication of profiles of members of the service who are part of the LGBTQ2S+ community also sent a

message about the progress the organization was making. The messaging in response to both the Pride parade incident and the Bruce McArthur controversy stressed how important it was to the TPS that confidence in the service be restored, how committed the TPS was to healing the relationship, and how eager the organization was to have the tough conversations that were required.

Listening and talking were important themes in the response to the BLM protests as well. In addition, the TPS highlighted corrective actions such the PACER Report, the RIBDC strategy, the establishment of the Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Unit, the service-wide roll out of body worn cameras for all frontline officers, and the expansion of its MCIT units. Chief Saunders made several references to the TPS modernization plan – *The Way Forward* – citing it as "one of his successes" (Gillis, 2020b, para.9). The plan was presented as a blueprint for the future of policing – an aspirational image of what the TPS was striving to become. As the plan's opening pages note, the TPS's current service model:

> …was designed for a different time and different city, and we have stretched it to the limits of what's possible… The scope and pace of change in Toronto's neighbourhoods and communities have created new demands and pressures on policing. (TPS, 2017a, p.6)

The modernization plan was broad-ranging and addressed more than the organization's troubled relationship with many of the city's marginalized and racialized communities. But those troubled relationships were acknowledged as were their claims about homophobia and racism in the TPS. There was a heavy emphasis on re-building trust with the community, accountability, transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Pushing Back on Claims

The biggest difference between the three cases was in the degree to which the TPS was willing to push back on some of the more specific claims made about the organization, which

then influenced the general tone of the rhetoric. On a continuum of conciliatory to defensive, the Pride parade response came closest to the conciliatory end of the continuum. As Chapter 4 showed, while other authorities in the community (i.e., the mayor and the TPA) were willing to be critical of the Pride parade organizers for banning the TPS, the organization itself took a much softer line and has to this day shown patience as talks about future parade participation continue. Using the conceptual categories that Benoit (1997, 2015) presents in his organizational image repair theory, one can characterize the response as focused on two main themes – mortification (apologizing for past wrongs) and corrective action (making changes).

The BLM response too was largely conciliatory, with Chief Saunders stating at one point that the TPS position was "totally in alignment" with the demonstrators' views (Perkel, 2020, para.17). Where the TPS pushed back in that case was in its reframing of the racism problem within the service. The organization adopted a strategy that Benford and Hunt (2003) describe as counter attribution and counter prognosis. The TPS characterized the service's problem with racism as not unique to the service, but reflective of a broader societal problem (counter attribution), which necessitated changes that went beyond what the organization alone could do to solve the problem (counter prognosis). This strategy had the effect of diffusing, if not entirely deflecting, blame for the problem as well as responsibility for its solution. When the TPS extended that argument to suggest that the organization was carrying the burden of addressing social problems that the broader community had been negligent in tackling (i.e., poverty, homelessness, mental illness), the response bordered on what Scott and Lyman (1968) have called condemning the condemners. Condemning the condemners is a strategy where the aim is to downplay one's own wrongdoing by pointing to the wrongdoing of those who are making accusations (Scott & Lyman, 1968). In calling attention to the ways in which the larger

community had failed to deal with many of the problems which were now overwhelming the TPS, the organization shifted the accusatory light back on the community. There are even ironic hints of scapegoating (Scott & Lyman, 1968) in this argument. That is, the TPS suggested that it was *being* scapegoated by the larger community for a problem that was a collective responsibility.

By far the greatest push back came in the McArthur case, though it is important to note that the resistance was not to the general claim that there were problems between the police and the LGBTQ2S+ community (something the TPS readily acknowledged), but to the specific claim that the service had mishandled the McArthur investigation. There were elements of an excuse – more specifically an appeal to defeasibility Scott and Lyman (1968) - when the TPS defended itself by saying that the investigators had done the best they could with the information that was available to police at the time. But as criticism mounted, the TPS moved to a strategy of outright denial (Scott & Lyman, 1968) – the investigation had not been mishandled. In fact, in its determination to defend itself against the charges of ineptitude, the TPS was willing to sacrifice gains it might have been making in repairing its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community by blaming the delay in capturing McArthur on the lack of cooperation from the community. Chief Saunders was called out on that attempt to scapegoat the community, leading him to walk the charge back to some extent or at least soften his tone and apologize if anyone was offended. But the McArthur case is noteworthy for the defensive position that the TPS took and the acrimony that characterized the exchanges at times between the TPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community. It was also the only time that Chief Saunders was criticized by name for his leadership of the TPS.

Both the differences and similarities in strategy demonstrate that choice of strategy was contingent on several factors including the nature of the claim to which the TPS was responding

(general or specific), the extent to which the TPS's identity and competency as a police service was involved, the audiences the organization was seeking to reach (marginalized or racialized communities or general public), developments in the case, and reactions to previous attempts to mitigate damage.

Contributions

Policing Literature

The dissertation makes multiple contributions. At a substantive level, the analysis adds to an understanding of policing at a critical juncture in its history. The dissertation began by discussing the environment in which police organizations currently find themselves, especially in relation to marginalized and racialized communities. The theme of *fragility* recurs in that literature. Thompson (2005) used the term when describing how social media and the new visibility that it has engendered has put organizations in a position of having to now manage their visibility in circumstances where control over information about them can so easily "slip out of their grasp and can, on occasion, work against them" (p.42). Goldsmith (2005) talks about the fragility of the trust relationships police organizations count on to do their job effectively and how easily those can be destroyed. Dwyer (2014) used the term fragility to describe the historical moment in which police organizations find themselves in their relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ communities (p.159). Progress has been made, Dwyer (2014) concedes, but the relationship is still fragile and can be easily damaged by incidents of questionable police action. I argued in Chapter 1 that the same assessment can be made of the police relationship with racialized communities. The dissertation shows how one police service (the TPS) has attempted to manage these fragile relationships in the face of controversies that threatened their reputation and in so doing, challenged their legitimacy.

Goffman (1967) has written: “When a face has been threatened, face work must be done” (p.27). The TPS’s face work involved adopting a range of presentational strategies aimed at mitigating the damage in each case. Some of those strategies involved messaging that is consistent with Manning’s (1977, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010) findings. Efficiency, competence, and professionalism were prominent themes in the organization’s messaging, though the messaging was tailored to fit the details of the particular controversy to which the TPS was responding. In the Pride parade case, these qualities were projected in how the TPS framed the good job the service had always done in keeping not only the LGBTQ2S+ community, but the massive crowds who normally attended the event, safe and free to enjoy the festivities. The rhetoric highlighted the protective functions of policing over the control functions which was significant given the criticisms it faced about under-serving the LGBTQ2S+ community. In the Bruce McArthur case, the messages about efficiency were more direct and focused specifically on the handling of missing persons cases since it was police competence in that area that critics were challenging. In the BLM case, the TPS touted the training and professionalism of its officers in the handling of mental health issues that were so often involved in the controversial incidents they encountered.

Themes of accountability and transparency were also prominent. In the McArthur case the TPS’s commitment to accountability and transparency were framed concretely in terms of the external review the TPS enthusiastically endorsed and the process it initiated internally to see what changes were required to its missing persons procedures. The service’s commitment to transparency was highlighted in the openness that characterized the ongoing investigation after McArthur’s arrest, with constant updates to the media and special information sessions for the LGBTQ2S+ community, and through the filing of a report for Sergeant Gauthier with the

Professional Standards Unit. In the BLM case, the attention the organization gave its plans to increase the use of body-worn cameras was an effort to demonstrate transparency.

But the strongest themes spoke to TPS regrets about past action and especially the organization's commitment to change. Displays of mortification and statements about corrective action were the dominant strategies employed by the TPS. There was a reaching out to the LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities with messages that unequivocally acknowledged the problematic relations. These messages were sympathetic, apologetic, and conciliatory in tone. There was an emphasis on highlighting the initiatives that the TPS had taken. In the case of the LGBTQ2S+ community, the changes parallel the recommendations that Copple and Dunn (2017) make in their discussion of how police can move beyond symbolic gestures to establish respectful relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ community – the running of community forums, the creation of advisory boards and a stronger and more supportive presence at LGBTQ2S+ communities (see Chapter 1). In the case of racialized communities, the mandatory anti-racism training programs, the collection of race-based data, the report-back sessions and other community engagement efforts got a lot of attention.

So too did the TPS modernization plan – *The Way Forward*. The TPS worked hard to frame the plan as "transformational." The word connotes something beyond simple or ad hoc reforms. Transformation suggests a broader, deeper and more fundamental understanding of the role of police organizations in the community. Transformation lies somewhere between the reform / abolition distinction that tends to frame debates on what to do about policing's legitimacy problem. I have argued that the plan presented an aspirational image of the kind of police service the TPS was seeking to become. Within the plan there was a blueprint for doing policing differently and a re-imagining of the TPS relationship with the city's marginalized and

racialized communities. So, while Manning (1997) may be correct in his view that policing involves an effort to "hold the show together" (p. 4), the kind of messaging police organizations are using to do that may be changing. Messages of efficiency, competence and professionalism are balanced with messages of sensitivity to the unique needs of marginalized and racialized communities and partnerships that break down the "we versus they" divide. The need to create the illusion that the police are always in control that Manning (1997) stresses does not seem to be prominent in this messaging.

To the extent that police services like the TPS are presenting themselves differently, the changes may offer a mirror reflection of what communities expect of their police services. Scott and Lyman (1968) write that accounts are offered with the hope or expectation that they will be honoured. If the point is to "save face" and mitigate damage to one's identity, social actors will offer accounts that they expect have some minimal level of traction with their intended audience. "The socialized person," Scott and Lyman (1968) they note, "learns a repertoire of background expectations that are appropriate for a variety of others" (p.53). Benoit (2015) makes a similar observation when he states:

> I must understand the audience's beliefs about me, as well as the values associated with those beliefs before I have any hope of changing their attitudes to repair my image. It is vital for a persuader to understand the audience. (p.31)

The point is demonstrated even more powerfully in a study that applied Scott and Lyman's typology of accounts to the narratives or "vocabularies of motive" of convicted rapists (Scully & Marolla, 1984). Scully and Marolla's study (1984) identify the excuses and justifications that rapists offered in their efforts to present themselves as non-rapists or ex-rapists. Excuses typically involved being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Among the justifications were such arguments as "women are seductresses," "women say no when they

mean yes," "women eventually relax and enjoy it," and "nice girls don't get raped" (Scully & Marolla, 1984, pp.534-537). Reflecting on their findings, Scully and Marolla (1984) conclude that rapists do not make these accounts up. Given the face work that rapists expect their accounts to do and the response they hope to receive from their audiences, they draw on cultural views about the nature of men and women and on what they call rape myths that exist in society. They write that the accounts "reflect a belief system which has historically victimized women by promulgating the myth that women both enjoy and are responsible for their own rape (Scully & Marolla, 1984, p.542).

In the same way, the TPS constructed responses to the controversies it faced with a certain understanding of what might resonate and what was likely to fall flat with the marginalized and racialized communities involved and the larger public. That the organization did not feel it could ignore the controversies or deny some of the claims that critics were making about the organization suggests that they believed a non-response (ignoring) or negative response (denial) would not be tolerated. The TPS had to respond somehow, and with messages that they believed might have some traction with their intended audiences. If those messages emphasized a professional and competent police service, but also a service that acknowledged its shortcomings, particularly in relation to its marginalized and racialized communities, and aimed at becoming more community-based and prevention-oriented, it was because the TPS anticipated that this is what the community expects of its police service. In this sense, the dissertation's findings indirectly say as much about the public as they do about the TPS. Regardless of how the TPS messages were received, the fact that these were the messages the TPS proffered suggests that the public may indeed be "in motion for change" (Nickle, 2020, para.18).

Organizational Image Management and Image Repair Theory

At a theoretical level, the dissertation adds to the organizational image management literature. Most of the organizational image management literature focuses on case studies of single organizations and single controversies (e.g., Carusone, 2013; Griffin-Padgett & Allison, 2010; Harter et al., 2000). Comparisons are generally across organizations and not intra-organizational (e.g., Benoit, 2015; Caldiero et al., 2009). Moreover, Benoit's (1997, 2015) image repair framework has thus far not been applied to a policing organization. The dissertation establishes that image repair theory can be just as useful in studying how police handle public relations crises as it is in other contexts.

In addition, in focusing on how one organization (the TPS) handled three different controversies the dissertation demonstrates how organizations tailor and modulate their responses to meet the unique circumstances of the different crises they face. In laying down the premises of his image repair theory, Benoit (2015) writes:

> The basic image repair situation is simple: A person or organization accuses another of wrongdoing, and the accused produces a message that attempts to repair that image. However, this basic situation can become more complex… (p. 13)

As complex as single cases may become, there is a whole other level of complexity when one organization is dealing with multiple cases involving multiple audiences. But as I argued above, organizations have the capacity to take into account the unique dimensions of the controversies they are facing, respond swiftly and pivot as contingencies arise.

A notable finding in Chapter 5, concerning the Bruce McArthur case is that messaging need not always be consistent. The TPS characterized the LGBTQ2S+ community as both supportive of its efforts and a hindrance to the investigation because they had not been forthcoming with information. I suggested that the former message was targeting the

LGBTQ2S+ community while the latter seemed directed to the public in general. Another inconsistency in messaging concerned the issue of whether mistakes had been made in the investigation. The TPS denied having made mistakes, but at the same time promoted various changes they were making in their procedures. As far as I determined from the data analyzed for this chapter, in neither case did the inconsistencies become an issue. I acknowledged the riskiness in this strategy, but the findings indicate nevertheless that consistency in messaging may be over-rated.

Another contribution to the organizational literature relates to the findings in Chapter 6 about how pivotal Chief Saunders was to the TPS's presentational efforts in the BLM case. As Chief of Police, Saunders was involved in the response to all three controversies, often speaking on behalf of the TPS. But in the BLM case he had a greater presence and allowed himself to speak personally, often referring to his own experiences with racism. Apart from his race, there were other qualities I argued that made Saunders a particularly effective messenger. The literature on organizational presentational strategies and organizational repair work does not pay much attention to messengers. An exception is Benoit's (2015) discussion of third-party image repair work which looks at the repair work that others will take on (or may be forced into) on behalf of an individual or group. That discussion acknowledges that messengers sometimes matter but does not make the attributes of a messenger as central as it could be. There is room for more targeted research on this question.

A final contribution to this literature lies in the observation that controversies need not be all bad for organizations. The literature on image repair work tends to start from the assumption that the kinds of accusations, criticisms, and challenging claims that necessitate image repair work are, by definition, undesirable developments in the life of an organization. That

controversies can have silver linings to them tends to be overlooked. The TPS probably did not welcome any of the controversies it found itself facing and would have avoided them if possible. Chief Saunders early resignation as the BLM controversy unfolded is an indication of how stressful these situations can be for an organization. On the other hand, in responding to each of the controversies, the TPS was able to highlight the message that the organization was changing and to promote a picture of policing different from what the organization once was. In other words, as important as culture change within the TPS or any police organization might be, it is also important to be able to communicate those culture changes to the public if there is to be greater trust and gains in legitimacy. Each of the controversies the TPS confronted, as stressful, embarrassing, and threatening to its public image as they might have been, resulted in opportunities for the TPS to promote its various initiatives relating to Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities, and more generally, the image of a "transformed" TPS. The TPS case demonstrates that while negative attention and controversies are never good for an organization, they can be turned into opportunities to go beyond repairing an organizational image to presenting an enhanced image of the organization and reaffirming the role for police in contemporary society.

Social Problems Theory

The dissertation also makes contributions to the social problems literature. The police are often the object of claims-making as groups and movements construct "the policing problem" (Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2023, p.3). The dissertation shows that police are not passive players in this "social problems game" (Loseke, 2003, p.20) but active players with moves of their own. Looked at through a constructionist lens, the rhetoric of the TPS can be understood as more than part of its image repair work in the face of controversy. In that rhetoric the TPS

communicated a particular formulation or counter frame for the "policing problem" as it relates to marginalized and racialized groups. The "problem" was typified as one that was serious in the past - with its legacy still affecting the organization in the present – but one that the organization was making incremental progress in addressing. The TPS was typified as an organization that was trying to take a leadership role in redefining what policing in a diverse community could look like, and what the service's roles and responsibilities are. Police officers were typified as professionals doing their best given the overwhelming responsibilities they carried, often with little community support. In responding to calls to slash or eliminate the police budget, the TPS engaged in social problems work, making counter claims in the debate that the BLM movement and the larger police abolitionist movement initiated.

The TPS also implicated itself in the debates about how to construct racism as a problem. Here, the TPS endorsed and promoted the frame constructed by anti-racist activists, a frame that typifies racism as systemic and built into how all of society's institutions function. Endorsing such a frame worked to the organization's advantage in that it allowed the TPS to diffuse some of the criticism directed at police. The "play" involved in this move bears some similarity to a strategy adopted by the father's rights movement. A study by Williams and Williams (1995) demonstrated how the movement strategically adopted (or coopted) an equal rights / liberal feminist /gender neutrality frame to advance its cause in connection with custody disputes. Using these frames, the movement insisted that to make assumptions about mothers being natural caregivers and favouring them in custody disputes discriminates against men. In a similar fashion, the TPS adopted (or coopted) a systemic racism frame to diffuse the police racism problem, arguing that the organization could not be entirely blamed for the problem, nor be expected to address it on its own. There is another example here of the links between counter

framing and rhetorical themes running through broader political discourse in a society that invites further theorizing.

A Synthesis

Finally, the dissertation demonstrates the utility of synthesizing the dramaturgical approaches that have tended to predominate in studies of police impression management strategies (Ericson, 1982, 1989; Manning, 1971, 1977, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010; Mawby, 2001, 2002, 2014) with the emphasis on accounts in the deviance literature (Scott & Lyman, 1968), the image repair approach in the organizational and communications literature (Benoit, 1997, 2015), and social problems theory (Benford & Hunt, 2003). The discussion of these approaches in Chapter 3 showed their complementarity, a natural outcome of the fact that they all build in one way or another on symbolic interactionism and Goffman's (1959, 1963) dramaturgical approach. But there is a siloed quality to research informed by each of these traditions with not much discussion or sharing of insights among those who use them.

It is conceivable that I could have conducted my analysis using any one of the three conceptual typologies I presented in Chapter 3. Each of them would have yielded interesting insights. But using all three allowed me to go further and deeper in my analysis, making links and connections that I might otherwise not have made. Scott and Lyman (1968), for example, were particularly useful in identifying how the TPS rationalized their past actions but would not have allowed me to go into how significant mortification and demonstrations and promises of corrective actions were. Similarly, as useful as Benoit's framework (1997, 2015) was in highlighting the image repair work of the TPS, Benford and Hunt (2003) allowed me to get more into the counter framing aspects of that repair work and to bring identity-related concerns of the TPS into the analysis. Together, they provided a fuller range of presentational and framing

strategies for me to draw from. Having demonstrated how these frameworks can be brought together to produce a richer analysis of the image work that police organizations engage in to build trust, the dissertation has laid the groundwork for thinking more systematically about producing a theoretical synthesis among them.

Police Use of Social Media

The main thrust of the dissertation was not specifically on how police use social media for impression management work, nor on how police interact with the public on social media platforms. Nonetheless, the findings are relevant to recent literature on these topics. O'Connor (2017) and Schneider (2016a, 2016b) found that police use social media to project messages of effectiveness and efficiency and to reinforce positive images of the institution. This was true of the TPS in this study as well. But this study showed how such messages are delivered in the context of specific controversies rather than in the context of routine communications. In other words, while police may routinely use social media platforms to communicate with its various audiences, they also rely on such platforms when confronted with specific crises that challenge the institution.

Kudla and Parnaby (2018) note that in considering police use of social media platforms such as Twitter, it is important to look beyond the messages themselves and look at questions of how often police engage with other users, who they engage with or who they ignore, and what issues they address as well as which they are inclined to ignore. The authors found that the TPS avoided tweeting about socially and politically sensitive topics. Again, those findings may pertain to routine TPS usage of Twitter. My dissertation shows that there was a different response when the TPS was at the centre of socially and politically charged issues to which they

felt they needed to respond. In those instances, they turned to every means at their disposal, including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, to counter the negative messaging they were facing.

Bullock (2018) argues that while social media platforms provide the police with a new platform for promoting their image, it also presents risks in the sense that their messaging may inadvertently undermine the very image they hope to project. This argument echoes a point that Kudla and Parnaby (2018) make in explaining why the TPS generally avoids discussion of sensitive topics on Twitter. They suggest that it is the police's inability to completely control the ensuing conversations and exchanges that inhibits them. However, in the three cases examined in the dissertation the TPS overcame that reluctance suggesting that in crisis situations police organizations may decide that the potential benefits of employing social media to get their messaging and version of events across outweigh the potential risks and unpredictability of social media.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

The introduction to the dissertation presented a number of caveats that spoke to the parameters of this study and the bracketing of questions having to do with 1) whether the TPS rhetoric matched its actions, 2) how the TPS messaging was received by its intended and unintended audiences and 3) how the position of the TPS on the three controversies examined aligned with the position of its rank-and-file members and other police organizations (i.e., the TPA). Each of these areas represents a natural extension of the questions addressed in the dissertation and offers an interesting area for future research.

1. While it is clear that the TPS is trying to project the image of a progressive service, eager to make up for the mistakes of the past with respect to marginalized and racialized

communities and ready to make fundamental changes in its efforts to build trust and maintain its legitimacy, what is actually occurring on the ground is another matter. In Chapter 1 I discussed the view of some researchers that any changes that have been made – both with respect to the LGBTQ2S+ community (Copple & Dunn, 2017) and racialized communities (Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022) - are superficial and largely performative, meant only to give the impression that things are changing. The findings of this study do not speak directly to that issue. But that is a critical question to ask.

2. As noted earlier, Scott and Lyman (1968) point out that to be effective accounts must be honoured by social audiences. The dissertation did not deal directly with how TPS accounts were received, though to the extent that the TPS modulated its messaging in response to public reaction, those reactions became part of the story. It would be useful in future research to look more systematically at the back and forth between the TPS and its various audiences. Such a study would come closer to capturing what Benford and Hunt (2003) call the "interactional dynamics" of rhetorical contests in the public problems marketplace. Benford and Hunt (2003) proved useful in my analysis to describe some of the strategies that the TPS employed, especially in its reframing of police violence and racism as part of a broader societal problem. But my use of their framework was limited in that my interest was on the TPS side of the interaction. Taking a definitional or frame contest approach to the controversies would generate additional insights into the social processes that framing and counter framing involve.

In considering the question of how TPS messaging was received, there is room as well to look more closely over the long term at how this messaging is impacting levels of confidence and trust in the police, especially among those in marginalized and racialized communities. Some of the literature discussed in Chapter 1 documents the more negative perceptions of law

enforcement that exist in LGBTQ2S+ and racialized communities (Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Kelly, 2022; Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Given the way that recent messaging coming out of the TPS differs from the denials of the past, it would be useful to track over time if the messaging is making any difference in these perceptions.

3. There were places in my analysis where I pointed out that TPS messaging diverged from the position taken by the TPA and the views of the organization's rank-and-file members. This was true about police participation in the Pride parade, with the president of the TPA, Mike McCormack, calling the ban shameful and stating that Pride Toronto "[turned] their backs on Toronto police (TPA, 2016a, 2016b), while the TPS accepted and respected the decision. More significantly, it was true for elements of *The Way Forward* modernization plan that Saunders was so proud to bring forward. In that case, Mike McCormack commented on how the community-based, preventative approach had been tried in other jurisdictions, only to result in increased crime levels and reduced public safety (Doucette, 2018). Frontline officers interviewed at the time were also said to be frustrated. "The Way Forward," one of them was reported to have commented, "is more like a road to nowhere" (Doucette, 2018, para.28). A more systematic exploration would likely reveal other differences in views.

The views of frontline officers get into the area of police culture. Chan (1996) defines police culture as "a layer of informal occupational norms and values operating under the apparently rigid hierarchical structure of police organizations" (p.110). Manning (1989) refers to the "accepted practices, rules, and principles of conduct that are situationally applied, and generalized rationales and beliefs" of police officers (p.360). Though there are positive aspects of police culture (e.g., strong sense of mission, solidarity with colleagues, pragmatism), the literature tends to emphasize a view of police culture has a hindrance to reform (Chan, 1996).

The final report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) quotes the adage "organizational culture eats policy for lunch" (p.11), adding: "Any law enforcement organization can make great rules and policies…but if policies conflict with the existing culture, they will not be institutionalized, and behavior will not change (pp.11-12). A question to be asked in this case is how the TPS negotiated any differences in views among its officers and what the organization did to bring its membership on board with the new directions it claimed to be forging.[33]

In addition to these, there are other areas on which future research might focus:

4. A uniquely Goffmanesque question to ask relates to how the TPS arrived at its decisions to pursue certain strategies in its responses and emphasize certain themes in its messaging. In other words, what went on behind the scenes to produce the front stage performance that became the focus of analysis in this dissertation? Goffman (1959) explains that in team performances there is often a person who directs and controls the dramatic action. Who among TPS leadership or in the organization's Corporate Communications Unit played key roles in determining the public messages delivered?

There are obvious challenges in pursuing research on this question. I got a sense for those challenges when I started this study and sought to supplement the qualitative media analysis with one-on-one interviews with TPS representatives. I explain in Chapter 3 how this would have involved an onerous TPS ethics review process over and above the clearance I received through the McMaster Research Ethics Board. The COVID shutdowns ultimately led me to drop this part of the study. It is not clear that even with TPS clearance and access to TPS representatives, I would have been able to get past whatever messages the organization would have been willing to

[33] For a study of the role that police culture plays in officers' views of racial profiling, see Satzewich and Shaffir (2009). See also the interesting debate the study generated (Henry & Tator, 2011; Melchers, 2011; Satzewich & Shaffir, 2011).

offer for public consumption. This is an issue with much of the research that has been done with communications and public relations and media specialists in police organizations (e.g., Buffone, 2019; Lee & McGovern, 2013; Mawby, 2001). Nonetheless, questions about the processes through which the TPS established its responses, especially if there were disagreements about what position to take or the appropriate points to emphasize, would be fascinating to explore.

5. A related question has to do with the role that others might have played in shaping the TPS responses. What other stakeholders and power brokers were involved? What kinds of pressures might the TPSB, the mayor's office, city council or even the provincial government have exerted in the organizational response to the controversies? To what extent did the TPS coordinate their responses with the mayor and other city officials? These questions involve recognizing that there may be other levels of teamwork (Goffman, 1959) involved when it comes to understanding the performance of the TPS in response to these controversies.

6. I tried in my analysis to provide a sense for how the TPS used various media to deliver and disseminate their messages. The organization hosted press conferences and used print media, as well as websites such as TPSnews.ca, but also made extensive use of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In other words, they tried to take advantage of the very advances in communication technologies that have made their job more challenging in the first place. The TPS use of these technologies to counter negative images about them in social media illustrates the extent to which the technologies can be characterized as a double-edged sword for police organizations. The technologies represent a threat but are also creating new opportunities to counter the threat. The use of Facebook and Twitter especially meant that TPS messages were probably reaching audiences that the organization might otherwise not have been able to reach.

But precisely how the TPS used social media in its impression management work was not a central question of the study. There are more focused questions to be asked about whether certain messages were disseminated one way while others were disseminated using different media. Goffman (1959) notes that when engaging in impression management, "control of the setting is an advantage during interaction" as it allows "a team to introduce strategic devices for determining the information the audience is able to acquire" (p.93). Certain media (e.g., the TPSnews.ca website and YouTube) gave the TPS the chance to bypass traditional media outlets and deliver its message directly to the public without editing or unwanted manipulation. YouTube videos, for example, allowed the TPS to present rehearsed messages in a situation where they had total control over the narrative presented without having to deal with interruptions or questions, as is the case in press conferences and interviews. I found that the TPS made the most extensive use of YouTube videos in response to the BLM case. This raises the question of whether the service saw that crisis as calling for a more controlled response or whether the organization is becoming more sophisticated in its production of content for social media.

Another question concerns differences in style of communicating depending on the medium used. Scott and Lyman's (1968) discussion of accounts looks not only at excuses and justifications, but also at what they call the linguistic styles in which accounts may be delivered - intimate, casual, consultative, formal, and frozen. To what extent these are used in image repair work, and under what circumstances would be an interesting question for future research. These and other questions concerning the medium as well as the messaging remain.

I addressed in Chapter 2 the question of how relevant Goffman continues to be in a rapidly changing communications environment. I argued in that chapter, and believe I have

demonstrated in the dissertation, that despite having developed his theories primarily in relation to face-to-face interactions, Goffman's work and the theories his ideas have generated are just as applicable to interactions that occur through social media and in other than face-to-face contexts. Even so, as research on the social media aspects of impression management and image repair work continues there is an opportunity to ask whether, or in what ways, some of Goffman's ideas may need to be adjusted or reformulated.

7. Finally, it is impossible to end a dissertation concerning police relations with marginalized and racialized communities without mentioning the Indigenous communities in Canada. There were scant references to First Nations people, Métis and Inuit in the dissertation, despite their long history of oppression at the hands of police (Jones et al., 2014; Stelkia, 2020). The case of Indigenous peoples is complicated in that it involves a history of colonialism and its destructive repercussions, including family breakups, loss of culture and generational trauma (Cotter, 2022; Morris, 2023). The task of addressing the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the police were beyond the scope of the dissertation.

Over the past decade, the role of police in Canada's Residential School system has come to the fore (LeBeuf, 2011) as has the issue of under-policing in relation to the many women who have gone missing from Indigenous communities (National Inquiry into Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). That levels of mistrust of police within those communities run particularly high should come as no surprise (Cao, 2014; Ibrahim, 2020). As for finding a path forward with respect to relationships with police, Morris (2023) captures the difficulty:

> Police discrimination operates along a number of intersectional social, economic, and political touchpoints which is why it has had such a profound impact on Indigenous Peoples. It is also a reason why systemic racism remains such an extraordinarily complex issue to which there is unfortunately no simple solution and no easy path toward

> institutional decolonization. While the issue has been amply defined among a deluge of government studies and reports, there is still a significant gap pertaining to an effective solution. Institutional recommendations and calls for justice as offered by the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls], the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and other oversight bodies may be helpful, but are only impactful insofar as they are meaningfully understood and implemented by police services. (p.56)

An analysis that Morris (2023) completed comparing the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) and the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) led him to conclude that while both police organizations are making progress in reconciling Indigenous-police relations, the approach adopted by the NAPS has been more effective than the little-by-little approach of the TBPS. The NAPS's focus on greater Indigenous recruitment, cultural training, proactive enforcement, and community-based policing has led to a more positive relationship and less incidents of police discrimination and violence.

But clearly the path to reconciliation will be long and arduous, with much more research required to discover what meaningful change might look like. In finding ways for police organizations to provide more equitable, fair, and respectful services to Indigenous peoples in Canada, there is hope that all people in Canada will be better served by their police organizations.

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