

The Public Debate About Privatizing Police Services in Ontario:

Lessons from the United Kingdom

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## Abstract

In 2015, Kathleen Wynne's government began a public consultation process of modernizing the *Police Services Act* (1990), arguing the public safety model must reflect a changing society. Throughout the past three years, the Wynne government used the United Kingdom's experience of restructuring the police service delivery model as the basis for a similar process in Ontario.

This thesis compiled and reviewed a number of academic qualitative and quantitative academic studies which pertained to how the UK government promoted police austerity measures including privatization as a means toward increasing service efficiency without compromising public safety. After reviewing data from over seven years of police service cuts in the UK and existing Ontario-based data on policing costs, my thesis concludes that the new *Police Services Act* (2018) was supported by a successful communication strategy that purposely avoided the long-term public relations risks of promoting a modernization process that included privatization as a way to control the perception of escalating police costs. Instead, the Wynne government's success in influencing public acceptance of the legislation was the result of a communication strategy that focused solely on social justice issues and its relationship with professional policing.

In the process of reviewing how both the UK and Ontario governments used political communication to influence the public's perception of how policing should be modernized, I also identified a significant reluctance by police service leadership towards increasing and promoting their own value. My thesis concludes that this reluctance and a lack of investment of resources in

both research and communication planning by police organizations continues to allow police legitimacy and its value as a public service in Ontario to be questioned by its detractors.

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## Declaration

Since 2015, I have been employed as the Executive Director for the Police Association of Ontario (PAO). Prior to starting at the PAO, I was employed in various executive roles within the healthcare sector including as Executive Director for the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Director of Marketing, Public Affairs and Member Relations at the Ontario Medical Association and Director of Communications and Marketing at MedicAlert.

## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	p. 1
Chapter Two: Background	
The Evolution of the Police Profession in the UK and Ontario	p. 7
Police Culture	p. 9
Local Governments and Funding Models	p. 13
Advocates for Police Reform – Ontario	p. 15
Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework	
The Systemic Crisis	p. 19
Jurgen Habermas – Public Deliberation Process	p. 20
Public Deliberation Process – The Cameron/May Governments and ‘ <i>The Big Society</i> ’	p. 26
Public Deliberation Process – The Wynne Government and ‘ <i>The Strategy for a Safer Ontario</i> ’	p. 29
William Benoit’s Image Repair Theory	p. 34
Robert Mawby’s Police Image Work	p. 43
Communication	p. 45
Persuasive Arguments and Persuasive Attacks	p. 46
The Use of Third Parties	p. 49
Expanding the Framework to Include Both Image Repair and Police Image Work	p. 50
Chapter Four: Literature Review	
Academic Research – Framing the Narrative and the Consequences of Inaction	p. 52
The Role of the Media in Creating a Systemic Crisis – UK	p. 53
Secondary Research – Long-term Effects of Austerity Measures in the UK	p. 62
A Systemic Crisis and Police Services in Ontario	p. 66
Police Culture	p. 66
Police Interactions with PMI	p. 68
Police Interactions with LGBTQ2SA Community	p. 70

Police Interactions with Other Marginalized Populations	p. 72
The Cost of Policing in Ontario	p. 77
Chapter Five: Operationalizing the Communication Strategy	
Future Strategies	p. 89
Chapter Six: Conclusion	p. 96
References	p. 101
Appendix	p. 128

## Figures List

Figure 1	How Legislation Goes Through Both the UK Parliament and the Ontario Legislature	p. 26
Figure 2	Illustration of How Expanded Image Repair and Image Work is Operationalized	p. 94

## Tables List

Table 1	Comparable Police Service Structures and Funding Models	p. 14
Table 2	BLM Sequence of Events and Responses	p. 18
Table 3	Comparable Deliberation Processes	p. 31
Table 4	Integrated Image Repair Theory and Police Image Work Duties	p. 43
Table 5	UK Police Recorded Crime and Police Service Employees	p. 64
Table 6	UK Selected Police Recorded Crimes	p. 65
Table 7	PAO Public Opinion Survey	p. 76
Table 8	Overall % of Ontario Municipal Budgets by Category	p. 78
Table 9	2016 Police Costs per Province and Territory – AMO Position	p. 80
Table 10	Police per Population in Ontario – PAO Position	p. 80
Table 11	Year-over-Year % Consolidated Provincial/Municipal Spending (Police/Social Services Comparison)	p. 84

## Chapter One: Introduction

As with other governments throughout the Western world, provincial and municipal politicians in Ontario are increasingly viewing their respective law enforcement budgets as a means of identifying cost efficiencies through privatization. Organizations advocating for increased austerity measures and enhanced police service delivery models, such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), cite a variety of factors to justify the need including declining crime rates; the provincial government download of financial responsibility for many public services to the municipalities; a public reluctance to increase revenue through additional taxation; an increasingly diversified population with various cultural, health and socio-economic needs; and an outdated policing culture (AMO, 2015, pp. 9-18; El-Chantiry & Kaustinen, 2017; A. Jones, 2016; Reid, 2017, p. 8). The now-former Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne had been lobbied hard by those advocating for reform, citing the success of the United Kingdom (UK) experience implementing police austerity measures that began when David Cameron became the country's Prime Minister in 2010. Cameron's Conservative party campaigned on a need to control all public sector expenditures as the previous Gordon Brown's Labour government spending during the recession in the late 2000's reduced the fiscal capacity of any future UK government to maintain quality public services. Beginning in 2010, the UK government through its *Big Society* policy adopted a communication strategy promoting a necessity to reform and modernize police services to reflect the needs of a diversified society, increase public safety and rein in the high cost of policing (Dodd, 2016; Drury, 2015; Gravelle & Rogers, 2011, pp. 223, 224; Millie & Bullock, 2013, pp. 147-149). In 2017, many municipal political leaders in Ontario adopted a similar communication approach, claiming the province's current policing model containing over 80 police services is unsustainable and ineffective when

managing interactions with an increasingly complex population with diverse needs, such as those from vulnerable and marginalized communities (AMO, 2015, p. 27; Millie & Bullock, 2013, p. 150; Morrow, 2016a). Under increased pressure from the municipalities to allow for an increased ability to control the escalating cost of policing, the Wynne government followed a similar path as the UK did in 2010 by announcing a police modernization consultation process would begin with an intended outcome of how to make policing more effective in a changing society.

This study aims to explore how the UK government's experience of implementing a communication strategy that promoted significant police service budget cuts could influence comparable strategies of those both for and against privatizing and/or cutting certain police service functions in Ontario. Understanding why both proponents and opponents in Ontario should study how the UK debate began and unfolded over a period of seven years could contribute to a more balanced approach within the public deliberation process of why, or why not police budget cuts should be considered. During the initial stages of the deliberation process promoting the need for austerity in the UK proponents benefited from a limited amount of research studying how police service cuts could affect public safety and service levels. First, the absence of longitudinal research studying the effects of specific police cuts over a period of time allowed proponents to implement a framing strategy that was based on a theoretical argument and not on quantifiable research data. Secondly, the primary argument of police service cuts was incorporated into a much larger debate about controlling public expenditures after an era of increased government spending designed to mitigate the negative effects of a global financial crisis (Gravelle & Rogers, 2011b; Rogers & Gravelle, 2012). However, as the UK enters the ninth year of cuts in all areas of public services, both sides of the debate in Ontario can use a growing body of research and data of the UK police austerity experience to construct a framing

approach that argues decreasing costs will negatively affect police service delivery and public safety (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Boulton, McManus, Metcalfe, Brian, & Dawson, 2017, pp. 79,80; College of Policing, 2015; Elliott-Davies, Donnelly, Boag-Munroe, & Van Mechelen, 2016, pp. 106-109; HMICFRS, 2016). Proponents of police service cuts can claim through research conducted within the first four years that the policy increased cost-efficiencies without compromising public safety and opponents can claim sustained cuts gradually impacted crime levels and staff morale.

Through an analysis of existing bodies of literature that studied media coverage during the debate about austerity measures and various UK-based qualitative and quantitative crime studies from 2010 through to 2017, my research aims to address the following central research question:

How can opponents of the narrative advocating for the ability to privatize parts of police services in Ontario build a response to defend against a communication framing strategy that promotes privatization as a public interest, such as that which helped UK political leaders increase public support for police austerity measures in 2010?

Secondary questions:

How does the long-term impact of the UK experience of police austerity measures affect the public deliberation process and police legitimacy when considering a similar approach with the proposed modernization of Ontario's provincial and municipal police services?

How can police culture affect police legitimacy while managing persuasive political communication attacks from governments and third parties?

How would marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as those living with mental illnesses, be affected by increased police service austerity measures implemented in Ontario?

Through an expanded framework of William Benoit's image repair theory and Robert Mawby's police image work theory, this thesis will explore how framing strategies related to the police austerity debate in Ontario could fill a significant research gap in understanding the long-term consequences of public sector cost reductions. This can be achieved by reviewing emerging research from the UK experience and designing a comparable framing strategy model for use during the public debate about police cuts. The various levels of government and non-governmental advocates of police cost-reduction measures in the UK and Ontario followed a comparable policy formation process and framing strategy. In both situations, increasing public support relied upon the creation of a narrative that police service cuts would not affect public safety and a modernization process would align the profession with an increasingly diverse society. This parallel jurisdictional approach can provide valuable insight into how the political actors built the narrative that police services can become more cost-effective and efficient by modernizing their approach to crime prevention and crime solvency. In the Background and Literature review sections of this thesis, I explain how the UK Conservative party created a framing strategy that increased a public acceptance of austerity measures by leveraging the unpopularity of a Labour government at the end of its mandate, benefitting from the lack of existing research of how austerity measures could affect public safety, designing messaging that

limited the amount of media scrutiny of the potential effects of cuts, and promoting a systemic crisis that could impact public service delivery in the future. Throughout the Background and Literature review sections I compare how Ontario's Liberal party created a similar policy formation path using similar variables as with the UK experience. To demonstrate how police austerity cuts impact public safety, I explore how these policy decisions affected, and will continue to affect, marginalized populations such as those living with mental illnesses and the LGBTQ2SA community. Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest the results of cost reductions or reduced investments in mental health services in Ontario is forcing front-line police officers to adopt new responsibilities within healthcare and social services. In Chapter Three I explore through a combined rhetoric-based theoretical framework using both William Benoit's image repair theory and Robert Mawby's police image work how the UK Conservative party's framing strategy of a looming public sector systemic crisis increased public acceptance of police services cuts at the same time as minimizing political criticism of potential long-term negative consequences. I also explore how the Cameron and Wynne governments directly and indirectly used persuasive attacks and crisis management tactics to support their respective policy direction (Benoit, 2015; Mawby, 2002). This combined theoretical framework also helps explain how the Wynne government has not been able to produce a similar framing strategy as the perceived negative experiences of over seven years of police service cuts in the UK has already begun to influence public deliberation in Ontario. Finally, this combined theoretical model using both Benoit's image repair theory and Mawby's police image work I explore the implications for potential framing strategies of both proponents and opponents currently engaged in the larger debate of the cost of policing in Ontario and other Canadian provinces.

As this thesis attempts to add a proposed research direction to the limited amount of studies of privatizing police services and the various communication frameworks deployed in the debate, I also use secondary sources such as news coverage to illustrate the effectiveness of the competing narratives. Exploring the similarities of comparable communication strategies is as important as the main difference of how they communicated the need to allow for more privatization of police service delivery. In the initial years of the UK public debate about police austerity measures, the Cameron government used a global financial crisis as the genesis of a narrative that justified the need to cost efficiencies through headcount reductions, reallocating resources and allowing for increased market-based options in public safety service delivery. The Wynne government adopted a different approach by not directly debating the financial benefits of privatizing some police service functions, and instead focused on a more publicly palatable narrative of ‘police modernization.’

It is important to note the debate over modernizing police services has not abated with the election defeat of Kathleen Wynne in June 2018. Her successor, Doug Ford, has temporarily halted the continuation of negotiating the regulations that support the *Act* pending review.

## Chapter Two: Background

### **The Evolution of the Police Profession in the UK and Ontario**

The origin of professional policing in Ontario as a community-based model can be found within a centuries old UK-version of policing, and one that shaped the formation of several colonial models including the Northwest Mounted Police (later the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in Canada and the Royal Irish Constabulary in Ireland (Emsley, 2007; Marquis, 1997). The community-based policing model began under then-Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel when he reformed a law enforcement model composed of a sporadic mixture of volunteer police officers throughout the UK and replaced it with paid police officers who were responsible for both crime prevention and crime solvency within their own local parish or municipality (Emsley, 2007). As the Irish model was managing a society rife with sectarian violence, pre-Confederation Canada law enforcement officers were policing an undefended border with the United States, ongoing conflicts with Irish immigrant nationalists, interactions with indigenous populations whose land was being taken by European settlers, and the emergence of growing urban centres experiencing rapid population growth due to immigration (Marquis, 1997). Regardless of how policing was administered in both the UK and Ontario, there was a commonality of independence between the legislatures that enacted the laws, the judiciary and the police as enforcers of the law (Grieves, 2015). While the police service model evolved over a century to meet the geo-political needs of the nation, provinces, municipalities, territories and First Nations, the core law enforcement responsibilities of crime prevention and crime solvency remained relatively intact (*Police Services Act*, 1990, s. 42). The updated *Police Services Act* (2018) incorporates the 1990 definition of core police duties in Ontario within the new *Act* as follows:

42 (1) The duties of a police officer include,

- (a) preserving the peace;
- (b) preventing crimes and other offences and providing assistance and encouragement to other persons in their prevention;
- (c) assisting victims of crime;
- (d) apprehending criminals and other offenders and others who may lawfully be taken into custody;
- (e) laying charges and participating in prosecutions;
- (f) executing warrants that are to be executed by police officers and performing related duties;
- (g) performing the lawful duties that the chief of police assigns;
- (h) in the case of a municipal police force and in the case of an agreement under section 10 (agreement for provision of police services by O.P.P.), enforcing municipal by-laws;
- (i) completing the prescribed training.

*(Police Services Act, 1990, c. P-15, Schedule 1, s. 42)*

While the professional model evolved on a parallel track between the UK and the rest of the Commonwealth, the differences of policing in relation to geographical, culture and economic needs within Ontario became more pronounced over the past two centuries.

## Police Culture

As with any organization or social group construct, a culture has evolved within the policing profession and has become a focus of those advocating for a fundamental modernization of how police services are delivered. Police culture is not directly referred to in the communication strategies of the political leaders in both the UK and Ontario and the case for privatizing police services, however, the negative attributes associated with police culture has been a peripheral element integrated into the narratives used by the Cameron, May and Wynne governments. I explore in greater specificity later in this thesis how these respective governments used comparable communication strategies and the concept of police culture to influence public opinion as a need to reform the police service delivery model.

In order to understand how police culture is viewed and studied amongst political leaders, social justice advocates and academia, I first describe the phenomenon, how it permeates throughout the profession and how it can manifest itself during interactions between police officers and the public. Constable and Smith (2015) use E. B. Tyler's definition of culture as a study of the common characteristics of social groups and organizations such as language, communication, and habits, and how these are transferred to others as a basis of describing policing culture (pp. 45, 46). Mawby's (2002) police image work theory goes further to explain police culture is also reliant on those symbols associated within the policing profession such as the badge, the uniform and social interaction amongst peers and how it has been shaping the individuals within the profession for over two centuries. Although he recognizes both the positive and negative attributes of police culture, many scholars continue to study the phenomenon as a systemic problem that emphasizes the psychological and physical isolation

police officers and service employees experience as a result of the constant reality of the danger associated with the job (Chan 1996; Constable & Smith, 2015; Paoline, 2003). Negative attributes such as sexism, racism, hyper-masculinity and a perception of an unwritten code of protecting ‘their own’ when negative behaviour occurs is often associated with police culture (Chan 1996; Constable & Smith, 2015; Paoline, 2003). Constable and Smith (2015) posit the development of an officer’s isolation from the larger part of society may begin during their initial rigid legal training with an emphasis on the dangers of the position (p. 49). Ben-Porat (2008) posits a “dominant homogeneity” subsumes the training process and creates a police “sub-culture” that emphasizes social differences between police with everyone else (p. 416). This divide in training could create the potential for behavioural unpredictability and an escalation towards violence during any situation involving the public. This, in turn, can shape how they engage with people, groups and communities and can emphasize a public feeling that police officers are devoid of compassion, empathy and common courtesy in any number of their over 8 million interactions with public each year (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Chan’s (1996) study of police culture in New South Wales, Australia recognizes the negative elements of police culture such as the acculturation process of new police recruits during training, however she also views the phenomenon “...to be functional to the survival of police officers in an occupation considered to be dangerous, unpredictable, and alienating” (p. 111). In her study of both the positive and negative attributes associated within police culture, Chan argues the phenomenon can be accepting of change, or be a supportive change agent if political leaders and police management supported organization-wide changes that enhanced and protected the profession. For instance, Crowell’s (2017) research study of police officer impressions of civilian oversight in Ontario reports the majority of those surveyed were

supportive of the roles of both the Office of Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) which oversees public complaints of police officers and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) which investigates suspected criminal actions of police officers. Crowell's research of police officer impressions of civilian oversight bodies complements Chan's (1996) theory that some attributes of police culture such as "police protecting themselves" is redefined in meaning from that of an occupational culture that protects peers who engage in inappropriate or criminal behaviour to one of a profession that wants to maintain and protect the integrity of the profession. These and more recent studies of police culture suggest there is an informal self-regulatory process within the phenomenon that provides a balancing function between removing bad and out-dated behaviour with the psychological need to maintain the positive attributes of shared experiences within a dangerous occupation (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Campeau, 2017; Schulenberg, 2016; V. White & Robinson, 2014).

The negative aspects of police culture were a focal point of the Wynne government's narrative of communicating the need to modernize policing and a deliberate framing strategy intended to deflect from a potential public focus on the expanded potential for privatization as outlined in the updated *Police Services Act (2018)*. The legislation was introduced in November, 2017 as an omnibus bill covering two Ministries within the government. The update to the *Police Services Act (1990)* which oversees the responsibilities of police officers and the police service delivery model is within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The Attorney General of Ontario's office is responsible for the second section of the *Act* which includes the regulatory framework of the independent public oversight bodies that monitors police service operations and police officer behaviour (2018). I hypothesize the Wynne government preferred the public and media focus on the negative attributes

associated with police culture instead of engaging in an ongoing defence on what types of organizations outside of the public service can provide some policing functions at the discretion of the municipal governments. More specifically, the purpose of the omnibus legislation involving two separate Ministries provided the government with an ability to implement a narrative that advocated for a need to change police culture with more public oversight powers that address unacceptable criminal and non-criminal police behaviour (Battersby, 2016; Gillis & Gallant, 2017; Perkel, 2017a; Rankin & Gillis, 2016). As a communication strategy, this approach is more easily understandable and acceptable for the public in that the government can claim they are addressing a systemic problem of bad police behaviour at the same time as minimizing any potential effects related to public safety as a result of outsourcing and privatization. It also distracts from the opponent's arguments that the outsourcing of police services could amplify cuts and a lack of funding in other public sectors such as mental health that directly affect police service delivery. This could be quantified quickly if the number of police officers on patrol are decreased in those police services with high 911 call volumes related to people in a mental health crisis. I will explore this subject further in Chapter Four.

Chan (1996) argues police culture can only change when police organizations and leadership incorporate a relational strategic approach, as has been studied by social theorist Pierre Bordieu (1996). Chan argues Bordieu's strategic communication framework sets out to reconfigure police culture from a phenomenon that encourages a rigid and militaristic approach of community policing to one that allows for more flexibility in problem-solving at the community and organizational levels. Essentially Chan and Bordieu are embracing the positive aspects of a police culture that simultaneously help police officers cope with the dangers of the position within an informal social construct of those with similar experiences, as well as a

disposition to change it if it can help them in their day-to-day responsibilities. Whether it is through viewing negative news stories of police interactions with the public, experiencing helplessness for a person with a life-threatening mental illness, managing a gruesome crime scene, or providing victim support services for survivors of a sexual assault, police culture provides a protective barrier that helps them to process and manage long-term exposure to ongoing traumatic incidents. Although criticism of inappropriate and criminal behaviour by police services personnel is often warranted, the current UK Prime Minister and former Home Secretary Theresa May in the UK and the Wynne government's focus on the negative elements associated with police culture such as the increased police shootings of marginalized individuals and a perceived lack of empathy for marginalized communities has not provided a greater understanding of how the phenomenon can improve police service delivery (Barrett, 2015; Dawson, 2017; Gallagher, 2015; Murphy & Davenport, 2015; Rieti, 2017a; Whitehead, 2011).

### **Local Governments and Funding Models**

Although privatization of public services has been studied extensively throughout the world, it is also important to understand how the UK and Ontario police services models are funded as a public service. In addition to implementing significant cuts to police services throughout the UK, the central government in London also downloaded the responsibility for the funding and maintenance of police services to the municipalities. As *Table 1* indicates, this policy development aligned their police service funding mechanism closer to a similar process that currently exists in Ontario. I argue the purpose of decentralizing the authority for funding and potentially outsourcing parts of the police service delivery model allows both the UK and Ontario governments to redirect any potential public anger of negative outcomes back to the

municipal governments. The central governments could claim that any public disapproval of either an underfunded police service that results in an increase in crime rates or any tax increases to fund a local police service should be re-directed back to local Mayors and their Council.

<i>Table 1 – Comparable Police Service Structures and Funding Models</i>	
<b>UK</b>	<b>Ontario</b>
43 Police Services	50 municipal police services, 1 provincial police service that contracts out services to smaller communities throughout Ontario.
<p><u>Police Oversight Bodies</u></p> <p>Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) – reviews all complaints/investigations related to police involvement in the death or injury of a member of the public.</p> <p>Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – responsible for overseeing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in the UK.</p>	<p><u>Police Oversight Bodies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Investigations Unit (SIU) – responsible for investigation all injuries and/or deaths involving a police officer and special constable in Ontario.</li> <li>• Office of Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) – responsible for reviewing all public complaints of police officer behaviour/interactions. (As per the new Police Services Act, the agency will be called Ontario Police Complaints Agency upon regulatory approval).</li> <li>• As per March 8, 2018, the new Police Services Act, the SIU will be called the OSIU upon regulatory approval.</li> <li>• Chief Inspectorate of Ontario – agency created under the new Police Services Act, 2018 to oversee the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Funding:</u></p> <p>Local (Council) taxes            Central Government grants            Central Government funding for oversight bodies</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u></p> <p>Local taxes            Provincial government grants            Provincial funding for oversight bodies</p>
<p><u>Limitations:</u></p> <p>The local government can only raise taxes per year by no more than 2% to fund police services. Increasing taxes over 2% to fund police requires a plebiscite in that jurisdiction.</p>	<p><u>Limitations:</u></p> <p>None. Ontario’s municipal governments can raise taxes to financially support any public service delivery program.</p>
<p>Source: Home Office – UK (2013) as retrieved through <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-finance">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-finance</a>;</p>	

## **Advocates for Police Reform - Ontario**

The Wynne government's modernization of the *Police Services Act (1990)* is shaped by a combined input of market-driven, political and social justice advocacy groups such as the AMO, the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards (OAPSB), the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM). Groups such as the AMO and OAPSB have lobbied the provincial government to allow municipal governments to have more flexibility to privatize or civilianize some police services in order to control budgets (AMO, 2015; Morrow, 2016a; N.D., 2017a). Advocacy groups such as BLM and OFIFC demand less traditional police presence in higher ethnic communities with a history of negative police interactions, increasing diversity amongst new recruits to reflect those who identify as marginalized, and additional training for police that frequently interact with vulnerable populations such as those living with mental health illnesses (Battersby, 2016; Hains, 2017; Hall, 2016, pp. 87-89). Unlike the Cameron government whose policy direction of privatizing police service functions emanated from primarily an ideological market-based perspective, I argue the Wynne government attempted to incorporate both the economic-based advocacy efforts of the AMO and the social justice-based protests from BLM as a means to communicate that the government has been collaborating with all stakeholders, including the policing professional organizations.

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario.** Beginning with the public release of a comprehensive policy document, *Policing Modernization Report* in 2015, AMO has been promoting to its over 400 municipal members and the public a need to allow municipalities to be able to civilianize or privatize some police functions they view as not part of the profession's

core duties (AMO, 2015; Brennan, 2014a). Although they also advocate for increased civilian oversight of police officer conduct and the introduction of a College of Policing that would mandate all of the province's police officers be regulated by a licensing body in order to maintain their status as sworn officer, their primary focus is to slow or reduce police service spending for municipalities (AMO, 2015, p. 6). Specifically, they argue cost-efficiencies can be realized through an improved labour relations process, a reduction of police service personnel and the wages and benefits associated with the cut positions (pp. 4 - 6). The organization's policy document outlines three key priority recommendations for the province:

1. Make changes to the interest arbitration system
2. Improve the quality of the existing governance and civilian oversight system
3. Make legislative changes to permit the greater transfer of specific functions to civilians or other security providers where appropriate (2015, p. 4).

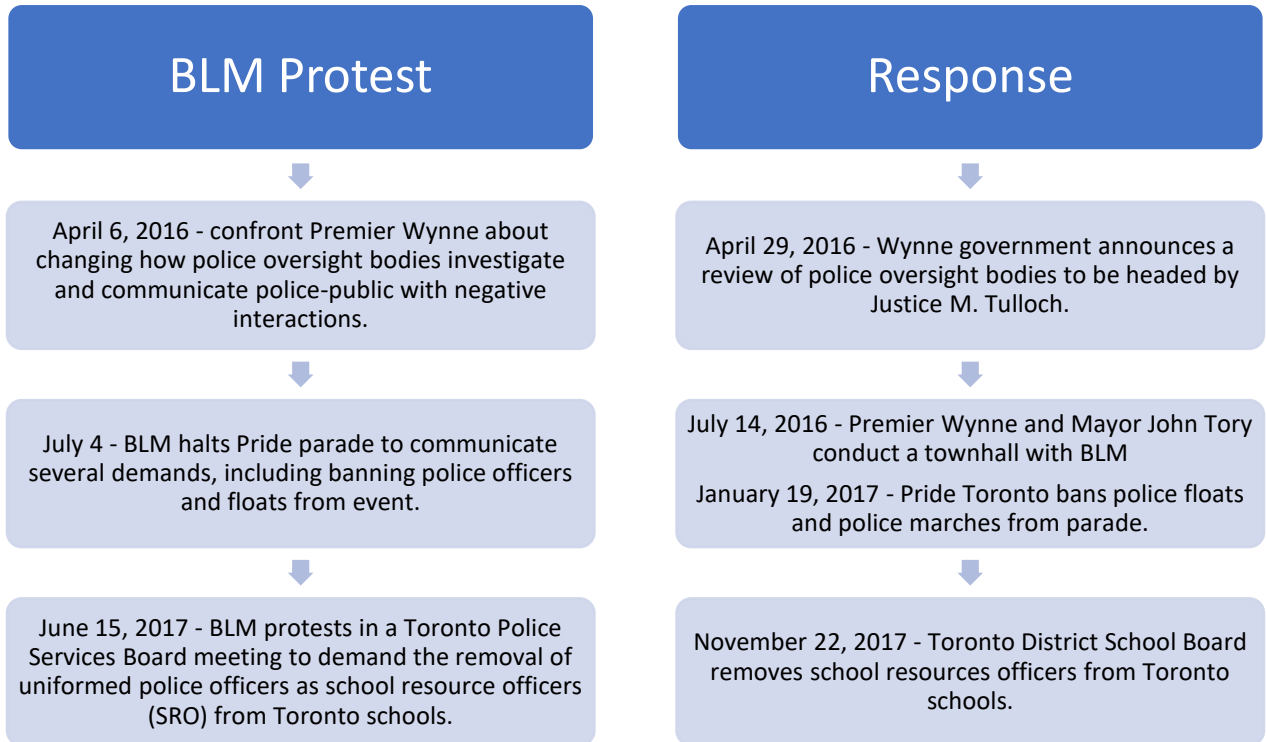
AMO's membership conferences and media coverage continues to highlight a narrative that taxpayers cannot continue to absorb the unsustainability of increasing police costs (Brennan, 2014a; Williams, August, 2016). Their main arguments focus on a claim that Ontario has the highest per capita policing costs in Canada and requires significant regulatory changes to lower police service expenses (2015, p. 9). In Chapter Four, I explore how the AMO adopted a similar strategy as the Cameron government in the development of their communication strategy and ongoing narratives of a need for more police services to be civilianized or privatized to prevent a systemic public service crisis from occurring.

**Black Lives Matter.** Although the Wynne government was preparing to initiate a public consultation process of how to modernize police service delivery in Ontario through 2015 and

2016, a sequence of police shootings of individuals from marginalized backgrounds in Ontario and a disruption of a highly media-covered Pride event increased the influence of BLM (Battersby, 2015; Battersby, 2016; Rankin & Gillis, 2016; Ratchford, 2016). The interaction between Premier Wynne and BLM in front of the legislature and her subsequent comment that systemic racism exists became a pivotal moment that would shape the communication strategies of all stakeholders involved in the modernization of policing duties (CBC News, 2016; Freeman, 2016a). BLM's protests were an effective series of persuasive communicative actions in that it increased awareness of systemic racism in Ontario. The media coverage of the BLM protests also provided the Wynne government with a framing strategy that focused on changing negative attributes associated with Ontario's police culture (racism, homophobia, etc.) with an ability to minimize references to police service privatization (Benoit, 2015; Constable & Smith, 2015). Although I will examine the persuasive attack typologies of the BLM events, the increased media exposure of the protests mutually benefitted both the government and the advocacy group and their efforts to change how policing is delivered in the province. Furthermore, each BLM protest event prompted additional media coverage that increased public exposure of the narrative of a need to change how police services operate in Ontario. For example, the BLM's confrontation with Premier Wynne on April 6, 2016 with a demand to change how police oversight bodies investigate negative police-public interactions prompted an announcement the government would launch a review of police oversight bodies on April 29, 2016 (Freeman, 2016a; Ontario, 2016). As *Table 2* illustrates, each protest prompted an additional media-covered response by either organizations or governments and subsequently reinforced the need to change policing in Ontario. While the BLM protests succeeded at increasing public awareness of systemic racism and a discussion about white privilege, I examine further in Chapter Four how

police service organizations could respond more effectively to these types of protests and how to mitigate long-term damages to the reputation of the profession and the organizations.

Table 2 - BLM Sequence of Events and Responses



Source: (CBC News, 2016b; Katsarov, ; Nasser, 2017; Nickle, 2017; Ontario, 2016)

## Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

### **The Systemic Crisis**

In order for both the UK and Ontario governments to begin a public dialogue about privatizing any public service, I argue they need to increase awareness of an existing problem or, in the least, create a problem. While the main focus of this thesis is to explore how opponents of police austerity in two jurisdictions can effectively advocate for their position within the debate about the high cost of policing, it is also equally important to examine whether the issue is real or perceived. Having an understanding of whether the high cost of policing is an issue can assist the various perspectives to become more effective in their communication strategies. Implementing a communication strategy to persuade the public of a need to fix a specific economic or social issue, a government should always initiate a public debate with a goal towards policy formation. For example, the UK began a debate about the unsustainability of policing in 2010 and subsequently implemented a number of cost reduction measures over a period of seven years. Although not as forthcoming as the Cameron government and its position of the need to implement austerity measures, the Wynne government's updated *Police Services Act* (2018) introduces privatization as an option for municipalities within the responsibilities of delivering police services (Chapman, 2016; Jones, 2016). According to Habermas a systemic crisis occurs when "oppositional" elements surface during a public debate about a policy that could possibly threaten the ability to form consensus due to conflicts amongst the political or economic interests of one or more of the stakeholders involved (Kay & Salter, 2014, p. 756). Although Kay and Salter (2014) are referencing research that concluded the BBC was biased in its coverage of the public debate about austerity measures by repeating the framing narratives of some political and economic interests, the experience provides stakeholders in Ontario with additional knowledge.

Comparing the police austerity measures experience in the UK with the current debate in Ontario can determine what type of communication approach the policing profession needs to adopt to be more effective (Kay & Salter, 2014). Specifically, the profession will have two options in its contribution to the public discussion of the cost of policing in Ontario; implement communicative action that increases awareness of what leads to the higher policing costs or design an approach that will counter the persuasive attacks of those advocating for more privatization (Benoit, 2015).

### **Jurgen Habermas – Public Deliberation Process**

Prior to exploring how opponents of privatizing police services in Ontario can begin the process of designing their own framing strategy, I will use this next section of the thesis to examine how three theoretical frameworks can assist opponents in the construction and execution of a communication strategy. Although my framework model is influenced by Habermas' theoretical normative approach of communicative action towards the formation of public opinion, I argue the inclusion of how that opinion is formed is as equally important (Habermas, 2006; McKenzie, 2018; Møen, 2018). Habermas (2006) argues communication rationality during public debates that involve political communication can only be realized if "...in complex societies as if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environment, and if anonymous audiences gain feedback between an informed elite discourse in a responsive civil society" (pp. 411, 412). While I agree public spheres such as the Internet, community events and family dinner tables are ideal examples of where to debate issues that are important to any society, Habermas' theory is missing the important influences of the rhetorical framework of persuasion within political communication. Political communication should strive

for the ideal situation, but it is unrealistic to assume any stakeholder or groups of stakeholders come to the deliberative process with the same interpretation of the ‘ideal outcome.’ I posit every stakeholder participating within any debate brings with them a particular point of view and a strategy of attempting to persuade others of why they should adopt a certain course of action or policy position. In the context of this thesis, all of the various social, economic and political stakeholders bring different viewpoints arguing for or against the issue of privatization and modernizing police service delivery in the UK and Ontario. Mawby (2002) argues the police voice is a relevant contributor within this theoretical framework “...as a state institution and as an organization, the police service as one of the actors within the public sphere, interacting with different groups, seeking to influence public opinion and to develop legitimacy” (p. 70). The effectiveness of how persuasion works within the deliberative paradigm is an important part of understanding how the public sphere works (Habermas, 2006).

The debate about the use of uniformed police officers working at construction sites or entertainment venues is an example of how rhetoric intersects with the Habermas’ public sphere. For example, Ontario’s former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Marie-France Lalonde, indicated in her press conference the modernization of the *Police Services Act (1990)* will get police officers to focus more on crime prevention and solvency and less on managing construction sites (Crawley, 2017a; Giovannetti, 2017). The Minister’s comments leveraged a common image thousands of people passing by a construction site see every day to amplify a misperception. Without context, the public begins to assign a value to that experience of a police officer standing by a site not engaged in a visible crime prevention or solvency activity. Moreover, the public begin to formulate a personal belief that could create an annoyance that taxpayers are funding them to stand and not do their traditional activities (Benoit, 2015;

Habermas, 2006). There are two important contextual elements to this experience: these uniformed police officers are working outside of their regular shifts and being paid by the construction company, of which the municipality takes a portion as a revenue generator (Powell, 2015). Furthermore, Minister Lalonde's comments about privatizing police services, "No, we are not looking at privatizing police services, I want to make that very clear. Having said that, is our highly trained police officer the best person to be on a construction site [directing traffic]?" indicates how rhetoric is a part of the political communication process and a method of how the public gains knowledge during political debates. Habermas (2006) recognizes the process by stating, "...the deliberation model is interested more in the epistemic function of discourse and negotiation than in rational choice or political ethos" (p. 413). In this circumstance, the Minister is using rhetoric within the public sphere to redirect and minimize a focus on privatization to the larger debate of modernizing police service delivery. As I explore throughout this thesis, persuasion on the part of the various stakeholders such as police organizations, politicians, the AMO and BLM are all part of the process of how citizens within a political deliberative process make decisions.

There are different elements of the political communication process that contribute to how public opinion of issues is formed, including the forum of *where* competing opinions and viewpoints can share information for consideration. Forums such as the distribution networks of the media provide opportunities for an exchange of ideas and countering arguments that could ultimately lead to the formation of public policy. Habermas' (2006) theoretical construct of a deliberation process within the public sphere provides a framework of where debates can occur and what variables are required for it to be successful. Secondly, the various groups interested in changing a policy need to know *how* to participate in the deliberation process through persuasive

arguments and countering opposing viewpoints. A combined theoretical framework of both William Benoit's image repair theory and Rob Mawby's police image work contributes to the design and delivery of the narrative that attempts to persuade all of the competing interests towards considering the outcome (Benoit, 2015; Mawby, 2002). Designing a communication strategy through the lens of this theoretical approach can assist police organizational advocates with the ability to adapt to the conditions of a public deliberation process, such as managing an obstinate political party, a biased media network or the absence of the voices that will be affected by cuts in police services. Exploring how that strategy could unfold in Ontario requires a review of how the deliberation process evolved in the UK and a better understanding of what variables hindered or contributed to the experience. This theoretical approach will also increase knowledge of where and how the opposing viewpoints succeeded and failed to advance their positions, as well as contribute to the quality of the deliberative process in Ontario.

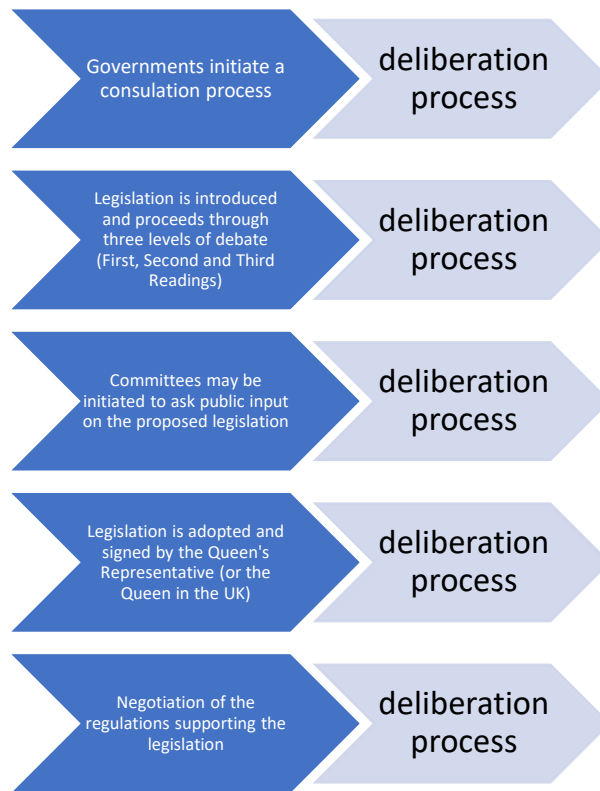
Habermas (2006) theorized that a fundamental shift in a policy proposal that affects the delivery of public services in a liberal democracy requires a process and a venue from where to engage in a debate before it is enacted (p. 413). If this type of communicative process is followed correctly, the policy outcome builds legitimacy as the citizens within that affected society will have all contributed to the debate within a forum of exchanging information and listening to different viewpoints. He posits "...reasonable outcomes rests in turn on the assumption that institutionalized discourses mobilize relevant topics and claims, promote the critical evaluation of contributions, and lead to rationally motivated yes or no reactions" (p. 413). There are many "actors" within the forum whereby political deliberation process takes place, including the *lobbyists*, such as police labour organizations, who are generally paid to push the politicians to change legislation or regulatory processes; *advocates*, such as BLM, who represent groups or

individuals of society affected by any changes; *experts*, such as lawyers who could further explain how the judicial process could work after legislation is introduced, come to the debate with a specific skillset or knowledge; *moral entrepreneurs*, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, who will increase attention to the issues that will not be addressed or ignored if the change is adopted, and; the *intellectuals* who could provide an academic viewpoint of the impact of any proposed changes based on research (Habermas, 2006, p. 416). However, the two pivotal actors involved in the political deliberative process are the *politicians* who are intended to accept and implement the outcome of the debate process by its citizens, and the *media* who are supposed to be the distributor of information and viewpoints so that considered public opinion can form (p. 416). As Javnost (2010) argues, "...the heart of a properly functioning public sphere is a press which stimulates debate, hold politicians and governments to account, and which functions to facilitate a flow of political information to the public" (p. 84). Later in Chapter Four, I explore how the Cameron, May and Wynne governments engaged in the political deliberation process and how it shaped the final outcomes.

Although all of the actors are explored in great detail throughout this thesis, the primary perspective and study focus is that of the role of police services and how police-based organizations can contribute more effectively to the deliberation process. As the policing profession is exposed to a significant amount of media scrutiny, I developed a combined theoretical framework of Benoit's (2002) image repair theory and Mawby's (2010) police image work as the basis of how the policing profession can build and improve their communicative action and crisis management strategies through a sustained process of protecting a brand and building political capital. Based on the experience of how the profession in the UK responded to the police austerity measures, these theoretical frameworks are the most applicable as they can

provide a structure that assists with both the need to respond to the immediacy of crisis communication and manage ongoing and long-term image building such as community outreach programs, proactive and reactive public relations activities, and marketing the police brand (Mawby, 2002). In doing so, the combined theoretical framework allows for police organizations to be able to effectively argue their position and contribute to the formation of a policy at every stage of the legislative process. As the police austerity measures legislation has been in place since 2010 in the UK, the debate about modernizing police services and the potential for privatization in Ontario is about to begin the last stage of the implementation by negotiating the regulatory elements of the limitations of each section within Bill 175 in relation to the updated *Police Services Act* (2018). In this next section, I review how both the UK and Ontario went through the public deliberation process experience and how each jurisdiction engaged their respective stakeholders towards the formation of a policy.

Figure 1 - How Legislation Goes Through Both the UK Parliament and the Ontario Legislature



Source: (Government of Ontario; UK Cabinet Office, 2013)

### **Public Deliberation Process – The Cameron/May Governments and ‘The Big Society.’**

A public deliberation process about the escalating costs of policing began immediately during the economic downturn in the UK, prompting an ideological discussion about the need for a general public service cost reduction within that country’s Conservative party. After the global financial downturn in 2008, then-UK Opposition Leader David Cameron introduced ‘*The Big Society*’ policy promoting individual responsibility and community empowerment, shifting local decision-making and public service funding matters from the country’s central government to municipalities (Fisher & Phillips, 2015; Glasman, 2010; Innes, 2011; Millie & Bullock, 2013). Glasman (2010) and Innes (2011) posit Cameron’s *Big Society* idea is composed of three main

parts – *civic responsibility, social entrepreneurship, and a locally-led mutualization of public services*. In relation to police service delivery, the new ideological shift openly communicated the benefits of downloading public service delivery for some areas of policing to competitive bids by local entrepreneurs using market-based solutions (2011, p. 74). Furthermore, Innes (2011) argues the UK government through the *Big Society* policy required police services to ‘*see like a citizen,*’ adopt a ‘*participative policing model*’ and increase transparency with a policy of ‘*see-through services*’ (p. 74). Increasing community engagement or ‘*seeing like a citizen*’ is an element of the *Big Society* ideology meant to shift police culture away from an “us against them” mentality and towards building trust with traditionally marginalized groups with a negative perception or history of interactions with police (Holdaway, 2013, p. 225). Increasing trust between marginalized communities and police meant municipal public safety planning needed to adopt a participative policing model that encouraged police volunteerism from affected neighbourhoods and diversity officer recruitment targets to reflect the ethnic and socio-economic composition of a particular community (2013, p. 225).

The Cameron government’s intent to decentralize public service delivery was communicated as a way for all UK citizens to have a greater sense of empowerment of how their police services would be provided. Similar to an approach studied by Baker and Hyde (2011) of how the South Australian Police adopted a hybrid economic/social model of policing whereby the public were redefined as ‘customers’ and not ‘taxpayers,’ and that public opinion at the community level determined the quantity and quality of the police service. They concluded the service model was changing in that “...customers, for police, are the general community and the various communities of relevance which make up the broader community, whether they are local communities or particular sectors, such as minority groups” (pp. 150-151). Within the *Big*

*Society* ideology, the Conservative party theorized trust in policing would improve if they followed a similar model and viewed the people in the communities they patrol and serve as customers (Gravelle & Rogers, 2012). By adopting a customer-centric approach, police service leaders and governance bodies would develop and implement organizational strategies that would come from a deliberative process that led to the formation of public safety policies reflecting their unique community needs. For instance, if a particular community or municipality was experiencing higher incidences of opioid overdoses and prostitution, citizens would expect its local police service to divert or allocate existing financial and service resources towards addressing those social problems and less in other areas of crime prevention and crime solvency responsibilities. Specifically, this could mean there would be less police officers on general patrol and responding to emergency calls, and more specialized police officers and police civilian personnel with specific training and experience managing substance abuse and human trafficking issues would be deployed within the community for a customized solution.

Although proponents of a UK-style austerity approach for Ontario's law enforcement sector argue the new legislation modernizing *Police Services Act* (2018) could adopt similar goals of reallocating police resources towards localized social and crime issues at the same time as reducing police service costs through alternative service delivery models, opponents argue studies conducted after several years of the UK austerity measures depict a different result. Opponents in Ontario claim that public safety levels declined as a result of a forced effort to implement substantial cost-savings and improved operational efficiencies (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Boulton et al., 2017; College of Policing, 2015; Elliott-Davies et al., 2016; HMICFRS, 2016). Moreover, critics in Ontario also argue the UK model is smaller in geography and denser in population and may not be a comparable model that incorporates the unique social, geographic

and economic needs of community-based provincial and municipal police service delivery models with less civilian and police services personnel (HMICFRS, 2016; N. A. Jones & Ruddell, 2014). For instance, an international border between the United States with no armed services patrols or the hundreds of remote small municipalities with a significantly higher indigenous population throughout Northern Ontario are examples of how higher policing costs associated with the unique geographic and social needs are not comparable to an island nation such as the UK (N. A. Jones & Ruddell, 2014; Ruddell, Lithopoulos, & Jones, 2014).

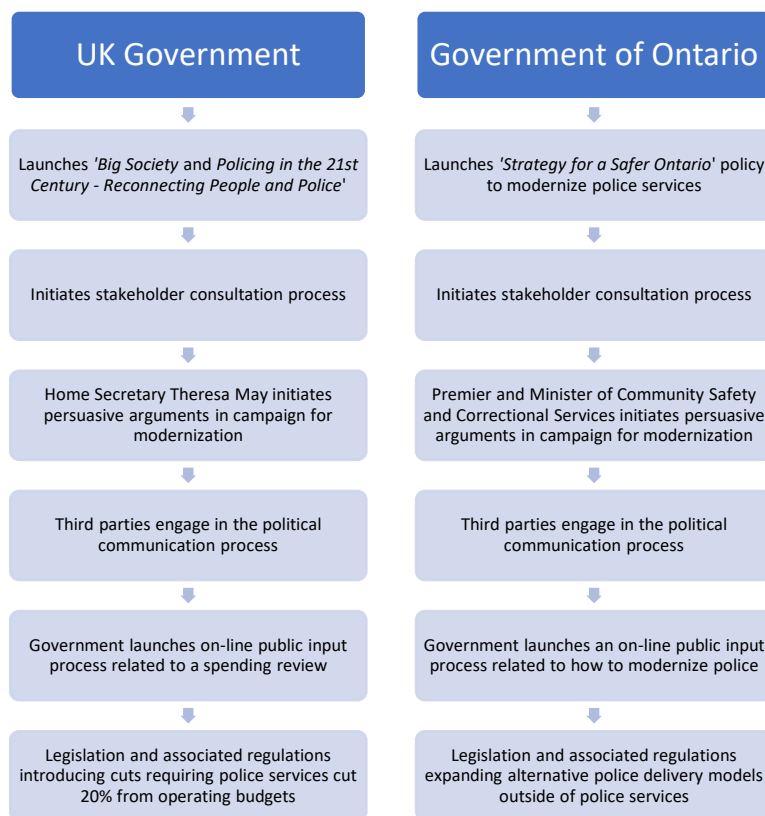
**Public Deliberation Process – The Wynne Government and ‘*The Strategy for a Safer Ontario.*’** As the UK government constructed the need to restructure and modernize police service delivery through the *Big Society* ideology, the Ontario government under Premier Kathleen Wynne followed a similar path with the *Strategy for a Safer Ontario* policy towards the formation and passage of Bill 175 in March, 2018 (Crawley, 2017b; Ferreira, 2015; N.D., 2015b; G. o. Ontario, 2016). As indicated in *Table 3*, the Wynne government emulated the UK public deliberation process of modernizing police service delivery in the construction of similar legislation. Following extensive consultations with various advocacy groups and using the UK model as a framework, the Wynne government identified the following key principles for modernizing and making polices services more efficient (Police Services Act, 1990; Crawley, 2017b; Government of Ontario, August 24, 2017, pp. 24-30):

- Promote a collaborative approach to community safety and well-being
- Improve interactions between police and vulnerable Ontarians
- Clarify core responsibilities and support more effective community safety delivery

- Enhance civilian governance, accountability and oversight
- Explore the expanded use of technology to support community safety
- Update education and training requirements for police officers
- Address the sustainability of First Nations training (*Police Services Act, 1990*).

Although there are more key principles in the Wynne government's *Strategy for a Safer Ontario* than the UK strategy, all would fall within Cameron's *Big Society* key policy principals of 'see like a citizen,' 'participative policing model,' and 'see through services' (Holdaway, 2013, pp. 221-225; Ontario, 2016b). As this thesis will soon outline, both governments have used similar strategic communication approaches employing various persuasive arguments centred on the conception that reduced policing costs will improve public safety and change police culture to reflect an increasingly diverse society (Benoit, 2015).

Table 3 - Comparable Deliberation Processes



Source: (Deakin, 2012; Finlayson, 2011; Glasman, 2010; Levitas, 2012; N.D., 2016b; G. o. Ontario, 2016; Smith, 2010)

On March 8, 2018, the Wynne government in Ontario voted for and passed *Bill 175 – the Safer Ontario Act* with a goal of creating a modern police service delivery model. The new *Act* was an omnibus Bill that updated a number of *Acts* including the older *Police Services Act* (1990). Within the new *Policing Services Act* (2018) there are a number of new and amended provisions related to policing including increased oversight of police officers and police service boards, discipline, accommodation of injured personnel, and how police services would be delivered within communities. The latter section of the updated *Act* (2018) titled “*Part III – Provision of Policing*” (see Appendix A) is the focus of this research as it pertains to a redefinition of what core policing duties are, and what areas of police functions can be administered through privatization or civilianization to either for-profit or not-for-profit entities

(2017). In a joint response to the above provision in the new *Act*, the Police Association of Ontario (PAO), the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA) and the Toronto Police Association (TPA) argued the most fundamental issue of allowing municipalities to privatize police-based services in Ontario is that the only public safety comparator of a government-owned facility managed by a for-profit company was not successful (N. Jones et al., 2017). In 2006, Ontario's only publicly owned and privately-run correctional facility was transferred back to government after the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services indicated the initial goals of cost-efficiencies were not leading to improved health and safety outcomes for inmates or the community (N.D., 2006b). A comparison report conducted for the Ministry found health outcomes at the Central North Corrections Centre in Penetanguishine such as infection control were rated poorer and recidivism rates were higher when compared to a publicly managed facility with a similar inmate population in Eastern Ontario (N.D., 2006a, p. 4). As I will examine further in the next chapter, examples such as outsourcing the management of a correctional facility that has a direct impact on public safety will be a part of the process towards constructing a framing analysis for those opposing the privatization of police services. I argue there are not enough examples of similar experiences within Ontario to quantify a further exploration of the policy. Several areas of the *Act* that have been identified as areas for potential privatization opportunities including crime prevention, physical surveillance and canine services will need to be further researched to determine if there is a potential for cost savings and improved service effectiveness (*Police Services Act*, 2018, ss. 10 - 12).

Although the new *Act* did not alter the core responsibilities and duties of a police officer, it did introduce a new interpretation of what entities can conduct crime prevention activities outside of police-based organizations (*Police Services Act*, 2018, s. 14.4.1). This section of the

revised *Act* provides municipalities with the permission it requires for privatizing police functions responsible for crime prevention. Section 14, sub-section 1 indicates municipal governments can tender for non-police organizations to provide crime prevention activities such as patrols and diffusing potential public disturbance calls before they can escalate to violence. Although the government could argue the sub-section allows for the flexibility of municipal governments to employ outsourced civilian personnel to manage some non-core policing functions or hire private security guards for the purpose of overseeing low-risk community events, the new wording does not describe what specific crime prevention activities could be outsourced. Furthermore, the lack of specificity of definition of what duties of crime prevention are prohibited from outsourcing conflicts with the historical and existing role of a sworn police officer and the deterrent effect on crime control as a result of the visibility of the uniform (Levi & MacGuire, 2012, p. 196). Even with the addition of the Minister's approval before outsourcing to a private entity for crime prevention activities, the definition is open to an expanded interpretation of the definition of "crime prevention" (*Police Services Act*, 2018, s. 14.4.1). Furthermore, the language as described in the provisions of the new *Act* allows for municipal governments to broaden the scope of privatization within crime prevention and to include other duties such as investigative support, explosives disposal and assistance to victims of crime without the necessary police oversight bodies that oversee police officers and police services civilian personnel who will manage similar responsibilities in other municipalities (2018, s. 12.1).

The *Act* also does not have any oversight bodies similar to the SIU or the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) that would conduct an investigation should a civilian working for a private company on contract to fulfil any of the listed areas for outsourcing

be accused of criminal or inappropriate behaviour. In his submission to the Standing Committee on Justice reviewing Bill 175, Waterloo Police Chief Bryan Larkin indicated the Ontario Associations of Chiefs of Police expressed a concern about what happens if the integrity and protection of data is compromised during a domestic or international terrorist investigation if it is managed and stored by a private company and not within a police service (March, 2018). In this hypothetical situation, a private organization managing potential evidence related to criminal activity would not be subjected to same level of oversight as currently exists within the police services and therefore would not be facing a similar level of discipline and sanctions.

Unlike the Cameron government's overt promotion of the need to implement police austerity measures as a result of a global financial crisis, the Wynne government has been very measured and cautious of any public statements advocating for allowing municipalities to implement cost reductions in police services. However, the Wynne government did follow a similar path as the Cameron government and the financial crisis of 2008 in that it created a systemic crisis to initiate a process for change using the BLM protests and the increased media coverage of several use-of-deadly-force incidents between police officers and the public as a need to modernize the service (Battersby, 2016; Canada NewsWire, 2017; Freeman, 2016; Glover, 2017; Hains, 2017; N.D., 2016a; Ratchford, 2016). Moreover, the Wynne government, like Cameron's, acquired media support during the initial phases of the introduction of their comparable legislative agenda related to reorganizing how police services would be delivered in their respective jurisdictions (Basu, 2017; N.D., 2017c).

### **William Benoit's Image Repair Theory**

William Benoit's image repair theory is constructed for the purpose of studying how various types of organizations manage through a crisis communication process in order to protect

the image of the organization or group, and to mitigate reputational risk (Benoit, 2015).

Although image repair theory recognizes an organization's goal of maintaining a positive image through a single or a series of short-term catastrophic events related to a specific incident, I argue the theory is limited in its ability to provide a framework for organizations that need an ongoing image management process (Benoit, 2015). Every day police services must prepare for the potential of a public relations crisis, as each interaction between the service and the public or an officer and a citizen can escalate into a negative situation that would require a communicative response. I developed two types of potential crisis management situations – a low-risk crisis communication event that tends to occur between an individual and a police officer and a high-risk crisis communication event that could involve a community and the actions of a police officer or service over a longer period of time. First, a low-risk event could involve a situation of a public complaint by an individual who claimed they were treated improperly after being stopped for a traffic violation. This type of event can be vetted through the local police service or processed through the OIPRD. The OIPRD in Ontario is the oversight body that oversees the public complaints system of police officer non-criminal behaviour such as deceit, discreditable conduct, unlawful/unnecessary exercise of duty and breach of confidence (OIPRD, 2017, p. 25). In the OIPRD's 2017 Annual Report, the public complaints service investigated 2,048 allegations involving 23,981 police services personnel (a single allegation involves multiple police officers) and concluded 1,895 of those allegations were unsubstantiated and 12 were substantiated but deemed less serious. Of the total allegations investigated, 33 were considered serious and forwarded to the appropriate police services for potential disciplinary action (OIPRD, 2014, pp. 34 & 35). Although there will be a risk some of these public complaints could escalate to a crisis communication event, I argue it is unlikely.

High-risk crisis communication events such as the Toronto Police Service's (TPS) investigation and subsequent arrest of Bruce McArthur for allegedly murdering eight men could negatively impact the reputation and image of police services and its relationship with the LGBTQ2SA community (Germano, 2018). McArthur was arrested in January 2018 in connection with the deaths of the initial two missing men from Toronto's gay village. The investigation was expanded after human remains of more men missing since 2010 were found in planters at a house where McArthur was employed as a landscaper. As the media continued to cover the investigation, the LGBTQ2SA reacted angrily to the perceived lack of attention police gave to the number of missing members from the community with claims of homophobia, racism and incompetence (Brockbank, 2018; Ferreira, 2018b; Mukherjee, 2018; Thanh Ha & Ling, 2018). The claims of racism and homophobia were compounded as the majority of the identified victims were people of colour and/or gay men. In the months prior to McArthur's arrest in January 2018, the LGBTQ2SA community was demanding more police resources to assist finding the missing men and to publicly recognize there was a serial killer preying on gay men. (Brockbank, 2018) The reluctance of TPS to communicate the existence of a potential serial killer with the LGBTQ2SA community in the months leading up to McArthur's arrest for allegedly murdering two men prompted a significant amount of negative press and community criticism. This type of event requires a more strategic crisis communication response in that the notion of police legitimacy as a public service meant to protect its citizens was being challenged. Furthermore, as the magnitude of this crisis continues to be an ongoing investigation, the TPS will be required to initiate a parallel strategy over the longer-term of repairing its image within the LGBTQ2SA community.

Benoit's image repair theory is the ideal communicative approach to manage the Toronto Police Service's investigation and arrest of Bruce McArthur in that a *persuader* (the Toronto Police Service) believes an *audience* (the LGBTQ2SA community, the families of the victims, the general public and the media) will be 'disapproving' of the past actions of the police service (Benoit, 2015, pg. 19). Although Benoit's image repair theory is limited in its ability to withstand a series of sustained crisis communication episodes of unrelated events, his framework possesses a number of typologies that are designed specifically to address higher reputational risks such as those related to the perception of incompetence and mismanagement of the McArthur investigation that could have resulted in additional deaths.

Responding to public and media accusations of incompetence, racism and homophobia during the investigation of an alleged serial killer resonated within Toronto's marginalized LGBTQ2SA community (Herhalt, 2018; Mukherjee, 2018; Van Paassen, 2018). The complexity and sensationalized elements of the McArthur investigation is an illustration of how a public service with an existing precarious relationship with the city's LGBTQ2SA community required, and continues to require, a strategic approach that halts a further erosion of trust. In relation to the McArthur case, Benoit's response strategies of *denial*; *evading responsibility*; *reducing the offensiveness of the act*; *corrective action*, and; *mortification* provide the TPS with several approaches towards managing crisis communication events and its impact on reputational risk and legitimacy (Benoit, 2015; Reid, 2017). It also provides an option that should not be deployed in response to any negative media or community events associated with this case. I will illustrate how each of Benoit's five image repair categories were employed by the Toronto Police Services prior in the lead up to Bruce McArthur's arrest and within the immediate months afterwards:

1. The *denial* approach is a communication strategy that lacks empathy for the *audience* affected by a certain action and is not recommended as a response strategy for an event such as the McArthur investigation (Benoit, 2015). Prior to the arrest of McArthur as the prime suspect in the disappearance of several men primarily from Toronto's gay village, Chief Mark Saunders would not recognize the potential of a serial killer preying on this population (Ferreira, 2017). Although there may be specific legal reasons why he did not use the term as more men were disappearing from the village, Saunders and his team were not effective in their persuasive communication to the LGBTQ2SA community that "...the evidence is telling us that (term serial killer) is not the case right now" (Ferreira, 2017). The challenge for TPS in this circumstance, is that a marginalized community that appeared to be connected to some of the victims were looking for reassurance in terms of feeling safe and feeling that the investigation was a priority, regardless of a past history between the community and the police service.
2. The second strategy of *evading responsibility* can be employed effectively to communicate and explain a negative outcome from a specific individual or organization that was the result of extenuating circumstances. For instance, the combination of the McArthur investigation, the recent van attack in Toronto that killed 10 people in April, 2018 and the murders of Ben and Honey Sherman in 2017, has affected the service's ability to remain within their annual budget (Gillis & Beattie, 2018). Terrorist attacks, large police investigations or responding to natural disasters are easier to explain to taxpayers as they are unplanned events requiring a significant amount of resources. As I explore later on in the thesis, this response strategy can also be employed when a police service needs to explain the death or injury of an individual experiencing a mental health

crisis and its relationship to the lack of adequate funding and access to mental health services in Ontario (Gillis & Gallant, 2017; N.D., 2017d).

3. Increasing the level of community engagement in specific activities with marginalized groups or individuals for the purpose of building better and more positive relationships are examples of how a police service can *reduce the offensiveness* of a negative history with police services (Benoit, 2015; Gillis, 2016; James, Chapman-Nyhao, & Kwan-Landford, 2011; Vendeville, 2016). For instance, the decision by some municipalities to have police officers designated as school resource officers (SRO) patrolling high schools in uniform can produce some positive benefits for the students and the community (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018). It is also a communicative action designed to rebrand what the image and presence of a police officer can mean to an age group with a traditionally negative or indifferent history with the profession. In the case of the missing men investigation prior to the arrest of McArthur, a reduction of the offensiveness of the impression of the investigation was evident when several non-uniformed officers attended a community event of concerned citizens from the LGBTQ2SA community and provided assurances their concerns were being taken seriously (Brown, 2017). For that moment, TPS was able to lower the negative association the community had with the police and a perception of homophobia associated with police culture in that they were there to listen, answer questions and console (Doe, 2018; Nasser, 2018). If those police officers did not attend to engage in a dialogue about the investigation, impressions of racism, homophobia and incompetence could have been amplified within the community.
4. Benoit's *corrective action* is a strategy designed to enact a process or activity that will address a negative perception of the offending organization (Benoit, 2015). For example,

Ontario's Chiefs of Police commissioned a report that wanted to know how police services could improve its relationship with the LGBTQ2SA community (Couto, 2014). The report produced a number of recommendations including a recognition of a history of oppression between police and the community, the expansion of Internal Support Networks (ISN's) where LGBTQ2SA police officers and civilian personnel feel safe during the coming out process, and a recommendation to increase the recruitment of more members from the community to become police officers. The report indicated a diversified workforce could contribute a greater understanding of interacting with marginalized populations. (Couto, 2014; Reid, 2017). Another example of a corrective action typology was Chief Saunders' admission that TPS could have done better in relation to the McArthur case and that he would launch an inquiry to examine systemic bias in the service (Herhalt, 2018).

5. *Mortification* is a communication response that recognizes an offensive act, such as the apologies made by Chief Saunders or the 1981 Toronto bath house raids accepting blame for not helping the LGBTQ2SA community with the McArthur investigation (Benoit, 2015; Campbell, 2016; CBC News, 2018a). In the latter case, it was important to recognize he miscommunicated as fear and tension within the community was palpable. By backing off his initial comments that he was misquoted, he was indirectly recognizing the sensitivity of the investigation in relation to the community.

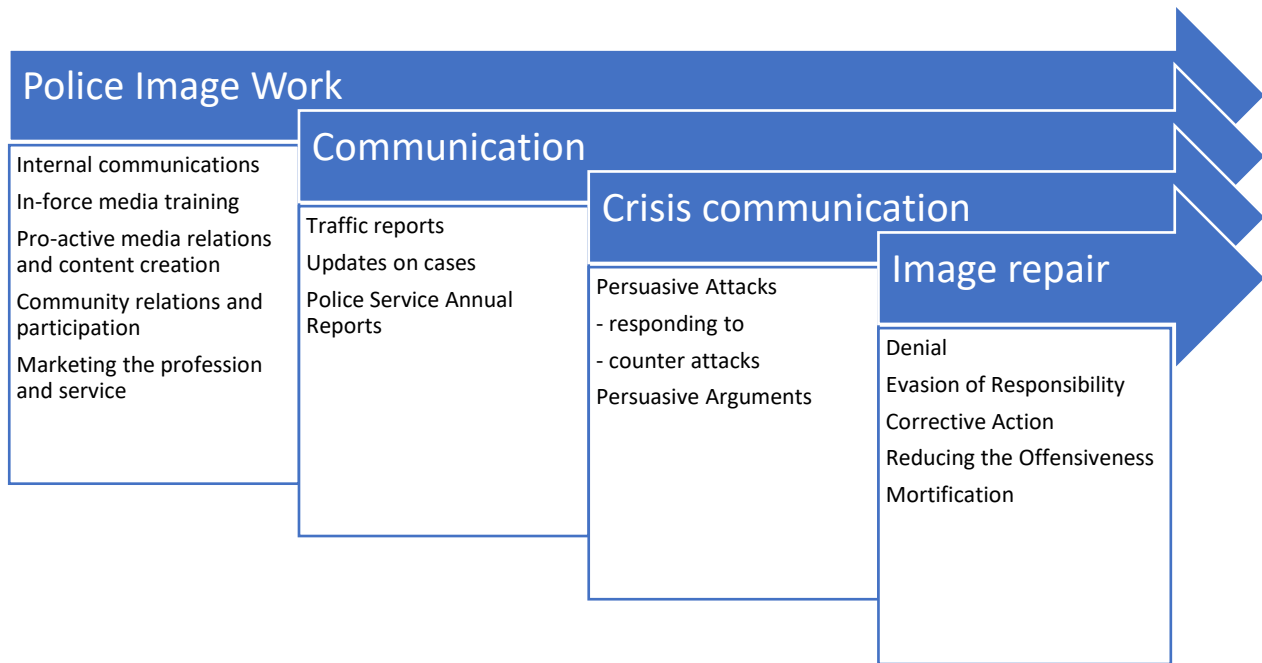
Although these typologies have multiple applications after a potential police-based crisis communication event, a research study conducted by Benoit & Drew (1997) concluded corrective action and mortification were the most effective at repairing relationships between individuals and organizations that were responsible for an offensive act. In this particular

example, the offensive act is in actuality a series of negative acts during the McArthur investigation that were exacerbated by decades of a negative relationship. Chief Sauder's investigation of systemic bias in the TPS is an illustration of both recognizing the issue and a willingness to build a relationship with the public it is supposed to protect (Herhalt, 2018). Response strategies such as the Chief indicating he was not in the police force when the bath house raids were conducted or there was no indication the disappearances were related creates a public impression the service is uncaring and apathetic to a community experiencing a form of trauma and fear (Campbell, 2016; Couto, 2014). According to Benoit and Drew (1997), the effectiveness of both corrective action and mortification as responses in crisis communication is due to a public willingness to forgive those associated with an offensive act and the sincerity of their apology.

While many complaints against police officer behaviour are legitimate and warrant further investigation, I argue image repair theory is unable to manage the volume of potential unrelated communication events throughout multiple police services, nor is it effective to manage the emotive aftermath of a significant crisis event. Image repair is a framework suited for organizations, political leaders and corporations requiring a response to a situation that hampers its financial stability, electoral success or social legitimacy within a very specific timeframe. For the purpose of managing the privatization of police services debate within Ontario, Benoit's image repair theory requires an expansion of communicative action to include a long-term and sustained building of the brand of professional police, such as police image work (Mawby, 2002). As illustrated in *Table 4*, extending image repair theory to include police image work as a macro-level theoretical framework of continuing a process of communicating with the public exists whether there is a crisis to manage or not. Furthermore, the combination of the two

theoretical models assists in mitigating the reputational risk of singular crisis communication events as the organization is actively contributing to an ongoing process of protecting its reputation and image. Burns and Bruner (2000) argue Benoit's theoretical framework lacks the incorporation of iconic imagery that are required for the purpose of ongoing process of managing its value to the community and social capital. All of the images associated with policing such as the badge, the uniform, the feeling of safety by some or the feeling of fear associated with others has a value of an association that can be leveraged in the formation of communicative action. Police image work is an expansion of the frame that builds upon those symbols of meaning associated with police services such as the uniform, the badge, public safety and security and can mitigate periods of vulnerability when an organization is susceptible to negative value formation. Although Benoit's (2010) image repair approach is ideally suited to respond to the immediate crisis resulting from the events related to the McArthur investigation, the Toronto Police Service will require a longer-term communicative strategy that repairs the erosion of trust in the relationship the LGBTQ2SA community, such as can be found with Mawby's police image work.

Table 4 – Image Repair Theory with Police Image Work Duties



Source: (Benoit, 2015; Burns & Bruner, 2000; Mawby, 2002)

### Robert Mawby - Police Image Work

The absence of an ongoing image and reputational management process within police services provides austerity proponents with more flexibility and opportunity to be effective in forming and delivering persuasive attacks. Research of UK police service operations conducted in 2002 found that a number of external and internal organizational pressures, including an expanding digitized media age, government narratives of proving consumer value, public perceptions of police misconduct and crime and, larger demands for police services are forcing police-based organizations to adopt marketing imagery as a part of the communication strategies (Mawby & Worthington, 2002). Mawby and Worthington (2002) argue these types of pressures coupled with an inconsistent understanding of the role of marketing and public relations as a

discipline within a police service limit the ability of the organization to promote its brand and value to the public. Moreover, the authors also found in their research a lack of internal marketing activities that ensures front-line police officers are aware of how to use their frequent interactions with the public to promote their value and build legitimacy. Mawby argues, “...image work can enhance police legitimacy by contributing to police accountability through transparency and open communications. At other times image work is deployed as a means of coping with illegitimacy, legitimacy deficit and delegitimation.” (p. 194). He goes further by positing police image work can be an effective tool to promote the value and flexibility of the framework, as it can be deployed at all levels of police operations including its community outreach strategies, media relations and internal communications. For instance, police service marketing and public relations departments could have provided all front-line police officers with potential messaging strategies to counter the AMO’s arguments that police officers were only working on core police duties such as crime prevention and solvency 20% of their time and 80% of their working hours on non-core police duties such as administration (Kay & Salter, 2014; Montgomery & Griffiths, 2016; N.D., 2012c). Front-line police officers who interact with the public on a daily basis should be provided with the necessary training and latitude to be able to counter misinformation, such as explaining how 80% of their non-core police duties could be de-escalating a situation so that no crime has been committed, consoling a victim of crime when they are upset or vulnerable, assisting a person in a mental health crisis or, interacting with the public at community events to communicate any updates in relation to an investigation.

## Communication

As a public service, one of the basic responsibilities communities expect of their local police service is an ongoing process of communication. As Benoit (2015) states, “...communication is vital because most of our knowledge is acquired through communication rather than direct experience” (p. 5). All communicative actions from a press conference asking the public for information related to a missing child to social media messages about city road closures are examples of how police services engage with the public it protects. Every communicative action is a persuasive argument of police legitimacy as a public safety service, such as increasing awareness of an escaped convict and a potential danger to a neighbourhood, avoiding water-filled roads after a storm to avoid injury, or announcing an increase in patrols for impaired drivers to prevent self-injuries or injuries to others (Benoit, 2015 p. 10). While each of these micro-communicative activities on its own is not a strategy, the formalization of a sustained organizational process that includes these tactics provides police organizations with the ability to build a police brand. Communication as an action posited by Benoit (2015) in image repair theory is the most basic function of a police service, but a more significant macro-level effort such as the ability to defend against persuasive arguments and persuasive attacks by organizations like the AMO and BLM is required for police services to support and maintain a belief of legitimacy (p. 7).

## **Persuasive Arguments and Persuasive Attacks**

As with most political communication strategies of public policy, framing the narrative for a need to restructure police service delivery in the UK was a strategy composed of a series of persuasive attacks (Benoit, 2015; Fisher & Phillips, 2015; Travis, 2012; Travis, 2013; Travis, 2015). Benoit (2015) defines persuasive arguments and persuasive attacks as "...an attempt to create (or strengthen) a negative value of a person or organization" (p. 9). In order for the UK government to challenge the existing perception of the value of police as a public service in the country, the Cameron government needed to implement a communication strategy that eroded the value of community policing in relation to a public sector crisis. The UK government implemented an ongoing communication strategy that attacked police services as an outdated and unsustainable public safety model with uncontrollable costs during a recessionary period (Benoit, 2015; Dodd & Travis, 2015; Fisher & Phillips, 2015; Travis, 2012; Travis, 2013). For instance, then Home Secretary Theresa May's communication strategy indicated a need to deconstruct the public's attachment to police services as a highly valued public service that is an integral part of community safety. May's messaging from 2011 through to her ascension as Prime Minister in 2016 of "reforming police pay," "cutting crime," "efficiency," and "increasing public safety," were communication strategies attempting to redefine the beliefs and values associated with police legitimacy from a meaning of "public safety and security" to a frame of "value and cost" (Benoit, 2015, p. 10; May, September 11, 2012; N.D., 2011; Travis, 2013; Travis, 2015). The government's creation of a new belief of responsible spending and protecting taxpayer money was a strategy intended to minimize the riskiness of austerity cuts and a potential public feeling of increased vulnerability as a result of less police officers (Benoit, 2015). The use of specific messaging about police performance, such as how police officers are only dedicating

approximately 20% of their work towards preventing crime and solvency and 80% on bureaucratic tasks, bolstered the Cameron government's central theme of responsible spending and simultaneously redirecting public focus away from vulnerability and emotive connections to police services (Millie & Bullock, 2013; Montgomery & Griffiths, 2016).

In the construction of the narratives related to the escalating cost and value of policing in Ontario, the Wynne government deferred the persuasive arguments and attacks to municipal governments and social justice groups (Brennan, 2014a; Brennan, 2014b; El-Chantiry & Kaustinen, 2017; A. Jones, 2016; Morrow, 2016a). For instance, the AMO regularly argues in their policy papers and media interviews that policing costs are the highest in the country due to an excessive abuse of police officers suspended with pay, a collective bargaining process that pays police service personnel similar salary structures regardless of location and cost of living, and an arbitration process favouring labour (AMO, 2015; Brennan, 2014a; Morrow, 2016b). In their persuasive arguments, the AMO have been deploying similar narratives of a systemic crisis as the Cameron government such as "...police need to know the cupboard is bare," or "...the percentage of pay increases awarded to first responders in the past few years could build a two-lane highway from Windsor, Ontario to Quebec City, and back again" (Brennan, 2014a; Brennan, 2014b; N.D.; Vanderlinde, 2017b). In their communication strategies, the AMO is attempting to create an image that police service personnel are overpaid at a time when there are other priorities requiring funding within municipal budgets. The strategy is deliberately assigning a value associated with other public needs within municipal budgets and forcing the intended audience to compare and choose amongst other priorities such as garbage, transportation, health or recreational services.

Whereas the AMO is engaged in a series of persuasive arguments designed to change the public's emotive connection to police services to a value of being cost-effective and responsible financial managers, BLM's method of communicative action are persuasive attacks that directly re-inforce the negative value associated with those symbols and imagery of the policing profession (Benoit, 2015). BLM's symbolic actions of protest at the Pride parades, the police service board meetings and outside the Toronto Police Service Headquarters are designed to redefine the public's positive association with symbols and imagery related to a police presence within both an LGBTQ2SA community event and schooling system as negative and harmful towards marginalized communities (Battersby, 2016; Canada NewsWire, 2017; Vendeville, 2016). As per Benoit's (2015) framework, BLM's persuasive attacks are attempts at changing "...an existing belief and trying to create a negative value for the audience, stressing the offensiveness of the act" (p. 9). As with the perceived negative imagery of a police officer standing at a construction site and not engaged in a crime prevention or crime solvency process, BLM has attempted to link historical and existing social justice events as a reason for modernizing the *Police Services Act (1990)*. Throughout this deliberative process, BLM as an advocate, contributed to the construction of the new *Police Services Act (2018)* with an increased focus of police interactions with marginalized and vulnerable populations (Battersby, 2015; Battersby, 2016; Ratchford, 2016). However, in the process of inserting the issue of systemic racism and a belief police culture is still homophobic and racist, BLM succeeded at having a police presence removed from both the Pride parade and the schools has succeeding in exposing a "police legitimacy deficit" that also hinders their ability to rectify their relationships with the communities (Mawby, 2002, p. 194). As a result, BLM indirectly provided the Wynne

government with the systemic crisis it needed to overhaul how *Police Services Act (1990)*, without publicly debating the need to privatize and civilianize police functions to control costs.

### **The Use of Third Parties**

The use of favourable opinions or support by those outside of policing organizations can be an effective strategy for both managing the period after a crisis management event or as a part of a longer-term strategy to increase the profession's image and reputation (Benoit, 2015). When an act or a series of negative events has occurred, Benoit (2015) argues contributing support from those supporting the actions or the apology for the action can lend credibility to the public forgiveness process. Benoit posits the use of third parties "...can lend a degree of objectivity to the image repair effort" (p. 98). After alleged serial killer Bruce McArthur was arrested and the LGBTQ2SA community in Toronto was criticizing the investigation by TPS for not connecting all the missing men to the same suspect, the sisters of one of the victims indicated at a press conference, "...establishing the link between them is the difficult part. You can't fault the police for taking the time that they do" (Slaughter, 2018). Their contribution as a third party helped to diffuse a growing criticism that the police were incompetent and indifferent when it came to investigating several missing gay men within the LGBTQ2SA community. Their connection as family members affected by the death of their brother added credibility and support of how the investigation was unfolding.

In terms of contributing to the longer-term strategies of police image work, third parties can also provide additional support for past or future police-based activities. In Ontario, BLM has consistently criticized the school resource officer (SRO) program that has been in effect for almost a decade in Ontario (Germano, 2017; Nasser, 2017). In this program, many high schools with a larger demographic of marginalized populations have a dedicated uniformed police officer

that works alongside teachers and students. The program is an example of an ongoing police image work process in that the accessibility and visibility of the police officer as an adult resource within the school is rebranding what the symbols of the profession mean to marginalized groups. Third parties such as parents of children within the school or academics such as Dr. Linda Duxbury who has studied the effectiveness of the SRO program contribute to the credibility and validity of similar processes as an independent assessment can remove the negative value formation to be countered (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018). The program has been controversial as the advocacy efforts of BLM succeeded in removing the SRO's from Toronto's high schools as they claimed racialized students were targeted more frequently than other teenagers (Glover, 2017). In a research study of the long-term effects of SRO's in Peel Regional schools, Duxbury and Bennell concluded the program had numerous benefits within those schools with uniformed police officers in terms of improved student mental health outcomes, public safety and lower crimes rates. (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018). Duxbury's contribution to the debate as a third party has provided additional objectivity to the debate of whether to have SRO's in the Greater Toronto Area schools or not (Benoit, 2015).

### **Expanding the Framework to Include Both Image Repair and Police Image Work**

Defending against a persuasive attack on two fronts where an individual or organization is attempting to alter the legitimacy of the role of policing within Ontario requires a communication framework that can counter both the privatization arguments by the AMO and the claims of the existence of oppression and systemic racism within police culture and the organizations where they are employed. The combination of Benoit's (2010) image repair theory with Mawby's (2002) police work creates an ability to expand the framing or communicative

capabilities that continue to protect, repair and build the profession's legitimacy. For instance, an image repair framework can be deployed to manage any crisis situation arising from the approximate 8 million interactions involving 68,000 police officers in Canada every year at the same time police services are engaged in community events, fundraisers or proactive patrolling throughout the province (Statistics Canada, 2016). Where image repair ends after a communication strategy is employed to manage a crisis that affects a specific service, police image work continues to protect the value, reputation and legitimacy of the profession. Although the main goal for political leaders in both jurisdictions is decreasing police costs through privatization and civilianization, the differing communication strategies adopted by proponents in the UK and Ontario towards achieving that goal has also posed a significant challenge for police organizations to maintain and build legitimacy. In the next chapter, I explore research pertaining to how both the UK's police austerity measures and the Wynne government's focus on social justice issues as a way to justify a reorganization of police service delivery requires a difference communication framework for police organizations.

## Chapter Four: Literature Review

### **Academic Research – Framing the Narrative and the Consequences of Inaction**

The literature studying the formation of the communication strategies for both the opponents and proponents of police austerity measures in the United Kingdom over a period of 8 years provides a direction of how similar strategies have and continue to unfold in a province where there is limited research. For instance, there are many academic studies of the early and latter years of how the UK government implemented a framing strategy and persuasive attacks that were captured by the media as a means towards public acceptance of the need for police austerity measures (Benoit, 2015; Dodd & Travis, 2015; Drury, 2015; Fisher & Phillips, 2015; Gallagher, 2015; Kay & Salter, 2014; N.D., 2012b; Travis, 2012; Travis, 2013). It could be argued the combination of media complicity, uncoordinated efforts by opponents in response to the framing strategies and the lack of operational marketing and communication functions within various police organizations provided proponents with an early opportunity to define the financial crisis as a need to rein in public service spending – including police services. Although the use of the media as the main distribution network for the Cameron government’s preferred messaging strategy is a focus of this thesis, academic research of the UK Conservative party’s ideological influences and the initial lack of response by opposing stakeholders contributed to the public’s acceptance of austerity measures. Moreover, the Cameron’s government’s use of data from several independent government research bodies such as Her Majesty’s Inspectorate Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the College of Policing and the Home Office provided proponents of austerity measures with quantifiable data in the initial years to support their arguments. Early data studies from government sources provided both the Cameron and May governments with a greater flexibility to interpret the data to complement the *Big*

*Society* policy of the need to cut costs within the public service in the early years of their government. This approach allowed a dominant theme of the emergence of a ‘systemic crisis’ to prevail within the deliberation process, as the long-term effects of service cuts were yet to be realized (Kay & Salter, 2015). However, after five years of police austerity measures, media coverage began to focus on the police’s inability to respond to several terrorist attacks with less law enforcement employees, a decline in responding to emergency calls in a timely manner and triaging what types of criminal activity requires the presence of a police officer. The long-term tracking of the effects of cutting police services began to negate their initial claims that public safety would not be compromised (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Dodd, 2017; Dodd, 2016; Stone, 2017; Travis, 2017). The challenge of continuing to frame the necessity of austerity measures in UK became an increasingly difficult narrative to defend for both the Cameron and May governments, as more longitudinal research after seven years of police service cuts materialized. This research provided opponents of austerity measures in the UK and other jurisdictions with a valuable source of quantifiable outcomes to formulate their own persuasive attacks (Benoit, 2015, p. 10).

### **The Role of the Media in Creating a Systemic Crisis - UK**

Several research studies posit that most of the media coverage during the initial debate about police reform through austerity measures and a lack of specificity of how policy outcomes could materialize provided the Cameron government with the latitude to direct the preferred communication approach and a public acceptance of cost reduction. Through a framing analysis of how the government associated the solution of austerity to correct excessive public spending during a recession under the previous Labour government, several research studies identified the UK Conservative Party was the main beneficiary of the media’s lack of scrutiny of the policy

debate (Basu, 2017; Berry, 2016; Painter, 2013). According to Richard Grusin (as cited in Basu, 2017, p. 15), the then-opposition Conservative Party leading up to the 2010 election implemented a framing strategy that assisted with a ‘softening up’ of the public before they could experience negative outcomes as a result of public service cuts. Several academic researchers argue the Cameron Conservatives created a narrative that the UK was a ‘broken society’ which required an immediate economic, political and cultural solution in order to protect future services (Basu, 2017; Corbett & Walker, 2013; Kay & Salter, 2014; A. White & Gill, 2013). This narrative created a perception that the public service was in a crisis and was used in the creation of a political communication process that resonated with those with the most to lose financially. Before exploring who this target market was, it is important to understand how the Cameron Conservatives created a political climate that amplified an anxiety with this segment of the population.

In a study of an optimal time to frame a political discussion about implementing austerity measures, White and Gill (2013) posited the Cameron government’s most significant challenge was related to how would the Conservatives create a climate whereby rationalizing market-based solutions for police service delivery was in the public interest (p. 288). They argued the most logical approach towards increasing public acceptance of more privatized police services required a communication approach that reframed the narrative to indicate alternative police service delivery models already existed in the UK and it has not impacted public safety. This is a consequential narrative, in that the previous government’s overspending during a financial crisis resulted in an unsustainable economic situation that threatened the quality of public service delivery and sacrifices were needed to prevent a more severe situation from occurring (p. 289). Enacting a strategic communication strategy that enhanced the consequences of inaction

amplified a fear of the unknown. Cameron's (2009) speech at a Conservative party conference and subsequent newspaper opinion piece a year before he became the Prime Minister is an example of how his party applied the consequential narrative approach towards initiating the need for public sector cuts. It created a public fear that a financial crisis was imminent without a government response, and the absence of a solution could lead to a negative economic outcome that would affect all citizens:

We all know how bad things are: massive debt, social breakdown, political disenchantment. But what I want to talk about today is how good things could be. Don't get me wrong, I have no illusions. If we win this election, it is going to be tough. There will have to be cutbacks in public spending, and that will be painful. We will need to confront Britain's culture of irresponsibility and that will be hard to take for many people. And we will have to tear down Labour's big government bureaucracy, ripping up its time-wasting, money-draining, responsibility-sapping nonsense. None of this will be easy. We will be tested. I will be tested. I'm ready for that – and so I believe, are the British people. So yes, there is a steep climb ahead (Cameron, 2009).

The speech expanded upon the frame of how excessive government spending in all sectors of public services including policing, healthcare and social services would affect all citizens and their standard of living without reform (Cameron, 2009). Furthermore, the strategy leveraged a public mood of uncertainty and worry related to the cost of goods and services, personal wealth performance and ability to retain and access future public services such as healthcare and police in an emergency. The Cameron speech was the beginning of a political communication process that reinforced a fear that resonated with a specific socio-economic voting base about what they could tangibly lose if the Labour government was re-elected and continued with their existing management practices of the economy.

The creation and implementation of the *Big Society* policy and accompanying communication strategy was designed to create a foreboding financial crisis and identify a specific voting base who would be open to viewing austerity as a necessity. Several academic studies identified this target audience as those who viewed themselves as both consumers and/or taxpayers, and not necessarily as supporters of a strong public service (Kay & Salter, 2014; Stanley, 2016). In a series of focus group sessions, Stanley found this target audience identified as taxpayers who were in the middle between an “undeserving poor” taking advantage of limited financial resources within social services and the wealthy whose greed created the financial situation in 2008 (pp. 401, 402). Furthermore, Stanley (2016) posited the austerity messaging resonated with those in his focus groups who “... almost exclusively identified against these undeserving traits and thus occupied a large middle ground in between these two positions by asserting their own hardworking virtues” (p. 401). Stanley concluded this demographic base was a large voting group with the capacity to elect a Cameron government. As this group of voters in the middle of all social and economic classes viewed themselves in contrast with those in both lower and higher income brackets who they perceived to be taking advantage of the system, this demographic was both motivated to vote for Cameron’s party and give him a mandate to implement an austerity policy (Stanley, p. 401).

Kay and Salter (2014) further expanded upon this target market theory with their study of the BBC’s coverage of the austerity debate, in that these taxpayers saw themselves through the lens of a consumer who subsidizes a public service that benefits only the rich and the poor, and not themselves (Kay & Salter, 2014; Stanley, 2016). Kay and Salter (2014) argue the media became an extension of the Cameron government’s narrative of the need to rein in spending and implement cuts as the global crisis left the country with limited choices. They researched the

methods by which the Cameron government framed the need for austerity through an online public consultation process asking the population to provide input of how they work in relation to managing this systemic crisis. The survey yielded over 70,000 responses that primarily validated the intended policy direction of the Cameron government. Kay and Salter (2014) posited the results of the government's public consultation process was further supported by the BBC's series of interactive public engagement processes that asked three questions – “What would you cut?,” “What is a Spending Review?,” and “What would you cut and what would you save?”. Kay and Salter concluded:

Little introduction is given for the (interactive) videos beyond the posing of the question. The question is thus assumed to be transparent, legitimate and immediately comprehensible, whereas we suggest that it is framed in such a way as to encourage certain responses and to powerfully discourage alternatives. The question precludes consideration of alternatives such as increased taxes for the wealthy or an examination of the nature of deregulated capitalism itself. Addressed to atomised individuals and to individual preferences and interests, it removes the possibility of communicative rationality and deliberation. ‘Public opinion’, then, becomes merely an aggregation of these interests and preferences, rather than a consensus arrived at through collective will-formation (p. 762).

Essentially, the BBC as the largest, state-owned media outlet acted as an extension of the Cameron government's intended policy direction and circumvented the political deliberation process with a focus on debating “constrained” options that forced choices between economic, social and political groups (Kay & Salter, 2014, pp. 767, 768). Furthermore, the design of the questionnaire did not attempt to eliminate the bias in order to get a more statistically significant representation of diverse public opinion and approach towards a fiscal policy. In fact, I would argue the 70,000 respondents and their biases provided the Cameron government with the

appropriate amount of data and textual analysis they needed to effectively build a framing strategy for the election. This strategy circumvented the public deliberation process through the use of intense rhetoric that supported their political objectives.

Cameron's pre-election speech and the strategic use of rhetoric with key phrases such as a "...culture of irresponsibility" in a reference to "...many people," and a call-to-action to this specific group of voters provided him with the legitimacy to reform public service (Cameron, 2009). The construction of this pending systemic crisis through a well-articulated frame by the Conservative party's narrative and its advocacy for reforming public service delivery helped this voting base to view Cameron and his party as the only political actor who would protect "hardworking" taxpayers/consumers and their interests from those taking advantage of the social services and judicial systems, and the wealthy who avoid paying a fairer share of taxes (Stanley, 2016, p. 403).

I hypothesize the Cameron's government's advocacy strategy for the need to decentralize more public services equated local government control of financial matters with an individual's ability to manage finances responsibly. Immediately after the 2010 general election, the new Cameron government amplified its rhetoric of a pending systemic crisis with the announcement of a new budget and a subsequent *Comprehensive Spending Review* policy that began to implement public sector cuts to a total combined amount of approximately \$143 billion CDN (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2016). A number of research studies in the early years immediately after the launch of austerity measures found the UK's local governments did initially survive through less funding for programs provided by the central government, but that economically deprived municipalities and local welfare services were negatively affected (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2016; Bailey, et. al, p. 578). Cutting welfare rolls as a means of "returning the system to sanity" and

correcting a system that is on a “merry-go-round of dependency” are consequential narratives that both illustrated the severity of a need to control the financial situation through austerity measures and resonated with their targeted voting base (Dominiczak, 2015). The Cameron government solidified this voting base further with a promise and policy that guaranteed and protected pension growth for senior citizens by redirecting a percentage of funding designated for younger recipients on social assistance programs (Lowndes & Gardner, 2016). This redirection of funding provided the Cameron government with a demonstrative result for their targeted voters whereby they experienced a small but noticeable increase in their spending power and comfort of living at the same time as penalizing those they perceive are living off and taking advantage of a social assistance system that perpetuates dependency.

The role of the media within the Cameron government’s communication strategy was not only effective in promoting public sector cuts that included police austerity measures, existing research in the UK indicates police organizations were unprepared for the amount of media scrutiny. In a structural analysis of police service “press offices” (now commonly known as corporate communications) across the UK in the 2000’s, Mawby (2002) concluded in his research that the profession recognized the need to increase proactive “...media relations, public relations, marketing and corporate identity activities,” but the majority of studied departments were consumed with reactive communication duties (p. 91). Approximately 71% of staff activities within the press office was reacting to press and public enquiries and very little on sustained strategies that built the police image in the UK. Mawby identified three types of structures of police image work within police services:

1. Marginal image work offices – these are the “bolt-on” or “peripheral” type of offices within police organizations that are generally staffed with a minimal amount of junior level of

people and considered a support activity (pp. 177 - 178). These types of police press offices have a lower level of engagement with diverse communities and media organizations.

2. Supportive image work – these press offices generally have more staff and are recognized as an important department by the organization’s leadership. These organizations will hire professional communications personnel and invest in the technology and processes required to be a part of the 24 hour news cycle process. Although the department is considered an important part of the organization’s operations, they may not be part of the strategic decision-making process (pp. 178 - 180).
3. Image at its core – these press offices are strategically involved in the planning process of the police service, and are actively engaged in promoting and rebranding police work beyond simply crime prevention and crime solvency. These organizations are fully committed to transparency and highlight all that police work entails including parades, community involvement, stakeholder management and recruitment of diversified members (pp. 180 - 184).

In his assessment of the three types of press offices, Mawby (2002) concludes most are within the “marginal work offices” or “supportive work offices.” He argues police services and organizations need to adopt an “image at its core” structure in that it is a stronger contributor towards reinforcing police legitimacy (p. 186).

A highly mediated society continues to increase scrutiny of police legitimacy and their role within public safety. Police legitimacy is at the core of the debate of whether or not to privatize certain police functions in the UK and Ontario. Although it tends to be considered a peripheral element of debate, it is also at the core of the argument of whether police organizations and culture are adjusting to the changing nature of the citizenry and the media.

Mawby (2002) argues police organizations need to recognize the “...changing mass mediated environment and its demands” to be able to effectively respond to oppositional forces such as politicians, advocacy groups and the media (p. 103). His argument that not adapting to the same rhetorical influences involved in an expanding public sphere environment such as social media and a changing media structure will continue to provide police critics with the ability to enhance a negative value of the profession or culture (Benoit, 2015).

A UK research study of how the media collectively vilified and contributed to the removal of Police Commissioner Iain Blair in 2008 has implications for the current debate about privatizing police service functions in Ontario. It could be argued most of the negative media coverage of Blair’s comments and policy directions are warranted, such as his comment that the media are racist, a public accusation of defending three police officers accused of racism and obstructing an independent investigation after a police shooting of a suspected terrorist suspect (Greer & McLaughlin, 2011). In Greer and McLaughlin’s (2011) research study of the media and their role de-legitimizing the Police Commissioner over several years, they concluded the resignation was “...a clear symbolic marker about what ‘type’ of Commissioner and policing philosophy is acceptable in contemporary Britain and demonstrated the power of the rising news media ‘politics of outrage’” (p. 43). The researchers were interested in exploring the phenomenon of ‘trial by media’ and the outcomes such a process could produce. I argue the public deliberation process about determining the effectiveness of Blair’s legitimacy as Police Commissioner in London in the public sphere was significantly influenced by the rhetoric communicated through the various media networks. Greer and McLaughlin (2011) observed in their research, “...over time, the journalistic repertoire of words and images that came to constitute Blair’s ‘master status’ in the public sphere constructed a ‘politicized’, ‘operationally

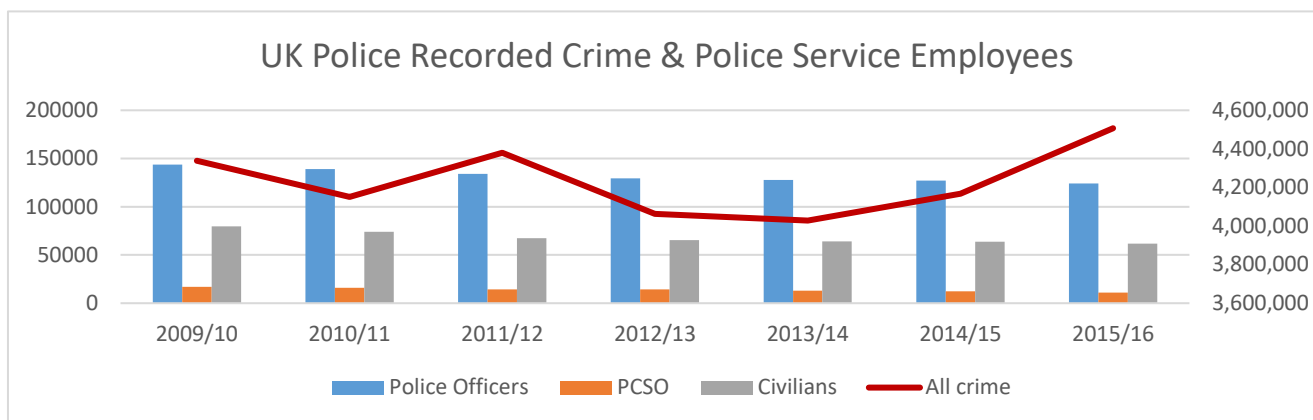
compromised' and 'gaffe-prone' Commissioner" (p. 24). Moreover, the sensationalized media coverage of the Commissioner in UK and the role of media during the debate about the UK's police austerity measures has the potential to create a similar police de-legitimizing effect in relation to the ongoing coverage of the investigation of Bruce McArthur, the debate about the high-cost of policing and BLM demands at various protests. Although there is currently no existing research in Ontario to support this hypothesis, Greer and McLaughlin's study of the rhetorical influences in the UK media is indicating a similar pattern of police de-legitimization in the coverage of the police's investigation of McArthur and BLM protests of police interactions with marginalized populations (CBC News, 2018a; Ferreira, 2018a; Gee, 2018; Germano, 2018; Herhalt, 2018; Ling & Gray, 2018; Thanh Ha & Ling, 2018).

### **Secondary Research - Long-term Effects of Austerity Measures in the UK**

Once the Cameron government's policy formation received a larger public acceptance of the need to rein in increasing public service costs such as police services through an austerity process, a review of longitudinal-based data sets and research commissioned by government sources can now provide additional insight as to how the Cameron and May government's framing evolved in response to a narrative for deeper cuts and several crisis management episodes. Government publications and reports such as those published by HMICFRS and the College of Policing provide yearly statistics of a number of variables related to the debate about the need for police reform and austerity such as, but not limited to the total number of police officers and civilians employed in services; salaries; police report crime; types of crime and employee satisfaction levels (College of Policing, 2015; HMICFRS, 2016). Although crown

corporations such as the College of Policing and HMICFRS are supposed to be independent from political influences to conduct research, the latter in particular has also been subjected to the *Big Society* philosophy of austerity with the inclusion of ‘value of money’ metrics as a part of its overall mandate that includes measuring the cost of policing to crime solvency and crime prevention. In order to understand the relationship between police resources and crime rates, I use three main sources of independent government-based data and research to contextualize how the Cameron and May governments were able to create and maintain a framing process of the need to implement police service austerity measures. In *Table 5*, it appears the reduction of police officers, special constables and civilians between the election of the Cameron government in 2010 through to 2014 did not produce any sustainable increase in crime rates (Ford, 2017). Moreover, the declining crime rates during this period provided the government with the latitude to claim austerity measures allowed a public service such as police services to reorganize and become more efficient without negatively affecting public safety.

Table 5 – Police Recorded Crime and Police Service Employees

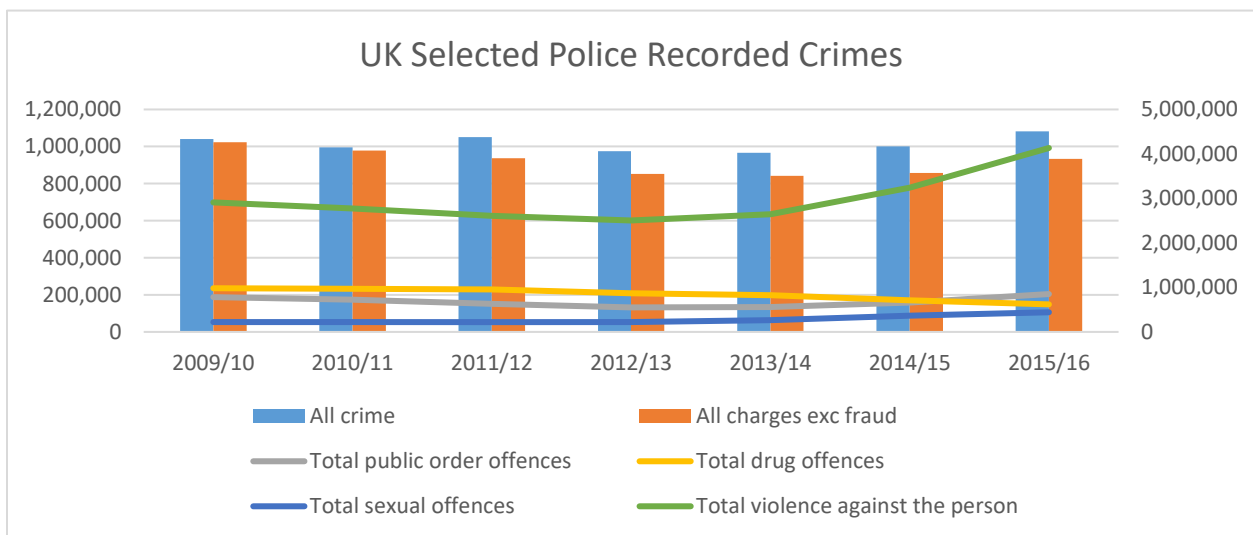


Source: (UK Government, 2017)

However, as police service personnel numbers continued to decline from 2014 through to 2016, police reported crimes began to trend significantly upward and challenged the UK government’s positive framing of the need for continued police services cuts (Merrick, 2017; Stone, 2017, p.6; Travis, 2015; Travis, 2017). Moreover, media stories began to focus on how police cuts by the central government was forcing individual police services to adopt informal and formal policies of triaging calls for service on the severity of the crime, such as drug offences, domestic abuse situations where the victim is unlikely to follow through with charges, or minor theft (Cellan-Jones, 2017; Harris, 2017; Moore-Bridger, 2017). As Table 6 reports, the result of less police officers and the directive by the May government to continue finding cost efficiencies at the same time as increased terrorist threats are forcing police services to ignore some crimes deemed as non-violent and low-cost impact. A re-direction of declining police resources to more severe crimes could explain the downward trend in police reported crime related to drug-related offences. Some police services such as the Metropolitan London Police have acknowledged a limitation of their resources and formalized this type of policy approach with programs such as the *Crime Assessment Policy* which states, “We need our officers to be

focused on serious crime and cases where there is a realistic chance that we will be able to solve it” (Davies, 2017, para. 11). This type of approach could mean calls for service such as domestic abuse situations could be assessed as less important if there was a probability the abused partner was not likely to press charges against their abusive partner. The May government’s inability to control the framing of the necessity of police austerity measures is changing as the public continues to experience the effects and emotive association of being a victim of low-level crime. As this erosion of trust in the Conservative party’s brand as the only party capable of managing the country’s finances without impacting public safety could also explain a number of policy reversals related to police service funding (Mason & Walker, 2017; Merrick, 2017). The target market Kay and Salter (2014) identified in their research of the large voting middle-class group that contributed to the electoral successes of the Cameron and May governments could now be persuaded austerity measures implemented by the Conservative government is not doing enough to protect their hard-earned money if their car is stolen or drug trafficking was occurring in their neighbourhood.

Table 6 - Police Recorded Crime by Select Types



Source: (UK Government, 2017)

## **A Systemic Crisis and Police Services in Ontario**

In the Province of Ontario, research commissioned and reported through independent branches of the provincial and municipal governments and aggregated through the federal government on police costs are also valuable sources of data that can corroborate the framing of a need for or the argument against police cost-cutting measures in Ontario. These studies can also provide additional contextual information towards understanding how the Wynne government's policy formation and legislative process related to *Bill 175 – Safer Ontario Act* unfolded as it faced pressure from groups advocating for more privatization. Although research based upon the UK experience of police austerity measures and its long-term effects on public safety can provide direction of how to shape the ongoing debate about a similar strategy in Ontario, the lack of consistent police costing research poses some persuasion challenges for police organizations. In this section, I review some key academic and secondary research sources of the public's perception of policing in Ontario and the cost of policing in Ontario as the basis of understanding how to create a communication approach.

### **Police Culture**

In order to understand how to build the reputation and image of policing in Ontario, it is important to review academic and secondary research of how marginalized populations view police services in the province, how the general public view the role of privatizing police services in a modern society and, how malleable policing culture is to changing how it communicates with the citizens they serve.

The complexity of social justice demands as advanced by BLM poses several challenges in terms of reviewing existing academic and secondary sources of research to understand the scope of the issue of police interactions with Ontario's marginal populations. Although the primary focus of BLM has been on the presence of uniformed police officers in events and schools at a time when there is a perception of racism and homophobia against some marginalized groups, they have extended the demographic composition of marginalized populations to include those who identify as intersectional. Those individuals who identify as intersectional are those who use multiple classifications to describe themselves including ethnicity, sexuality, socio-economic class, sex-trade workers or individuals based upon their immigration status (Samuels & Rose-Sheriff, 2008). Identifying and assisting those who identify as intersectional not only pose several challenges for police services, but all public services such as health care, immigration, procedural justice and social services. For instance, the shooting of Andrew Loku by TPS in 2015 as he was experiencing a mental health crisis is an example of BLM's claims that police were too fast to kill him without understanding that he was a black man with a mental health condition related to traumatic experiences in Sudan (Battersby, 2016; Gillis & Gallant, 2017; Perkel, 2017b; Warnica, 2015). BLM argues Loku's intersectional identity is subject to police-based stigma and racism as he is a person of colour with a mental illness. It was a message BLM expanded upon when they disrupted the highly media-covered Pride parade in 2016. Using the Toronto Pride as a backdrop, BLM emphasized the lack of social justice for those who identify as intersectional people of colour within the LGBTQ2SA community which also includes sex trade workers (CBC News, 2016a; Vendeville, 2016). As with the limited research related to police costs in Ontario, studies of intersectional identities and their interactions with police services in the province is non-existent. This is not to deny the lived

experiences of those who identify across a wide spectrum of intersectional traits, but the level of complexity of the demographic poses significant challenges for any public service and an ability to address a specific social, economic and health need. In order to review the extent of the academic and secondary source research in relation to the communication approaches police services may need to understand components of the problem, I will segment each into police interactions with people with mental illnesses (PMI); vulnerable population views of police in Ontario and Canada; public views of protest and the police, and; Ontario-based police culture research.

**Police Interactions with PMI.** Although there are no mandatory or consistent reporting practices of police interactions with PMI's across Ontario, there are a few academic studies that indicated most are managed well. There were two notable studies – one conducted for the Mental Health Commission of Canada of PMI perceptions of police officers and the other by Dr. Jennifer Schulenberg and her research of the police viewpoint interacting with people living with mental illnesses (Brink, Desmarais, & Livingston, 2011; Schulenberg, 2016). In Brink et al.'s (2011) research of those living with a variety of mental health conditions including bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia and depression found a large majority were respectful of the role of law enforcement in the community (p. 42). However, when asked a question about whether they agreed or disagreed they "...were treated with respect and dignity" during their interaction, only 56% agreed (p. 42). However, PMI's rated the interactions with police officers when it came to the quality of the event with them. In their research of 244 individuals who had at least one or more interactions with the police and how the process unfolded, almost two-thirds felt more "respected," "calmer" and "clearer" after the event had subsided (p. 70). In a question about whether a police officer should be able know about a PMI's history prior to responding to the

call, over 80% of respondents agreed if a PMI had a criminal past, known history of alcohol or substance abuse or patterns of violence (p. 72). The researchers indicated there was a strong sense by the respondents of the need to know before they approached the PMI so that they could manage the situation better. Moreover, respondents understood the difficulty police officers experience when managing PMI's, however, respondents provided three recommendations that would improve interactions – hire law enforcement personnel with extensive training in mental health, provide mental health histories to police officers en route to an interaction with a PMI and treat all people with compassion and respect (pp. 85, 86).

Schulenberg's (2016) research studying police perceptions of their interactions with PMI's found a high-level of frustration with front-police officers in relation to training and access to the history of mental health calls, a sense of helplessness should PMI's not have immediate access to resources to help manage their crisis, and a conflicting performance management process that conflicts with police culture's view of "front-line police work" (p. 474). Her research comprised of 74 police shift ride-alongs in municipalities of various sizes primarily indicated that police officers spent a significant amount of time trying to assess whether a mental health condition existed as they did not have knowledge of the PMI's history prior to arriving on the scene to interact with the individual. The assessment could be further extended and complicated if the individual was also under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. The respondents in Schulenberg's research indicated they would prefer to know about the individual prior to the interaction as it could assist in their initial approach and ability to diffuse any potential escalation. The second source of frustration in the study was related to the lack of resources available to PMI's including the assessment at the hospital by a healthcare professional. Several of the officers indicated they feel they often need to apprehend the

individual and put them through the criminal justice system as a “humane” option instead of having them be released from the hospital only to commit suicide several hours later (2016, p. 476). The third frustration identified by Schulenberg highlights a disconnect between the organizational demands to achieve a specific number of arrests or citations and less on “front-line police work” (p. 474). Schulenberg notes the encouragement of a police culture disposition to build relationships with communities they serve continues to be not recognized by management as an important part of their duties, but processing PMI’s as quick as possible continues to be a focus of performance management.

**Police Interactions with the LGBTQ2SA Community.** Emma Russell’s (2016) case study of the debate of an openly lesbian Chief Commissioner, Christine Nixon marching in the first Melbourne Australia Pride parade in 2002 is an example of how an expanded framework of both image repair and police image work can positively impact a relationship between police services and a marginalized community. Russell’s textual analysis of the announcement and subsequent participation of the Melbourne Chief Commissioner into the Pride parade was a divisive topic amongst those within both the LGBTQ2SA and policing communities. Within the LGBTQ2SA community, several detractors opposed to Nixon’s participation in the parade as it was viewed as an intentional forgetting of a past history of violence and homophobia. Russell posited her research identified an underlying sense of “...unresolved pain for the LGBT people that threatens to hinder the possibilities of developing positive LGBT-police relations” (2016, p. 13). Those open to the Chief Commissioner’s participation in the parade saw Nixon as an important symbol that recognized an important step towards reforming the negative history between the police and the community and normalized sexual identities (Russell, 2016). Nixon’s decision also prompted many negative comments from within the policing community and

conservative politicians that viewed the action as placating a minority viewpoint and an inference of recognizing moral depravity. Russell (2016) posits the media coverage that resulted from a uniformed Chief Commissioner participating in the Pride produced two outcomes within the expanded framework of image repair and image work:

1. Image Repair – Nixon’s participation in the parade is an example of how the police service is engaged in a process of a ‘mortification’ apology in that her participation is trying to repair a past history of anti-LGBT police activity by recognizing the community as a part of society. In a book co-authored by Nixon called ‘*Fair Cop*,’ her memoirs “...recasts contemporary policing as modern, adaptive and inclusive not by forgetting past police practices, but by remembering them....as backwards, overly authoritarian and ineffective” (p. 286). I would argue the symbolism of her participation started the process of “forgiving” and building legitimacy with the community (Benoit, 2015).
2. Image Work - The combination of her known past comments of a ‘shame’ while wearing the uniform as an out junior officer to the 2002 march in the Melbourne parade is a process of police image work that was rebranding the value of the uniform to herself and the LGBT community. The image of her and her successors participating in the Pride parade established an ongoing communication process that “...any threat to legitimacy that police authority poses may be mediated or counteracted through strategic police image work that portrays police as protectors and defenders of LGBT rights, despite the continuation of practices that contradict this image” (Russell, 2016, p. 288).

While Chief Commissioner Nixon’s participation in uniform may not have achieved an absolute “forgiveness” of past events, the symbolism and process of engaging with a marginalized

community provided an opportunity for police leaders to embrace the positive attributes of policing culture for the purpose of redefining their value to its citizens (Benoit, 2015).

**Police Interactions with Other Marginalized Populations:** Academic research and secondary research sources indicate a consistency of results in that there is a difference between how marginalized communities and non-marginalized groups in Ontario perceive police services (Bozinoff, Cao, Ben-Porat, Deshaies). Ben-Porat (2008) in his study of policing in a multicultural Canada theorized the lack of equal perceptions between marginalized communities and non-marginalized communities is the result of “over-policing” and “under-policing” practices that originate within a more conservative police culture (p. 415). He describes “over-policing” as an excessive number of negative interactions between police and marginalized communities that are generally targeted due to race, sexual orientation or poverty (2008). In this case the topic of police arbitrarily stopping black youth at a higher rate than non-black youth in several Ontario cities became known as “carding” or “street checks” and prompted civil liberties groups to demand the Wynne government ban the practice (Hoffman, White, & Webb, 2015; The Canadian Press, 2016). Although the process became controversial over the years, it was initially used by police services for decades as a legitimate way to gather information that could lead to solving an outstanding crime (Hoffman et al., 2015; The Canadian Press, 2016). The process of “under-policing” is described as a practice whereby police ignore crime prevention activities and generally avoid patrolling within those communities with higher crime rates, poverty and composed of marginalized communities (Ben-Porat, 2008). In Toronto’s LGBTQ2SA community, residents often claimed missing and murdered men were not afforded the same police attention as non-marginalized communities, because of their sexual orientation and because the majority were people of colour. (Ferreira, 2018a; Ling & Gray, 2018;

Mukherjee, 2018; Thanh Ha & Ling, 2018). Ben-Porat (2008) posits, "...paradoxically, visible minorities can be inflicted with both under-policing and over-policing, suffer from crime in their neighbourhoods and from being stopped as suspects of crime outside of them. As a result, these minorities may have low trust in the police and be reluctant to cooperate with the police" (p. 415). Ben-Porat cautioned that lower levels of trust in police is not necessarily the result of a lack of police service in a marginalized community or a larger number of negative police interactions amongst different ethnic groups, he also indicated there are other factors that could be involved including pre-existing perceptions of police from the home countries of some immigrants and the political and organizational leadership influences of police services (p. 417).

Cao's (2011) research quantifies Ben-Porat's (2008) theory of why marginalized communities have lower levels of trust in police services with a study of the consistent inequality of perceptions between visible minorities and non-visible minorities of police. Using the data from approximately 23,000 respondents in the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey, Cao found visible minorities rated police as "doing a good job" between 49% and 66% while non-visible minorities rated police with higher approval rates of between 57% and 74% (Statistics Canada, 2004; 2011, p. 11). Cao used the same coding process to the 1994 Canadian General Social Survey and found the visible minority ratings remained within 2% of the 2004 ratings, and the non-visible ratings increased by 2-4% (Statistics Canada, 1994; 2011, p. 12). He argues:

It is a vindication for those who argue that race remains significant to understanding Canadian confidence in the police. To be sure, multiculturalism policies have diminished the more visible legal and socially approved forms of racial mistreatment that characterized the period before the 1970s. The silence about race in criminological theory and the criminological literature, however, is at risk of normalizing the domination of European whites in two ways: first, such

silence has produced unrealistic perceptions about racial tension in Canada; and second, it sustains racial domination by supporting the myth that everyone is treated equally in Canada (p. 16).

Cao (2011) also qualifies the research in that the differences of perceptions between marginalized and non-marginalized groups is not a significant gap (p. 17). Cao agrees with Ben-Porat (2008) and his recommendations of reorganizing some areas of policing to include an adjustment in hiring practices to reflect the diversity of the community, to the cessation of over-policing/under-policing practices and towards increasing community involvement and consultation processes (p. 17).

Holly Campeau's (2017) research indicates police culture is changing from its traditional conservatism foundation to one that is open to how professional policing can be changed to build its legitimacy within the communities they serve. Through a qualitative research study of 100 active and retired police officers in an Ontario city, Campeau concludes there is evidence to suggest police organizations and their leaders need to leverage those police culture attributes that can help the profession build its image and reputation in a social media age. Campeau indicates a "cultural transformation" is occurring within the profession with newer police officers open to transparency, modernity and diversity as they believe it is a component of the "moral integrity" of the position (p. 13). Campeau posits "...change in policing cannot be accelerated through policy alone, policy appears to serve primarily as formal institutional myth which is only coupled with routine practices" as those who initiate the policy are often those in leadership positions who are the "...staunchest supporters or non-change" (pp. 13-14). This would indicate police leadership decision-making that is rooted in the traditional style of police culture will be unable to manage Ontario's changing demographics and increased media scrutiny

of policing. Furthermore, Campeau's research regarding the different manner by which front-line police officers operate within the traditional view of police culture and those who do not is an impediment in the ability for the profession to manage persuasive attacks from groups like the AMO and BLM (Benoit, 2015). As indicated in the previous paragraph, Melbourne's Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon's less traditional approach to policing that included an embrace of both police image work and the adoption of mortification redefined the "moral integrity" of the position she occupied as a leader (Russell, 2002, p. 13). When police leaders do not embrace how police culture could contribute to the "moral integrity" of the position, front-line officers such as those interviewed by Schulenberg become frustrated in not being able to provide a good public service (Campeau, 2017, p. 13; Schulenberg, 2015, p. 474).

In a public survey of Ontarians conducted for the PAO, researcher Rachelle Deshaies (2017) found a similar result of police impressions (*see Table 7 below*) between those who identified as a visible or sexual minority and those that did not. Although there were no questions asked about the practice of over-policing/under-policing in specific neighbourhoods, results indicate there is a higher sense of vulnerability within those that identify as LGBTQ2SA as well as mistrust of police officers. Those surveyed within the LGBTQ2SA appear to be experiencing a situation whereby there is a heightened historical sense of fear of both police behaviour against the community in the past as well as need to have the police as a means of protection from other individuals and groups engaged in homophobic-based violence. Furthermore, Deshaies (2017) research and Bozinoff's (2017) public opinion research following the BLM protest at the 2016 Pride parade both indicate those who identify as ethnic and/or LGBTQ2SA can be supportive of BLM's social justice

movement but not be supportive of the removal of uniformed police officers from Toronto Pride or schools. Deshaies (2017) and Bozinoff's (2017) research also aligns with Cao (2011) and Ben-Porat's (2008) observations in that those groups with a traditional negative history with police are not overly supportive of decreasing a police presence within their communities through privatization or a redeployment of resources.

<b>Table 7 – PAO Public Opinion Survey</b>			
	<b><i>Straight</i></b>	<b><i>Visible Minority</i></b>	<b><i>LGBTQ2SA</i></b>
Total	N=1524	N=314	N=102
<b><i>Which best describes your feelings when it comes to police presence.</i></b>			
I want to maintain the current level of police presence.	53%	N/A	46%
I want more police presence in my community	33%	N/A	37%
I want less police presence	3%	N/A	4%
<b><i>In your opinion, which best describes Ontario's police? They are:</i></b>			
Just like the police of the past, they haven't changed a bit	11%	14%	14%
Not like the police of the past – they are more progressive/open-minded	32%	25%	18%
Trying to change but still have some work to do	41%	43%	55%
Don't know/not sure	16%	18%	14%
Note: This data has been retrieved from <i>PAO Public Perceptions Research</i> (2017), pp. 40-42.			

## The Cost of Policing in Ontario

Unlike the UK which requires all police services to follow a standardized data collection process as a means for assessing the effectiveness of police operations, the provincial government in Ontario does not have a similar process. Each municipality follows their own reporting processes of police interactions with the public. Access to these reports is also varied in that some services provide the complete data by year and type of occurrence (public disturbance, domestic abuse, mentally ill, etc...), others provide access to limited data for a fee, and some do not offer it to the public at all. Macro-level data of all the provincial municipal government tax returns called Financial Information Returns (FIR) is a valuable source of research that provides specific details of the cost of policing in the province by municipality. The FIR reports provide context of how valid the key persuasive arguments of organizations such as the AMO are in relation to their claims the cost of policing is a systemic crisis (AMO, 2015; Brennan, 2014a; Brennan, 2014b; Morrow, 2016b; N.D., 2017a). In 2016, the PAO hired a research firm to consolidate all the FIR reports of the municipal police services they represent between the years 2013 and 2015. The data collected from 53 municipalities FIR reports indicated police expenses were neither the most expensive line items in the budget, nor did it grow at a faster rate than other departments (Arifuzzaman & Austen, 2016, p. 8). As *Table 8* indicates, overall police services account for an average of approximately 14% of the total municipal budgets representing 8,623,512 people in 2015. While this year-over-year percentage is based on three fiscal years, it indicates policing costs are stable and appear to be in line with other municipal expenses. There is a discrepancy of reported policing costs in terms of the narrative adopted by the AMO with the Police Association of Ontario (PAO) narrative. The AMO represents the majority of municipal governments throughout the province and includes the two largest police

services in the province – the Toronto Police Service (TPS) and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). The AMO is correct in that the policing costs per capita in Ontario are amongst the highest in the country. However, the narrative also identifies another hypothesis that is not captured in the reports from Statistics Canada and the municipal FIR reports in that services covering larger areas are more expensive.

<b>Table 8 - Overall % of Ontario Municipal Budgets by Category</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Transportation Services	19.3%	19.9%	18.2%
Environmental Services	17.4%	17.4%	18.1%
Social and Family Services	18.1%	17.9%	18.3%
Police	14.1%	13.9%	14.2%
Administrative & Other	9.5%	9.3%	9.3%
Social Housing	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%
Recreation	6.3%	6.2%	6.4%
Fire	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%
Ambulance	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%
Planning and Development	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Note:</i> retrieved from <i>Police Association of Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Report</i> (2016), p. 8. Represents approximately 65% of Ontario’s population. Toronto and Ontario Provincial Police are not included.			

In comparison to other jurisdictions throughout Canada, Ontario's per capita cost could be higher due to the addition of the OPP which has to police over 1 million square kilometres (OPP, 2017). As per *Table 10* the cost of policing appears to have a higher cost-per-capita rate in larger rural areas throughout Canada such as those managed by the RCMP in the three Territories. Larger policing areas require additional fleet resources such as manned and unmanned aircraft, marine vehicles, snow-based equipment and more durable road-based vehicles. Even within the province, the OPP's planned new procurements to support the organization's operational requirement is projected to be \$18 million, whereas the City of Hamilton's police service has budgeted \$1 million for its population of just over 500,000 (OPP, 2017; Hamilton Police Service, 2017). Moreover, as indicated in *Table 11*, the policing cost per capita in PAO-represented municipalities has kept pace with the population growth at 3% respectively, at the same time as the number of police officers per 100,000 has decreased (Arifuzzaman & Austen, 2016, p. 20).

**Table 9 - 2016 Police Costs per Province/Territory – AMO Position**

Province/Territory	Population	Total Police Expenditures (000's)	Per capita cost/province
NL	528,817	\$144,081	\$272
PE	152,021	\$29,946	\$197
NS	953,869	\$265,851	\$278
NB	759,655	\$181,053	\$238
QC	8,394,034	\$2,571,914	\$306
ON	14,193,384	\$5,034,417	\$355
MB	1,338,109	\$477,742	\$332
SK	1,163,926	\$411,607	\$354
AB	4,286,134	\$1,433,075	\$334
BC	4,817,160	\$1,433,075	\$297
YK	38,459	\$30,205	\$785
NT	44,520	\$54,301	\$1,219
<b>NU</b>	<b>37,996</b>	<b>\$51,466</b>	<b>\$1,354</b>

*Source:* Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Police Administration Survey. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14777-eng.htm#a13>

**Table 10 - Police per Population – PAO Position**

	2013	2014	2015
Population	8,494,350	8,632,464	8,773,574
Average # of police per 100,000	210	207	208
Average per capita policing costs	280.9	286.2	291.5

*Note:* retrieved from *Police Association of Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Report* (2016), p. 20. Represents approximately 65% of Ontario's population. Toronto and Ontario Provincial Police are not included.

As the Government of Ontario considers the regulatory framework for private alternative delivery models for the “80% of non-core police services,” recent research conducted by the PAO about public impressions of privatization may provide police organizations with potential messaging strategies that promote the value of public police services (Deshaies, 2017; Montgomery & Griffiths, 2016, p. 11). The PAO study of 1,659 Ontarians indicates that 57% opposed, 37% remained neutral and 6% supported the general concept of privatizing police services (Deshaies, 2017). Strong opposition to the concept grew when different scenarios were tested, such as personal information gathered by private security and the potential for the escalation for violence without the presence of a uniformed police officer (Deshaies, 2017). The data suggests there is a public understanding of a correlation between the visibility of a police officer and the prevention of crime. Although the research is conducted by the PAO for the purpose of understanding public attitudes and could include a potential bias, the data can still provide police organizations with directional context of how to explain the value of the “80% of police duties” in relation to public safety functions such as de-escalation so violence does not occur (Montgomery & Griffiths, 2016). The main limitation of these secondary research sources of police-public interactions is the lack of quantifiable data related to how many situations resulted in no criminal charge due to the inconsistent reporting of those types of interactions.

One of the key arguments of the AMO is that crime rates have been steadily falling for a number of years and now is the time to curb police expenditures as police are now carrying out more non-core police functions that could be provided by more cost-effective means (AMO, 2015). This hypothesis is faulty in that it is a general assumption that the majority of the “80%” of non-core police duties are non-regulatory processes and/or not related to crime prevention and de-escalation (Montgomery and Griffiths, 2016). In a 2005 economic study of the regionalization

of police services across Canada, Lithopoulos and Rigakos (2005) concluded the strategy has yet to realize significant cost savings as a result of the economies of scale. The only noticeable savings identified through regionalization was the per capita cost of policing in a regional municipality was \$10 less than in a non-regional service (2005, p. 346). Furthermore, Lithopoulos and Rigakos (2005) identified the cost per criminal code offence is 15% higher amongst regional services as there is less police officer capacity to work the case in terms of investigations, interviewing, regulatory administration and potential court time. An academic study of the duties of police officers in the city of Port Moody, B.C. expands upon this analysis by observing the increased number of steps required as the result of more regulations throughout a decade also limits police officer capacity and contributes to escalating costs (Wuschke, Andresen, Brantingham, Rattenbury, & Richards, 2018). For instance, the amount of time to process a break-in is 58% higher, an impaired driving charge is 250% higher and a domestic abuse situation is 964% higher and illustrates how additional regulations contribute to more police officer administrative tasks (2018, p. 22). A significant portion of the 80% of the non-core police duties the AMO has identified as a potential cost-savings opportunity would not be able to be outsourced due to the amount of information required for the purpose of justifying a criminal charge or release.

As indicated in the previous section, the provincial government followed a similar policy formation process as the Cameron government in that a primary focus on cost-cutting and outsourcing should be directed at those police functions that are non-core policing duties – in particular healthcare related calls for vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations in both jurisdictions are composed of those living with a variety of mental health conditions such as fetal alcohol syndrome, schizophrenia, depression and addictions. In addition to the various mental

health conditions, vulnerable populations also include non-health related demographics including those living in domestic abuse situations, new citizens in poverty and members of the LGBTQ community (Boyce, Rotenberg, & Karam, 2015; Stark, 2016). In both the UK and Ontario, police services are increasing becoming the first point of contact for mental health related calls for service (Boyce et al., 2015; Dawson, 2018; Meyer, 2013; N.D., 2017d; Winsor, 2017). Sir Thomas Winsor of HMIFRS indicated in his 2017 Annual Report (2017) on the efficiency of policing in the UK, “The provision of mental healthcare has reached such a state of severity that police are often being used to fill the gaps” (p. 25). These gaps are cuts in budgets assisting those living with mental health conditions and within the social service system that are forcing those individuals in a crisis to seek assistance from other first responders, such as police officers. As in the UK, all Canadian provinces are reporting a similar increase for calls for assistance with those experiencing, or about to experience a mental health crisis. These calls for assistance in the absence of a mental healthcare professional are expanding front-line police officer core responsibilities to include assessing and managing a health care needs (Boyce et al., 2015; Hamilton-McCharles, 2018; Vis, 2017). A news story investigating how mental health calls in London, Ontario affect their municipal police service found these types of calls grew over 40% over four years and accounts for 15% of their total operating budget (Ruttan, 2014).

Advocacy efforts from groups such as AMO who received more latitude in Bill 175 to cut policing costs for their members will also need to manage 911 calls related PMI’s living within the social service system. The Auditor General of Ontario indicated in a 2016 *Summaries of Value for Money* report that social services and housing continues to be inadequate when managing an increasing mental health service issue in the province, who make up a large portion of those living on social assistance (2016). As *Table 11* indicates, Ontario ranks fourth amongst

the four largest provinces with less than a one percent increase of social service funding between 2011 and 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Furthermore, any reduction in the year-over-year investment in policing without a redirection of more money into social services could impact public safety. As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, calls for service for experiencing a mental health crisis are increasing throughout the province (Hamilton-McCharles, 2018; Johnson, 2015; Lupton, 2017; Meyer, 2013; Vis, 2017). In 2016, Guelph Police Services spent an average of 5 hours on a mental health-related calls on 678 reported occurrences throughout the year (Guelph Police Service, 2017). If a municipality decides to reduce police officer headcounts through outsourcing at the same time as all levels of government continue to underfund mental health services, increased PMI-related calls for service could affect police officer capacity and their ability to manage crime solvency and non-mental health related crime prevention duties (Dawson, 2018; Hamilton-McCharles, 2018; Meyer, 2013; Vis, 2017).

<i>Table 11 - Year over Year % Consolidated Provincial/Municipal Spending (Police/Social Services)</i>							
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% increase 2011-16</b>
Quebec police	6.5	3.7	3.7	8.7	2.6	3.8	4.8
Quebec social services	6.6	-1.1	3.1	3.8	-1	0.6	2
Ontario police	0.1	1.5	5.4	5.3	3	1.8	2.8
Ontario social services	1.5	-6.7	0.2	1.6	0.7	5.2	.2
Alberta police	8.3	6.2	8.9	2.6	3.8	2.7	5.4
Alberta social services	1.9	0.9	14	-10.8	13.4	-11.3	1
BC police	5.8	6.9	0.4	4.1	5.9	-1.8	4
BC social services	8	-8.3	0.2	-1.3	-1.3	14.9	2
<i>Source: (Statistics Canada, 2017)</i>							

As mental health issues continue to increase cost pressures on municipalities, the updated *Police Services Act* (2018) mandates that communities throughout Ontario prepare and implement Community Safety and Well-Being (CWSB) plans with an advisory committee of relevant community professionals (Part XIII, ss. 195 - 200). The purpose of the advisory committee is to create a strategy whereby a specific criminal activity or social problem could be addressed and managed through community professionals such as social workers, doctors and educators collaborating on solutions to provide housing options, increase safety and improve health outcomes. For example, if a specific town is experiencing an opioid epidemic or significant youth alcohol issues, this team would work together to provide a short- and long-term plan to address the issue. The *Act* outlines the purpose of the advisory committee as:

**197** (1) A municipal council that prepares a community safety and well-being plan shall establish an advisory committee.

**Joint preparation of plan**

(2) Despite subsection (1), a group of municipal councils that are jointly preparing a community safety and well-being plan shall jointly establish and consult with a single advisory committee.

**Membership of committee**

(3) Subject to the regulations, the advisory committee must, at a minimum, consist of the following members:

1. A person who represents,
  - i. a local health integration network for a geographic area in which the municipality is located, as determined under the *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006*, or

- ii. an entity that provides services to improve the physical or mental health of individuals in the community or communities.
2. A person who represents an entity that provides educational services in the municipality.
3. A person who represents an entity that provides community or social services in the municipality, if there is such an entity.
4. A person who represents an entity that provides community or social services to children or youth in the municipality, if there is such an entity.
5. A person who represents an entity that provides custodial services to children or youth in the municipality, if there is such an entity.
6. An employee of the municipality or a member of the municipal council.
7. A person who represents the police service board or, if there is no police service board, the commander of the detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police that provides policing in the area or his or her delegate.
8. Any other prescribed persons. (*Police Services Act, 2018*)

Although healthcare, social service and educational professionals are required for the composition of the committee, the participation of sworn police officers who are responsible for the safety of those that can harm themselves or others has not been mandated in the *Act*. The *Act* does allow for the inclusion of an individual who represents a police service board, but that individual may be in any occupation other than within police services, and therefore not be necessarily familiar with how interactions with vulnerable populations occur. The only municipalities that allow for the inclusion of a police officer are those listed with a municipality with an OPP detachment and not with those municipalities with their own service (Police

Services Act, 1990). It is important to note the OPP serve primarily rural communities with municipal police services managing public safety within all of the major urban centres composed of the majority of Ontario's population. Moreover, the exclusion of front-line non- OPP police officers from the planning process in those services representing the majority of the population removes valuable professional insight of how a CSWB is constructed and operationalized within each community.

The exclusion of a mandated front-line police officer in the construction of CSWB plans does not only exclude the lived experiences of those who frequently interact with PMI, the new *Police Services Act* (2018) does not address two significant contributions to escalating police service costs – managing and transferring people experiencing a mental health crisis and health care scope creep moving into core police officer duties. Although the *Act* provides direction of how the CSWB's will be constructed at the municipal level, the Wynne government did not indicate how any plans targeting a specific social problem will be funded. It is important to note that without funding and a reallocation of healthcare resources, proponents of privatizing those non-core police functions identified by AMO could experience additional cost pressures and negative health outcomes as a result of police resources managing only non-healthcare related calls. Less police officers involved in interactions with those living with mental health issue and experiencing a crisis does not necessarily mean there will be less violence, it will mean there will be an increased need for more preventative healthcare funding models in communities throughout the province that help individuals and caregivers prevent or manage events.

Similar to legislation in the UK related to police interactions with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, Ontario's *Mental Health Act* (1990) mandates that an attending police officer(s) needs to assess whether such a person should be detained and brought

into a medical facility for a psychiatric evaluation by a physician in the event they may harm themselves or others (*Mental Health Act*, 1983, Part X, section 136; *Mental Health Act*, 1990, section 17). Under the Ontario *Act*, the police officer(s) must transfer the individual to a hospital and wait until an attending physician can make an assessment (s. 17). These transfers and the monitoring of the PMI while in the hospital can take hours before a police officer(s) can legally transfer care to an attending physician (Guelph Police Service, 2017). Although waiting times vary by jurisdiction, transfer periods involving police officers can take up to eight hours. For instance, London Police Service in Ontario indicated these mental health calls and transfers consumed approximately 15% of their police budget in 2014 as a result of the long wait times in the emergency rooms at hospitals (Meyer, 2013; Ruttan, 2014). Thunder Bay Police Service also indicated their mental health-related calls for service rose by 26% over three years with police officers spending several hours waiting for patients to be seen by a physician at a hospital (CBC News, 2018b; Vis, 2017).

## Chapter Five: Operationalizing the Communication Strategy

### **Future Strategies**

To be effective at repairing, protecting and building the image of professional policing in Ontario, police organizations need to become more effective at designing and implementing proactive communication strategies that can reinforce their value as a public service. While the current deliberation process over the economics of policing and the social justice issues related to police interactions with marginalized populations is an important part of the current debate about modernizing police service delivery, the question becomes *what are police organizations not doing to promote their value and legitimacy to their communities*. In review of existing academic research and secondary sources, I found the debate was less about how police austerity measures would impact public safety, and more about the lack of communication response strategies and ongoing proactive communication activities by police organizations that reinforces the importance of their role delivering public safety. Simply put, police organizations need to “...capture the space and create the story before anyone else does” (Lee & McGovern, 2012). The AMO’s communication strategy of increasing awareness about a pending financial crisis related to police costs is effective in that police-based organizations have limited public relations-based resources to counter political arguments for increased privatization. While the AMO has created a public sector systemic crisis narrative on select data that does not explain the complexity of police costing, the lack of a police-based response continues to build a perception that unsustainability is a reality. Similarly, BLM’s persuasive arguments that police services are oppressive towards marginalized populations is deconstructing the traditional image of professional policing and redefining the occupation as less “valuable” as a necessary public

service within a changing and increasingly diverse society (Benoit, 2010). The limited communication responses and long-term strategies to BLM's ongoing claims also continues to erode police legitimacy and value. In the next section of this thesis, I illustrate how an expanded framework of image repair and police image work can contribute to more effective strategic communication approaches for police organizations as a way to rebuild their value and image within their communities. For it to be effective, these strategic communication approaches require three key elements: the recognition of the ability to leverage the positive attributes of police culture, the adoption of a strategic advocacy position on an issue that promotes the cost-effectiveness of police as a public service and, a commitment to expand police-based research that contributes to police legitimacy.

Implementing an expanded framework of a combined image repair and police image work police-based communication strategy advocating for provincial funding is an opportunity for professional police organizations to increase public service value and to mitigate any significant volume of singular crisis communication events. A longer-term communication strategy advocating for increased mental health funding could achieve several objectives:

1. Create public awareness of a chronic underfunding of a growing social problem that if adequately addressed, could lead to lower police service costs and less negative police-PMI interactions that lead to death or injury. In Ontario, there are several studies that indicate many police-health partnership programs such as the Niagara Regional Police Service/Niagara Health System (expedited triage system of PMI's at a St. Catherine's hospital) and the Mobile Intervention Team (a dedicated mental health trained police officer and mental health professional de-escalate a PMI in a crisis with the intent of not admitting the individual to a hospital) have experienced positive outcomes. The former

program experienced a 57% reduction of waiting times for police officers transferring PMI's to a physician, and the latter program produced a 66% drop in PMI's being admitted to a hospital (Ghebreslassie, 2017; Pizzingrilli, Hoffman, & Hirdes, 2015, p. 136). The challenge for police organizations advocating for this type of program is getting an ongoing financial commitment to expand funding projects beyond a cycle of numerous pilot projects to an innovative pan-provincial strategy (CTV Barrie, 2017; Longwell, 2018; Vanderlinde, 2017a; Week, 2017).

2. Increase public satisfaction in the value of police services. As indicated in Deshaies (2017) research for the PAO about supporting programs similar to Toronto's Mobile Intervention Team, 63% of 1,524 respondents in Ontario supported the concept of the program (Deshaies, 2017, p. 41). Although more research is required of public, police, healthcare workers and end-user impressions of the program, research indicates the public appears to want more specialized areas within police services.
3. Redefine the role of policing within marginalized communities. Creating a template that begins with an advocacy strategy for increased mental health funding for PMI's begins a process of changing the meaning of what the symbols and images associated with policing mean to that particular public (Mawby & Worthington, 2002; Russell, 2016). The template can be expanded and customized to other marginalized populations such as the LGBTQ2SA community or indigenous populations.
4. Leverage the positive attributes of the police culture that police officers relate to, including a desire to be allowed to do quality 'front-line police work' (Schulenberg, 2015, p. 474). The phenomenon of police culture can be a positive influence on the success of any communication strategy implemented by a police-based organization.

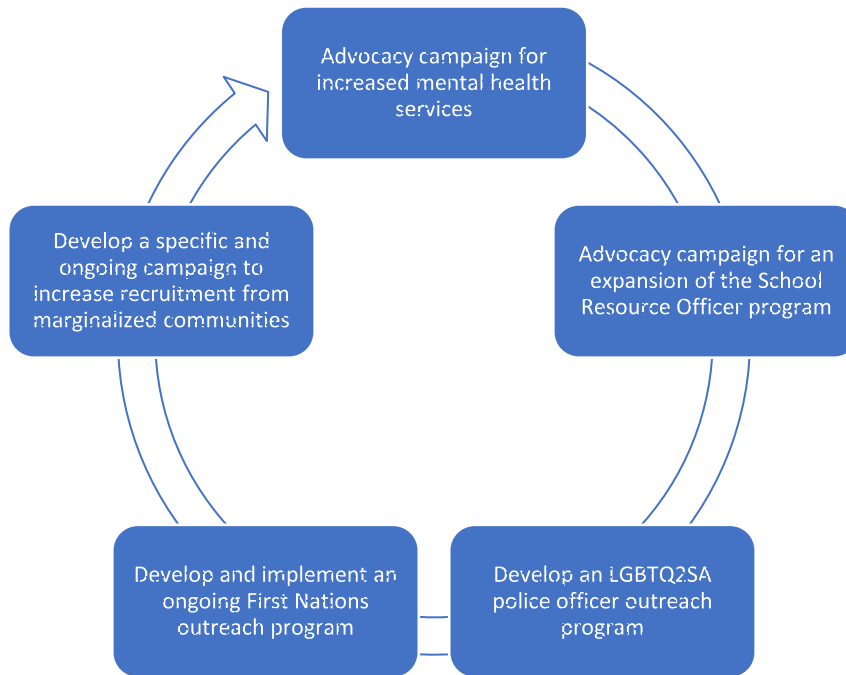
Several of the research studies in this thesis highlight police service personnel are aware of the debate about their legitimacy and public image (Campeau, 2017; Chan, 1996; Loftus, 2010; Schulenberg, 2016). Campeau (2017) observes the existence of a generational divide within the profession in that there are actively employed police officers who remember a period when there was little oversight and a newer generation that has only worked within the parameters of numerous oversight bodies.

Police management and front-line police service personnel should leverage police culture as a means towards protecting and building the expanded framework of image work in Ontario. As Rev. Brent Hawkes said the year after uniformed police officers were asked to not participate in subsequent Toronto Pride parades, "...don't ban what's offensive to some, reform it to the benefit of everyone" (Kappler, 2017). Hawkes was referencing the fact that, as a religious leader he wears a similar uniform with an oppressive past that has evolved to become a symbol of progress within the community. In order to justify their value within the community and to mitigate against the AMO narratives of the high cost of policing in Ontario, policing organizations need to adopt an expanded image repair and image work framework that challenges an entrenched misperception of high police costs. For instance, Schulenberg's (2015) research of police officer interactions with known and suspected PMI's are micro-level examples of police image work that resonates with front-line policing (p. 474). Those micro-level communicative interactions could be scaled up and deployed in other problematic areas for policing, including within the LGBTQ2SA and African-Canadian communities.

Police leaders should also promote the effectiveness of the School Resource Officer program (SRO), not just as a public safety strategy, but as a resource for students on a number of topics including advice on bullying, a career in policing or as a confidant in terms of preventing a

sexual assault or drug use. Duxbury and Bennell's (2018) research concluded a public investment of \$660,289 into the SRO program in five Peel Regional high schools netted a Total Present Value (TPV) of \$7,349,301 in savings to that community (p. 250). The TPV is what the surrounding community gains as a result of a longer-term investment in the program in terms of several avoidance-based costs including, but not limited to, crime activity, early prevention of how to manage mental illnesses and less individuals cycling through the correctional services and justice systems (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018, p. 250). In this example, it is important to note the explanation of the dollar value invested into a program and the subsequent return on investment is not just a financial statistic; but a communication talking point that provides substantive counterpoints to detractors currently within the deliberation process about the escalating cost of policing and social justice. This communication strategy related to a specific program is an example of how police leaders need to embrace the 'imaging at its core' communication approach as described by Mawby (2002) earlier on in this thesis for an expanded framework of image repair and image work to succeed. Programs such as the SRO provide police organizations with the ability to increase police legitimacy as well as to protect against the effects of a micro-crisis communication events should they occur. As indicated in *Figure 2* below, the template can be expanded beyond police image work to include more customized applications. Each campaign could be a macro-communication strategy that focuses on 'problem' areas for professional policing with narratives quantifying the value of each.

Figure 2 - Illustration of How Expanded Image Repair & Image Work is Operationalized



Police leaders need to understand that police culture is an important component of expanding a communication framework that can increase job satisfaction levels, organizational effectiveness and police self-worth. Several studies indicate a correlation between higher job satisfaction levels and improved police service outcomes with better training, an increased ability to communicate with the media and communities, and a performance management process that encourages personal and professional development (Bonfine, Munetz, & Ritter, 2014; Christmas, 2012; Coutts & Schneider, 2002) For instance, in a Canadian survey of 393 police officers in 2002, 82% of the respondents indicated their performance appraisals were measurements of their personality traits and not based on organizational goals or professional development (Coutts & Schneider, 2002). It is important to note here that police officers also want the organizational goals and professional development to focus on the quality of their interaction with members of

the public and not on the quantity of monthly statistics related to issuing tickets or expediting a call for service under a weekly average (Campeau, 2017; Schulenberg, 2016). In an opinion piece for a national newspaper, former Deputy Chief of the Toronto Police Service Peter Sloly stated police organizations and its culture is rooted in an old-style approach to policing:

Police services have a predisposition for enforcement – a "catch the bad guys" culture. Police management strategies mainly reward outputs (traffic tickets, street checks, arrests, etc.) instead of outcomes (crime reduction, community satisfaction, cost savings, etc.). The traditional path to promotion in policing has been through the enforcement squads (homicide, hold up and drugs) and not through crime prevention assignments (Sloly, 2016).

Although Sloly recognizes the existence of organizational issues related to police culture as a whole, front-line police officers through their daily interactions with the community already provide police leaders with the knowledge of how to find cost-efficiencies in the system without the need to immediately privatize. The organizational challenge for police leaders is how to integrate the police culture view of ‘good front-line’ police work with an ability to quantify crime prevention models using sworn officers in roles such as an SRO or as a part of a CIT with a mental health professional.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

The UK experience of implementing a communication strategy as a means of influencing the public to accept the need for police austerity measures had a significant effect on a similar debate within Ontario. While some stakeholders debating the cost of policing adopted persuasive arguments for and against the benefits of cost-reduction measures that included privatization, the Wynne government learned from the long-term public relations risks associated with promoting the need to modernize policing based upon the narrative of controlling escalating costs. While not ignoring the initial request by municipalities to have more flexibility to implement privatization as a means to control police budgets, the government implemented a political communication process that used social justice issues as the need to overhaul the police service delivery model. The academic and secondary research reviewed in this thesis of the UK experience indicates the long-term effects of cost-cutting and privatization of police services has produced a number of negative outcomes that has impacted public safety and the successive Cameron and May government's image as good financial managers. The amount of negative media coverage of the effects of police cuts in response to terrorist attacks, response times to 911 calls and increasing crime rates reported by academic studies and the UK government's own agencies could have been a contributing factor to the Wynne government's decision to focus modernization on social justice issues and not on police service sustainability. The fact that the new *Police Services Act* (2018) includes a section that allows for an expansion of privatization opportunities for crime prevention responsibilities indicates the Wynne government was successful at diverting public attention away from the economic arguments of an Ontario version of the UK's police austerity measures (Part Three, s. 14.1). By focusing on social justice issues related to negative police interactions with marginalized populations such as the province's

ethnic and LGBTQ2SA communities, the Wynne government was able to influence the public deliberation process as a debate about modernizing an outdated police service model and occupational culture that needs to adjust to a changing society. Although the Wynne government occasionally used inferences of police costs such as the Minister Lalonde's description of police officers monitoring construction sites and an openness for allowing municipalities to cut police budgets, it preferred to let the AMO, BLM and media be the voice of change (Giovannetti, 2017, para.19; Jones, 2016).

The research reviewed in this thesis concludes that police organizations were able to respond effectively to the economic arguments of privatization based upon the long-term results of the UK's policy of police austerity measures, but the profession was not prepared for a communications strategy that challenged the essence of police legitimacy. Ongoing media coverage of high-profile police-based crisis communication events such as the McArthur investigation and police shootings of people of colour with known mental illnesses complemented the Wynne government's strategy to keep the narrative focused on modernization and not on cuts to public safety or how the mental health care system is managed. The Wynne government did not want the narrative to focus on ideas such as the recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest into the death of Andrew Loku of a need for 24-7 provincial mental health crisis teams that could de-escalate similar situations (Ghebreslassie, 2017). A focus on permanent crisis management teams such as COAST and CIT could redirect the media to challenge the various levels of government and their funding commitments to provide the necessary tools and training for police to effectively manage their expanding responsibilities as healthcare providers and social workers. Instead, the broader debate evolved into questions about

police legitimacy in relation to excessive use of force managing PMI interactions, historical injustices and perceptions of negative police behaviour in Ontario.

The research also indicates that police organizations in Ontario allocate most of their official public relations activities responding to individual and immediate crisis events and less time on longer-term strategies promoting the value of policing as a public service. By committing the majority of police communication-based resources towards managing a singular crisis event such as the McArthur investigation and disengaging from the development of longer-term image work strategies such as the School Resource Officer program or Pride parades, police service leaders are unintentionally contributing to a reinforcement of a negative value formation (Benoit, 2015; Germano, 2017; Gillis, 2016; A. Jones, 2018; Mawby & Worthington, 2002; Nasser, 2017; Reevly, 2018; Vendeville, 2016). The distinction here is not to suggest police organizations force themselves into events, but to develop meaningful and strategic engagement processes that repair relationships with marginalized communities. Police organizations cannot contribute to the formation of considered public opinion of police legitimacy and their value as a public service if they are removed from being active participants within the public deliberation process about their place within Ontario communities (Habermas, 2006). Retreating from a public debate about police legitimacy and the absence of proactive communication plans to promote the profession continues to emphasize those negative attributes associated with police culture including homophobia, racism and the perception of an ‘us versus them’ mentality. Ongoing image work must focus on how police are part of the communities they serve.

Schulenberg (2016) and Campeau’s (2017) research indicate there are many in the profession who want a greater sense of empowerment to actively promote the value of professional policing, challenge those who believe police costs are unsustainable and highlight

how their occupational culture is a progressive phenomenon that can influence change. The historical view of an older police culture that traditionally follows the militaristic style of top down management is beginning to wane. This demographic change and the increased level of media exposure of police interactions is quickly forcing police-based organizations to be more active communicating their roles within communities and value as a public service.

The value of policing in Ontario is currently viewed through a lens of a perception based upon limited data. The Cameron government leveraged this gap in research to set in motion a process of implementing a bold ideological austerity process that resonated throughout the western world. While it would be difficult to challenge the long-term effects of cuts to police services and public safety based upon the UK experience, the Wynne government's communication strategy benefitted from the lack of standardized province-wide data that would quantify police value and challenge the perception of increasing police costs. The most accurate data points within the research reviewed in this thesis are the municipal tax returns as captured through the FIR reports (Arifuzzaman & Austen, 2016). However, these aggregate dollar figures do not break down the micro-data that include variables such as the average time a police officer spends with a PMI, the number of calls per year/per municipality on specific calls or how crime prevention is measured. Claims by groups such as the AMO that the cost of policing continues to escalate is a snapshot of a budgetary line item that does not include extenuating and uncontrollable variables such as a natural disaster, a significant increase of sexual assaults or an opioid epidemic that are not planned as part of a yearly police service budget (AMO, 2015; Brennan, 2014a; Brennan, 2014b). For the AMO, their arguments that policing is inefficient is based solely on the amount of criminal charges a police officer lays and not on the amount of criminal code offenses they prevent. The AMO is more aligned with Sloly's (2016) observation

of police leadership directives in that they are focused on “reward outputs” such as arrests, tickets and revenue generation from monitoring construction sites and not on “outcomes” such as prevention, engagement and community satisfaction. Without a province-wide standardized reporting process of all that police do, it will continue to be impossible for municipalities to allocate resources to an anticipated crime rate each year and it will be equally difficult for police-based organizations to justify their value as a public service.

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## APPENDIX “A”

**12** (1) The regulations may provide that a prescribed policing provider shall provide policing functions in an area that,

- (a) are not among the primary duties of a constable at common law; or
- (b) are specialized policing functions.

### **Provision by prescribed policing providers**

(2) The following rules apply if the regulations provide that a prescribed policing provider shall provide a policing function in an area:

1. The prescribed policing provider shall provide the policing function in the area in accordance with the standards for adequate and effective policing.

2. The police service board, or the Commissioner, that has policing responsibility for the area,

i. is not responsible for providing the policing function in the area,

ii. shall not provide the policing function in the area if the regulations so provide, and

iii. shall cooperate with the prescribed policing provider to enable it to perform the policing function in the area in accordance with the standards for adequate and effective policing.

Use of Personnel

### **Members of police service must provide certain functions**

**13** (1) A police service board must use members of the police service maintained by the police service board, or persons who are assisting those

members while acting under their direction, to provide policing functions, unless the regulations provide otherwise.

**Provision by authorized policing providers**

**14** (1) Subject to subsections (2), (3) and (4), if the regulations provide that a policing function does not have to be provided by members of a police service or persons who are assisting those members while acting under their direction, a police service board, or the Commissioner, may, in accordance with the regulations, enter into a written agreement with another police service board, the Commissioner or a prescribed entity to have them provide the policing function in an area for which the board or the Commissioner has policing responsibility.

**Restriction**

(4) An agreement under subsection (1) shall not be made with a prescribed entity who is a for-profit entity unless the entity is to provide one of the following policing functions:

1. Crime prevention.
2. Investigative supports related to law enforcement, including supports in the areas of,
  - i. crime scene analysis,
  - ii. forensic identification,
  - iii. canine tracking,
  - iv. technical collision investigation and reconstruction,
  - v. breath analysis,

- vi. physical surveillance,
- vii. electronic interception,
- viii. video and photographic surveillance, and
- ix. polygraph and behavioural science.

3. Explosives disposal in areas where explosive disposal technicians would not otherwise be reasonably available to provide this policing function.

4. Assistance to victims of crime.

### **Minister's approval required**

(5) The Commissioner requires the Minister's approval to enter into an agreement under subsection (1).

### **Contents of an agreement**

(6) An agreement under subsection (1) must,

- (a) identify the policing functions that will be provided by the entity;
- (b) specify whether payment is required for the performance of the policing functions;
- (c) require the entity to provide information to the police service board or the Commissioner so that the board or the Commissioner will be able to fulfil their legal duties to provide reports under this or any other Act;
- (d) contain an acknowledgment by the entity that it is subject to inspection by the Inspector General; and
- (e) address any other prescribed matter.

### **Same**

(7) If an agreement under subsection (1) is with a prescribed entity that is not an institution within the meaning of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, it must also address,

(a) access to the records of the entity for the purpose of discharging the obligations of the police service board or Ministry in relation to subsection (10); and

(b) the protection of personal information in the custody or control of the entity that is related to the provision of policing functions under the agreement.

**Responsibility for ensuring standards met**

(9) The police service board or the Commissioner, as applicable, shall ensure that the policing provided pursuant to an agreement made under subsection (1) meets the standards for adequate and effective policing.

**Use of personnel who are not peace officers**

**15** (1) A police service board, the Commissioner, a prescribed policing provider or an authorized policing provider may provide a policing function using people who are not peace officers unless,

(a) the policing function requires the exercise of a legislative or common law power of a peace officer or police officer;

(b) the regulations prohibit the provision of the policing function by persons who are not peace officers; or

(c) the regulations prohibit the provision of the policing function by persons who are not police officers.

**Personnel to meet prescribed qualifications**

(2) The police service board, the Commissioner, and every prescribed policing provider shall ensure that any people used to provide a policing function meet the prescribed qualifications, if any.