Policing Under Siege: What is Driving the Normalization of Police Militarization in Canada?

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ABBREVIATIONS

AR - Automatic Rifle

AV - Armoured Vehicle

AVGP - Armoured Vehicle General Purpose

BC - British Columbia

BearCat - Ballistic Engineered Armoured Response Counter Attack Trucks

CF - Canadian Forces

CKPS - Chatham-Kent Police Service

CP - Community Policing

CPS - Calgary Police Service

CSIS - Canadian Security Intelligence Services

DND - Department of National Defence

EPS - Edmonton Police Service

ERT - Emergency Response Team

ETF - Emergency Task Force

FNPP - First Nations Policing Program

H&K - Heckler & Koch

HRP - Halifax Regional Police

LAV - Light Armoured Vehicle

LIM-AT - Low-income measure, after-tax

LPS - London Police Service

NATO - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NIJ - National Institute of Justice

NSS - National Security State

NuoFF - National Use of Force Framework

NWMP - North-West Mounted Police

OPP - Ontario Provincial Police

PPU - Police Paramilitary Unit

PSEPC - Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

PTG - Police Tactical Group

RCMP - Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RNWMP - Royal North-West Mounted Police

SEF - Selective Fire

SQ - Sûreté du Québec

SWAT - Special Weapons and Tactics

TPS - Toronto Police Service

TRU - Tactics and Rescue Unit

UBI - Universal Basic Income

UK - United Kingdom

UN - United Nations

US - United States

VPD - Vancouver Police Department

WPS - Winnipeg Police Service

WiPS – Windsor Police Service

WWII - World War Two

YRP - York Regional Police

ABSTRACT

The police and military are considered a feature of modern nation states. Their functions are meant to be separate, with one fighting external threats and the other fighting internal threats. In contemporary times, the line between the military and police has become increasingly blurred, with the police adopting inherently military characteristics. In the Canadian context, the idea that police at the local level are militarized and that there is a particular set of characteristics driving this militarization has remained largely unexplored. By taking an historic and analytical approach, this dissertation explores the militarization of Canadian police and its underlying mechanisms by revealing how the history of Canadian police intersects with their contemporary practices to arrive at militarization. While traditional explanations for militarization suggests that increased crime and violence are forcing police to militarize due to increased dangers, sociological explanations believe that police are militarizing due to an increase in threat perception resulting from the growth of minority groups and economic disparity. Using Peter Kraska's "Indicators of Militarization" framework, attention will be paid to the acquisition and use of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons by Canadian police at the local level, relying on empirical examples of their (mis)use. A pooled-time series panel regression analysis reveals what is driving militarization by revealing if traditional or sociological explanations of militarization are driving the expansion of police militarization into routine policing at the local level. As Canadian police normalize the use of militaristic tools in routine policing, it is imperative that the dangers of this functional change be understood.

ABSTRAIT

La police et l'armée sont considérées comme une caractéristique des États-nations modernes. Leurs fonctions sont censées être séparées, l'une luttant contre les menaces externes et l'autre contre les menaces internes. À l'époque contemporaine, la ligne de démarcation entre l'armée et la police est devenue de plus en plus floue, la police adoptant des caractéristiques intrinsèquement militaires. Dans le contexte canadien, l'idée que la police à l'échelon local est militarisée et qu'il existe un ensemble particulier de caractéristiques à l'origine de cette militarisation est restée largement inexplorée. En adoptant une approche historique et analytique, cette dissertation explore la militarisation de la police canadienne et ses mécanismes sous-jacents en révélant comment l'histoire de la police canadienne s'entrecroise avec ses pratiques contemporaines pour aboutir à la militarisation. Alors que les explications traditionnelles de la militarisation suggèrent que l'augmentation de la criminalité et de la violence contraint la police à se militariser en raison des dangers accrus, les explications sociologiques estiment que la militarisation de la police découle d'une augmentation de la perception des menaces résultant de la croissance des groupes minoritaires et des disparités économiques. En utilisant le cadre des "Indicateurs de Militarisation" de Peter Kraska, l'accent sera mis sur l'acquisition et l'utilisation des unités tactiques, des véhicules blindés et des armes d'assaut par la police canadienne à l'échelon local, s'appuyant sur des exemples empiriques de leur (mauvaise) utilisation. Une analyse de régression de panel sur séries temporelles agrégées révèle ce qui motive la militarisation en déterminant si les explications traditionnelles ou sociologiques sont à l'origine de l'expansion de la militarisation de la police dans le cadre de la police de routine à l'échelon local. Alors que la police canadienne normalise l'utilisation d'outils militaristes dans le maintien de l'ordre de routine, il est impératif de comprendre les dangers de ce changement fonctionnel.

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AUTHOUR'S CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This dissertation contributes to the broader discussion on the drivers of police militarization in North America. Existing police research in Canada has mainly focused on macro-level policing and has been quite generalist. To address this gap, this research employs a meso-micro approach by examining the processes driving police militarization in Canadian cities with populations of 50,000 and above, capturing overlooked nuances in the function creep of police militarization. Specifically, this work considers explicit instances where police have acquired and used tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons at the local level to better comprehend what is driving police in varying-sized populations to acquire these tools and militarize. This particular approach to understanding police militarization in Canada is novel. By using specific examples at the city level, this dissertation sheds light on the influence of local-level decision-making on the overall narrative of police militarization in Canada and its social and political impact on real, everyday people. Existing research tends to overlook the role of local decision-making in police militarization. At the time of writing this dissertation, no other work in Canada has explored police militarization with this level of detail, and limited research has used local examples for this type of analysis. This systematic and sociohistorical analysis also offers a new perspective on understanding police militarization by reinterpreting Peter Kraska's "Indicators of Militarization" framework. Although the use of micro, city-level data to understand what is driving police militarization in Canada tends to be overlooked, this research demonstrates its significance in future policing research and its role in contributing to a larger militarization narrative with far-reaching sociopolitical consequences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"To militarize means adopting and applying the central elements of the military model to an organization or particular situation" (Peter Kraska 2007:503).

1. Introduction

The police and military are considered a pre-eminent feature of the modern nation-state (Giddens 1987). In some modern nation-states, the line between police and military has been blurred and the relationship between the two is no longer mutually exclusive (Kraska 2007). In countries like the United States (US), for example, vast, detailed research has shown that the qualities and behaviours once reserved exclusively for the military have infiltrated everyday policing with irreversible consequences. Canada, being a modern nation-state, is not immune to these processes, especially considering the influence the US has had on its policies and practices related to policing. However, little research has been conducted to examine whether this has been the case. Despite how important and influential existing policing research has been and continues to be in other countries, scant research has attempted to explain if and how the militarization of policing has unfolded in the Canadian context and what may be driving it. Meyer and O'Malley (2005) suggest that one reason for this lack of research is the assumption that the Canadian criminal justice system is less punitive and repressive, especially compared to the US. This fallacy is particularly evident given that research on Canadian police has put a great focus on protest management and public order (Roziere and Walby 2018) and tends to mostly ignore the possibility that characteristics of militarism may be presenting themselves through these police practices. The staunch focus on the peacekeeping efforts of Canadian police has overlooked and ignored the possibility that militarization has occurred and is influencing police behaviour.

There are several reasons why the militarization of police is of concern for academics, policymakers, and the general public. Most notably, research has found that police who possess militaristic tools and equipment are more likely to interact with and kill civilians than police who are not militarized and do not own or use this type of equipment (Delehanty 2020). What results is militarized policing leading to 3:1 more fatalities than routine policing, rendering these military-style interventions into policing highly dangerous and deadly (Perez et al. 2015). Additionally, Lawson Jr. found that, while non-militarized police forces tend to use lethal force only in extreme circumstances, militarized police use lethal force against civilians more quickly, resulting in more civilian deaths (Lawson Jr. 2018). In areas with large, marginalized populations like people of colour, minority groups, Indigenous peoples, and those living in poverty, police patrols and raids tend to be more intense (Gama 2016), and police are more likely to use tactical resources. Studies in the US have found that an increase in police violence, especially against minority groups, has been a direct influence of a wave of militarization, where police find themselves as soldiers fighting on the front line of war rather than as public servants (Lawson Jr. 2018). This militarization is exacerbated by the procurement of military weapons which has been aided by the introduction of various transfer programs in Canada and the US. These programs supply police forces with military equipment and has been responsible for the onset of militarization and an increase in the use of lethal force resulting in civilian deaths (see: Radil et al. 2017, Delehanty et al. 2017). In this context, the militarization of police, and the weapons that signify this militarization, encourage police to take on a more lethal mentality which results in more deaths. In the Canadian context, given that police have acquired more weapons, and ethnic diversity is growing, it is imperative to consider this phenomenon and its consequences.

While studies in other democratic countries have successfully identified militarization, academic studies on policing in Canada have not studied the phenomenon in-depth. While studies on the topic have become more prevalent in recent years, most information on the militarization of police in Canada tends to be found in online blogs or traditional media reports. Much of this discourse presents mere speculation about trends in policing. Of the limited academic research that does look at the possibility of militarization of policing in Canada, a study by Roziere and Walby found that, between 2007 and 2016, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams were increasingly used by public police in Canadian cities for routine activities such as warrants, traffic violations, community policing, and even as a response to health crises and domestic disturbances (2018), signifying a widening of the scope of routine policing. Like findings in the US, their research concludes that the implications of this increase in SWAT deployment (and militarization) are likely to target already marginalized populations and is more likely to lead to citizen shooting deaths (ibid). In a 2020 study extending their 2018 paper, Roziere and Walby considered how a possible increase in a militarized style of policing is mostly the result of a surge in the use of militarized weapons. They contend that even though Canadian police do not have as much access to decommissioned militarized weapons as the police in the US (Roziere and Walby 2020b), the increased procurement and use of military equipment that is occurring is likely to lead to an increase in civilian shootings and casualties (Delehanty et al. 2017). The weapons transfer from the military to police forces creates a stock of lethal weapons that police have access to and are likely to use in their SWAT deployments. This increased use of lethal force, Roziere and Walby claim, are justified by police as a response to the perception of imminent of risk and danger (2020) of "others." While these studies link the presence of

militarized weapons and militarization to more lethal and dangerous policing, neither has confirmed that militarization exists in Canadian policing.

Most Canadian studies have not produced the same rich results as Roziere and Walby's 2018 study. However, other research has extended on the idea that an increase in police militarization may be tied to the perception of imminent risk and danger, real or fabricated. Monkkonen (1992) claims that there is an inherent culture of fear and risk in police practice that may lead to the overuse of military-style tactics of control. As such, the use of military weapons by local law enforcement officers in Canada may work to promote and reinforce a culture of fear and risk prevention, where police, in their fight against the "other," have secured tools to allow them to perform "effective policing" and risk management. Kurtz and Upton (2017) build on this idea when they suggest that police actions are justified by the fabrication of stories in law enforcement circles that often focus on excessive risk and become further supported by military tactics and equipment use as the ideal response. As a pervasive cultural notion in criminal justice that generates precautionary practices (Ericson and Haggerty 1997), the logic of risk and its perception has been one driver of increases in deploying tactical units and using militarized weapons and determines their frequency and lethality.

Studies conducted on policing have found that risk perception and the fear of some out-groups are tied to the use of certain styles of policing that are associated with militarization (see: US: Stamper 2011, Hirschfield 2015, United Kingdom (UK): Ariel et al. 2018). With this in mind, it is still unclear whether an increase in more violent and lethal policing in Canada is motivated by these risk- and fear-based factors and if these motivations may be contributing to the use of a militarized style of policing throughout the country and the decision by local police forces to acquire militarized equipment. Attempting to comprehend if the perception of increased

fear and risk is tied to changes in modes of policing may help to elucidate if the Canadian police, like the police in other nations, is indeed militarized and is using these attitudes and behaviours as justifications to target certain groups out of risk prevention, control, and fear.

The idea that police are militarizing to deal with changing populations is not novel. Fortenbery (2018) argues that law enforcement must now deal with larger populations, advances in weapons of mass destruction, and increases in terrorism... and they [police] must effectively protect the public, prevent social disorder, and reduce crime. As a result, to respond to these new threats, police tend to use more violence which, in turn, results in more deaths (McElrath and Turberville 2020). These markers, which cause police to become more militarized in their approach to policing, concretely exist in other countries, like the US and several countries in Latin America. In Canada, however, it can be argued that the markers that encourage militarization, or even justify it (which will be discussed further below), do not exist on such a large scale, or at all. This calls into question why Canadian police may be adopting militarized behaviours, especially given Canada's unique social and political environment. The military organizational structure is ineffective in places that do not meet the right conditions for its implementation and can cause distrust in police and render them ineffective at their jobs while simultaneously leading citizens to resort to violence against the police out of safety concerns. Allowing police access to military-style weapons encourages their use in routine police, inciting more violence and lowering the bar for their justification. In this case, given that the Canadian police have access to these same military weapons and materials (and are using them), it calls into question what characteristics and factors are driving their increased use in routine policing.

Research in both Canada and the US has shown that the demographic composition of a city significantly influences police department behaviour, particularly when it comes to

militarization. A study by Irving Jackson and Carroll found the demographic composition of a city had a great deal of influence on police expenditures (1981). Indeed, it was found that the larger a Black population, the more likely that police would increase their spending – this held constant when the researchers tested for the large presence of other minority groups (ibid). To reiterate these findings, Carmichael and Kent found that racial segregation and the size of the minority population within a city had a significant effect on the size of a police force (2015) aside from population size. Reinforcing Irving Jackson and Carroll's findings, Carmichael and Kent (ibid) also found that a city's racial and ethnic composition influences a police department's behaviours more than crime rates, which act as a traditional means of justification for police department behaviours and use of force. These findings reveal that at the city level, demographic factors play a more significant role in shaping police behaviours and resource allocation than traditional factors such as crime rates. This implies that the values, politics, and spending of police departments are greatly influenced by the demographic composition of the cities they serve, subsequently impacting their inclination to acquire specialized tools and weapons, and potentially leading to an increase in the use of force. Given that research has found that city-level factors greatly influence police behaviour, it is possible that militarization is occurring at the city level and is inspired by the racial and ethnic composition of the city. As such, differences in city-level demographics will act as the unit of analysis for understanding what is driving militarization in Canada and will attempt to underscore the rate at which these elements are driving the militarization of policing in Canada and to what degree they are occurring.

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To explore the idea of what is driving the militarization of police in Canada at the city level, this dissertation will be broken down into six chapters. Chapter One will feature an

introduction and literature review on the definitions of militarization and will explore what militarization looks like in other nations (both developed and developing). Chapter Two will explore the literature on the origins of policing and Canadian police history. It will open by looking at the colonial roots of the Canadian police and will feature an historical overview of policing over the last 150 years. There will also be a brief exploration of the history of Canadian police SWAT teams, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons. Chapters three, four, and five will feature the manuscripts of the dissertation. Chapter Three will feature the first article on SWAT teams (tactical units) and will explore the acquisition and use of SWAT teams at the city level. Chapter Four will feature the second article on armoured vehicles and will explore and analyze the acquisition of these vehicles by various police departments in Canada. Chapter Five will analyze the presence and use of assault weapons by Canadian police and will provide an analysis of the use of and acquisition of these weapons by police by focusing on the circumstances of their use. All manuscript chapters will feature relevant historical backgrounds, literature reviews, and micro case studies on each subject material indicator. Finally, Chapter Six will feature a discussion and analysis of the subsequent three chapters, will answer the research questions, and will feature future policy recommendations.

2. The Militarization of Law Enforcement

There is no clear point at which one can say that the militarization of policing began. Some scholars contend that the police have always been militarized by claiming that the foundation of military and police power is the same – the state-sanctioned capacity to use physical force to accomplish their respective objectives (external and internal security) (Kraska 1994). Other arguments suggest that militarization began under the influence of Sir Robert Peel

who introduced uniformed police under the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 in England (Pereira 2015). While there is no singular, precise way to identify when and how militarization infiltrated policing, a clear, concise definition is required so that it may be easily identified in real world policing. The word militarization finds its roots in the word militarism, defined as a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that stress the use of force, such as weapons and military power as the best means to solve problems (Kraska 1994). More complex definitions claim that militarism can be defined as an attitude and a set of institutions that regard war and its preparation as a normal (and desirable) social activity (Mann 1984). Militarism emphasizes martial values by focusing attention on the political realm. It suggests warlike values add an ability to drive social change and involves a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions, that promotes the use of force and threat of violence as the most appropriate and efficient way to solve problems (Lutz 2007). The best means of solving problems, according to militarism, is to inflict violence by emphasizing military power. In its purest form, militarism promotes the use of military tactics to solve problems using tools, strategies, and technology and to achieve its end, leading to what is more commonly known as militarization.

Catherine Lutz extends her definition of militarism to define militarization as being present when military ideology is applied where there is no set of universal military values (ibid). As a tense social process in which civil societies organize and produce violence (Geyer 1989), it can also be identified as the "process of arming, organizing, planning, training for, threatening, and sometimes implementing violent conflict. To militarize, then, means to adopt and apply the central elements of the military model to an organization in a particular situation" (Kraska 2007:503). Militarization, according to the above definitions, can be interpreted as adopting and applying the central elements of the military model to an organization or situation with the

intention of inflicting violence, or dominance, over a certain sector or group – a process that has become dangerously normalized in policing in some parts of the world.

2.1 How to Identify Militarization in Policing

The task of identifying militarization in policing is more complex than just understanding its definition. Indeed, militarization can manifest in different forms and different places. Definitions of militarization tend to vary across scholarship. Peter Kraska's definition of militarization, for example, rests on a set of core beliefs, values, and assumptions that stress the use of force and threat of violence as the most appropriate and efficacious means to solve problems. Kraska's definition of [police] militarization stresses that it is a process "whereby civilian police utilize and organize themselves around the military model through a material, cultural, organizational, and operational framework that emphasize the exercise of military power, hardware, organization, operations, and technology as its primary problem-solving tools" (2007:305). Other definitions of the militarization of policing contend that police militarization is identified when police take on characteristics traditionally associated with the military like access to heavy weapons and equipment to maintain public order, without the use of lethal force (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) and Stavrianakis and Selby (2012) argue that, once the police glorify military values, and turn towards the use of force to solve problems, militarization is present. While the above definitions create a framework for identifying police militarization, other definitions tend to take on a more singular approach, suggesting that material indicators are the most efficacious way to identify militarization.

The material approach contends that the possession of specialized teams/units or equipment can indicate militarization. As part of the material approach to police militarization,

Fisher (2010) suggests that the mere presence of a SWAT team is enough to denote militarization. He contends that this is because of their direct link to the military using military weapons, tactics, and operational strategy (ibid). In the same vein, it has also been suggested that the procurement of military equipment by police units is highly indicative of militarization (Johnson 2011). This material approach also suggests that the material aspects of militarization are manifested through political policy and are visible and tangible in the physical world.

While the material approach identifies the physical characteristics of militarization that are visible and tangible, a theoretical approach may reveal the more nuanced aspects of militarization that may be harder to identify. Some scholars have suggested that militarization is a by-product of the rapid growth in dense urban areas. Specifically, Stephen Graham argues that "militarization is a sign of a rapidly urbanizing world" (2013:12). The three characteristics of urbanism, according to Wirth (1938) are large populations, social heterogeneity, and population density. In this urban world, Graham contends, it is believed that states and security forces must identify problematic people and threats in advance before they are effectively indistinguishable from the wider populace (2013). According to this definition, a rapidly urbanizing world is one where there is more diversity. As a result of this diversity, the rapid shift towards militarization may stem from a desire to identify and distinguish threats before they become reality and their [perceived] deadly potential is realized. This military urbanism acts as a means of reorganization and (attempted) securitization" (ibid:14) against the rapidly growing presence of the "other." According to this argument, the emergence of militarization is the result of a large shift in geographical composition generally denoted by an increase in social diversity and heterogeneity.

While defining militarization may assist in better understanding its emergence in Canadian policing, an overview of how the process emerges in other countries may prove fruitful

in better understanding the historical processes that lead to militarization. Over the last several decades, it has been found that the driving force behind militarization seems to be a build-up of the military industrial complex combined with incidents of terrorism and a growth in violent organized crime events. This string of events has catapulted the US, for example, into full blown police militarization as a means to combat terror, real or perceived. In places like Latin America, however, the story is somewhat different as there are rampant and excessive levels of organized crime that has led to the military being used as police to combat these levels of dangerous crime. As a result, more violence has erupted against police and between citizens. Canada shares similar sociopolitical issues to these countries; however, they are much less severe and may not warrant such a strong police response. Understanding the conditions through which militarization of police festers in other countries may provide insight as to why Canadian police have either been slow to militarize or have done so to a lesser degree compared to other nations.

2.2 Case Study: Global Indicators of Militarization

2.2a The United States

Policing in the Western world traces most of its origins to traditions of policing established in Britain and parts of continental Europe, mainly France. These traditions are most visible in former British and French colonies (such as the US and Canada) and have come to shape modern policing practices throughout the West while also influencing police militarization. One of the most prominent examples of this influence, and its resulting militarization, exists in the United States. A large body of research has empirically demonstrated that policing in the US is indeed militarized. To illustrate what the process of militarization looks like, the following section will present a case study of how the US became militarized and how one can identify this

militarization in policing. This illustration will serve as the accepted case study of outward and identifiable militarization identification and its historical processes.

The turn towards militarized policing arguably started in the US around the mid 20th century after World War Two (WWII)[1] with the emergence of a professionalization of police work. The establishment of a "profession of police work" (Sloane 1954:77) attempted to present policing as a noble profession as opposed to being simply an occupation or work for those with less education. Brodeur et al. (2000) argue that this shift towards the professionalization of police helped to move them away from the corruption, inefficiency, political interference, and discriminatory law enforcement practices that characterized them, paving the way for a new form of policing. Other scholarship contends that the move towards professionalization was nothing more than a shift towards more organizational efficiency (by borrowing rank and structure from the military) (Staufenberger 1977) in a place where there had arguably been little or none beforehand. What emerged from this shift towards professionalization was the introduction of a military-style structure into professionalized policing that would come to characterize their conduct and entrench them in the Military Industrial Complex that emerged in the 1960s.

The professionalization of police, and the introduction of a more rigid military-like structure, paved the way for new modes of policing that involved the normalization of more violent, solider-like conduct. One of the first instances of this new professionalized, violence-focused mindset was on display during the US Labour Strikes that started in the 1920s. On May 30, 1937, Chicago Police shot and killed 10 unarmed labour protestors during the Memorial Day Massacre while injuring more than 100 others (Alter 2021) due to a belief that the protesters held

[1] Some scholars argue that the rapid technological advancements that occurred during the Second World War, where the American military started utilizing new scientific technologies to solidify its military superiority on the world stage (Haggerty and Ericson 1999), is partially responsible for the use and innovation of military type weapons in policing. The use of these weapons by police is characteristic of their professionalization.

radical left-wing political beliefs (which was later disproved). 25 years later, The Civil Rights Movement appeared to create another opportunity for enhanced militarized policing with a call for more aggressive forms of policing as protests and tensions created by increased segregation between Whites and non-Whites intensified. The solution on the part of police was to use brutality as a mechanism to control the African American population, which came in the form of physical violence and the use of weapons as a means of [social] control. What has resulted from these new modes of policing is an inherent distrust and disdain towards police that permanently solidified their negative reputation, especially among minorities (Bhattar 2021). On the surface, professionalization appears to have moved policing towards a more reputable and prestigious occupation. However, the reality of this change was a shift in thinking that caused the police to undergo more scrutiny than at any other time in American history (Palmiotto 2000) due to their increased use of violence. What resulted from this professionalization was a new reputation for police that turned away from prestige towards being known as abusive, violent enforcers of the elitist status quo who carried military-style weapons to subjugate and control minority groups.

The distrust for police that arose from the brutality experienced during the Civil Rights Movement caused lawmakers to seek an alternative mode of policing. What emerged was the community policing (CP) model as an attempt to move away from the reputation that police were too brutal and too militaristic. Due to failed attempts at CP during the Civil Rights Era (Pereira 2015), it was not until the 1970s that organizational changes attempted to re-establish the police-community relationship (Staufenberger 1977). Part of this initiative was increasing the visibility of police and their relations with members of the community. This pro-active, decentralized approach (touted as the opposite of the centralized, professionalization approach), hoped to reduce crime and disorder by involving the officer in a particular community on a long-term

basis to facilitate trust and co-operation (Trojanowicz and Carter 1988). This re-branding of policing aspired to improve police-citizen relations after the tumultuous Civil Rights Era by focusing on the needs of individual communities over those of the officer or force. While the CP model was not entirely successful in replacing professionalization or a centralized structure, there are still places that attempt to practice it today despite the popularity of professionalization.

Between the various shifts in modes of policing arising from the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s to 1970s and the turn of the 21st Century, the militarization of the US police was suspected, but never materially proven. It was not until the post-9/11 era that the police cemented their place as militarized. Due to the events of 9/11, policing policy changed to taking a more "pre-emptive" as opposed to responsive role to crime as seen through the emergence of the National Security State (NSS) (McLaughlin 2006). In the NSS, "the police forewarn the public that [their] priority is to upgrade security policing as part of the preparations for an inevitable major terrorist incident" (ibid:131). Indeed, the focus of contemporary police has been far more proactive, with an increased focus on identifying and countering potential terrorist threats before they happen, all in the context of an expanding and increasingly vague definition of terrorism. This shift in behaviour, as mentioned earlier, is a main feature of militarization.

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The rise of a militarized police is not unique to the US. Some scholars argue that, outside of the United States, scholarly research has neglected the extent to which this process has taken place (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). Across the world, it is argued that local and state law enforcement has seen an increase in militarization over the last thirty years, with civilian police acting more like armed forces and soldiers replacing civilian police in traditional law enforcement tasks (ibid). This process occurs because police are receiving better training,

discipline, and accountability (Wood 2015). Others have suggested that [militarization] is part of a natural progression in the evolution and professionalization of policing (den Heyer 2013). If this is the case, then why does scholarship tend to overlook that this process may be occurring outside of the US? The reality is that the distinction between military and civilian law enforcement is increasingly blurring in other parts of the world, both developed and developing. To understand the extent to which this processing is occurring, and the process through which it occurs, attention will be put on the process of militarization in other parts of the world and will seek to comprehend other possible indicators of militarization outside of those commonly researched and understood in the US context in order to help better identify it in Canada.

Outside of the US, scholarship has demonstrated that the militarization of police is taking place in Europe, Latin America, Australia, and the UK (see: Flores- Macías and Zarkin 2021, Bailey and Dammert 2006, Dammert and Bailey 2005, McCulloch 2001, 2021, Magaloni and Rodriguez 2020, and Lutterbeck 2004). Specifically, countries like the UK, France, Germany, Australia, Mexico, and Colombia have become a hotbed for the constabularization of the military (the process where the armed forces take on the roles and responsibilities of civilian/local law enforcement agencies), the use of paramilitary police, and an overall militarization of local law enforcement agencies. The rise of a police state in these countries has been marked by systems of mass social control, new and old, repression (of speech and free will), and warfare promoted by a ruling class whose will is carried out by the police (Robinson 2018). Coupled with the developing status of some of these countries, the lack of oversight and legal precedence regarding police duties can seemingly make military involvement in public security seem normalized. What has been observed in these countries over the last half-century is that the police have started to either emulate military contractors or use them outright in

domestic/internal policing matters all while causing great harm to its citizens. This phenomenon is unfolding all over the world and its consequences have had a lasting impact on policing by revealing the type of violence that police are now capable of using the deal with civil issues, peaceful, rightful protest, and routine policing.

To understand how this phenomenon is occurring globally, focus will be placed on countries that have different types of militarization. Latin America, as the first case, provides an interesting case as constabularization, paramilitary police, and militarization are occurring in different parts of the continent at any given time. Additionally, given its developing status, it portrays how militarization (and its various forms) occurs in a non-democratic nation while also showcasing a unique situation where the use of military police and militarization may be justified given the political and social violence. In contrast, focus will also be placed on Australia as its democratic regime is one of the most similar to Canada's in the world. While this does not negate the importance of the process of militarization in other parts of the world, focusing on these particular cases puts forth contrasting narratives that emphasize how militarization can manifest in different governmental regimes globally and whether or not it is justified to better shed light on how this process may be unfolding in the Canadian context.

2.2b Latin America

Various parts of the Americas are considered some of the most violent and dangerous places on earth. Some countries in this region have a history of employing the military to carry out law enforcement activities, while others have equipped their police with more militaristic weapons, training, and mindsets to fight crime. Since the turn of the millennium, Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) argue there has been a trend toward the militarization of law enforcement in

various Middle and South American countries. They claim this trend is driven by the rising levels of violent crime, alongside the "appeal of punitive populism, especially amid perceptions of police incompetence and corruption" (522). It is also argued that this shift is due to "surges in social violence, acquisitive crime, and insecurity driven by narcotics, civil war, counter insurgency (increased availability of small arms), and structural stresses on society (hyperinflation, unemployment, and drastic income inequality)" (Macauly 2012). In a number of these countries, there also exists an ongoing, long-standing drug crisis, characterized by decades of violence, mass murder, and guerilla warfare, requiring more aggressive forms of control. Macauly argues that local police have been ineffective in preventing or resolving these types of crime (ibid). To more effectively respond to these surges of violence, some of these countries have either adopted a constabularized model or have transitioned towards a paramilitary style of policing (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). The outcome of this new style of policing is either an increase in violence or a non-solution to the drug crises, only exacerbating the ongoing issues.

The three main types of [militarized] police in the Americas range from militarized police (considered less militarized), paramilitary police (more militarized), and constabularized military (considered the most militarized) (ibid). The use of a constabularized military, while not unique to Middle and South America, is much more widespread and commonly adopted in these areas and is even viewed by some as a means to restore peace and societal order (Diamint 2015). Flores-Macías and Zarkin define constabularization as the process whereby the military (armed forces) take on the responsibility of civilian law enforcement agencies (2021). As the most extreme form of militarization, the armed forces tend to take on public security tasks themselves. This can include crime prevention (security patrols), crime fighting (drug crop eradication and interdiction, drug and arms seizures, searches and arrests, evidence gathering and interrogation),

and prison security (ibid:522). This process differs from militarization as civilian police either do not exist or have limited powers. A constabularized force will generally follow military law and have access to all military equipment to carry out their activities and are the most militarized of all law enforcement groups.

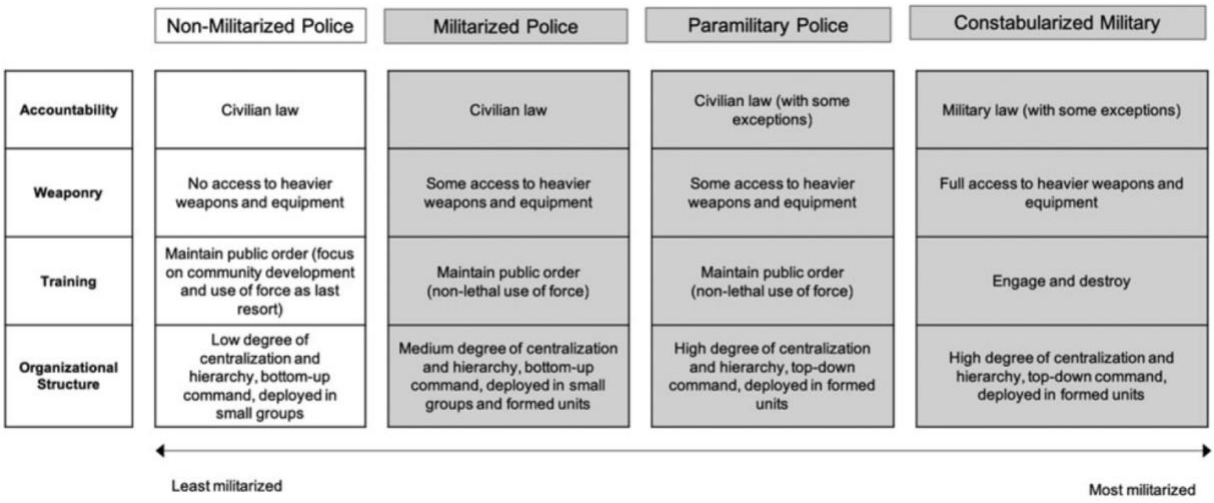

Figure 1: "Law enforcement types based degrees of militarization" (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021:521).

In the past, the use of military intervention in domestic security was more common during military dictatorships and was not as common in democratic regimes (ibid). In most Latin American countries, it appears as if the distinction between military and domestic policing is less meaningful and even blurred. The Mexican military, for example, has participated outright in policing operations since 2006 due to an overturning of Article 129 of the Mexican Constitution in 1996 which argued that, during peaceful times, the military cannot perform anything other than strictly military functions (ibid). The overturning of this ruling allows the military to perform domestic functions and public duties in an auxiliary role. While the military was meant to eventually be replaced by the National Guard (ibid), this transition never occurred. Instead, what emerged over the next decade was a movement toward a military state that was cemented during the Presidency of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa.

When Calderón Hinojosa took office in 2006, the country began to see a rapid shift in law enforcement practices. As part of his national security strategy, the newly elected president sent 6,500 troops into Michoacán to battle cartel violence (Calderón Hinojosa 2006). Moloeznik claims that the national security strategy adopted by President Calderon was the catalyst for the formalization of the militarization of public security, the creation of a new police model (2013), and "the start of constabularization" (Flores-Macias and Zarkin 2021:350). This model is characterized by a desire to professionalize law enforcement agencies, which meant replacing them with professional soldiers. Part of this professionalization also included the militarization of public security whereby the military operates with little external control and oversight while they take over public security measures (Wilkinson 2018). The logic behind this switch, it is argued, is that the military would be better equipped to help combat organized crime. Part of this argument also stems from the belief that this shift was due to organized crime regimes having taken hold of military grade weapons (Flores-Macias and Zarkin 2021) and that the military, who also had powerful weapons, was best equipped to fight back. While this solution was meant to be temporary, argues Wilkinson, it effectively ended up substituting for police while becoming the face of law enforcement (2018) throughout parts of Mexico to bring an end to the War on Drugs, instead leading to a more violent police presence.

The consequences of this national security strategy have been vast. For one, argues Wilkinson, the military has been given access to interior security (ibid) as opposed to traditional "outer" security. This has meant more "grave violence against civilians, leading to an increase in executions, enforced disappearances, torture, and a dramatic increase in homicides" (ibid). Indeed, Perez et al. (2015) have demonstrated that, when members of the army intervene in domestic policing, they tend to kill more civilians than police, with one of their studies

demonstrating that soldiers kill 3:1 compared to domestic police, rendering military intervention into routine policing and policing in general highly dangerous and deadly. Organized crime groups have also responded strongly to the show of force from the state. The involvement of the military in domestic policing has also led to more violence towards these groups. In turn, organized crime groups are now more likely to carry military grade weapons and equipment and use military style tactics and maneuvers against law enforcement (Lessing 2013, 2017). While violence was high before the implementation of this policy, it arguably increased after and made one of the most dangerous places on earth even more dangerous and volatile.

Constabularization and militarization are not unique to Mexico. Several other South American countries have also been susceptible to the militarization of their police due to increasingly violent political landscapes. In El Salvador, for example, elite military brigades have been unleashed in urban settings in an attempt to combat drug and gang violence. In Venezuela, high-ranking military officials now fill the spots reserved for civilians who then use these positions to launch joint military-police offensives against gangs (Gagne 2015). This "heavy-handed" method of policing has become engrained in the fabric of these countries to the point that their presence and subsequent violence becoming normalized. In Colombia, the armed forces have been involved in internal order since the 1960s (Leal Buitrago 2004). Rodriguez argues that Colombia, with its "long, recurrent history of violence, insecurity, economic instability, and mid-range civil institutions" has made it a unique case (2018:111). This situation has made the country appear to always be under conflict, making it a hotbed for militarization and militarism (where force is the ultimate solution to solve problems). One prime example of this recurring violence is the war on drugs. To combat narcotics trafficking, the country has created more forceful counter agencies. The most notable of these agencies, the Counternarcotic Brigade,

focuses its attention on aerial assaults and the destruction of laboratories (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). In 2005, it was found that the number of these types of counter-narcotic operations reached 1,000 (Schultze-Kraft 2012). To add even more force, actual military brigades were assigned to join forces with the Colombian Police. The most notable of these being the Fourteenth Directive from the Ministry of National Defence (Llorente and McDermott 2014) that joined forces with the National Police and continues to be at the forefront of the narcotics crisis.

The consequences of this outright militarization of police in Colombia have been vast. While these entities intend to fight drugs and gang violence, their efforts have turned on civilians. In 2020, police beat a man for violating his COVID-19 curfew by tazing and then beating him to death, leading to anti-police brutality protests where police were caught on video firing live ammunition and tear gas at protestors and beating them with batons (Noriega 2020). At this event, 13 civilians were killed and 300 were wounded (Dickinson 2020). It has also been found that police violence in Colombia generally targets at at-risk populations, such as drug users and Afro-Colombians (Noriega 2020). The presence of this militarized body to conduct policing and anti-riot measures has not reduced violence in the country, nor has it reduced the levels of drug trafficking or drug-related violence. This violence by police, it appears, has been directed more prevalently at civilians who "disturb the peace" and who challenge the political landscape rather than the dangerous criminals and gangs that justify their presence and use.

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The militarization of police in Latin America has a unique historical process that is not common in other parts of the world. In parts of Latin America, especially those places that experience corruption and an ongoing war on drugs, the military organizational structure has an important advantage. When corruption is a problem, like it is in this part of the world, this

particular structure adds accountability and oversight on the individual officer, for example. In addition, this model should be effective in dealing with high levels of crime and violence as police are properly weaponized to handle the violence presented by these groups. This process is, however, arguably unique to this part of the world and provides an extraordinary example as to when militarization, or the use of the military to police, may be justified. Additionally, what this case demonstrates is that militarization, or even constabularization, can be justified in situations with extreme citizen violence, gang violence, or drug cartels. These conditions, however, are not present in places like Canada or the US. As such, the case of militarization in Latin America demonstrates the extremes required for militarization to be utilized. In the following section, there will be an exploration of a country with similar socio-political conditions to Canada to try and understand the processes through which police militarization is starting to emerge.

2.2c Australia

Australia tends to be served by a positive reputation on the world stage, seen as a free and fair democracy where police act in accordance with their mandates and the line between police and military stands firm. Like Canada, this has led to the militarization of police in Australia being relatively under-researched. Like other Anglo-American countries, it has traditionally held a strict demarcation between police and military, with a constitutionally enshrined idea that the military is not to be used during times of peace except under extreme circumstances (McCulloch 2021). However, since the 1970s, the line between police and military has started to blur, with paramilitary forces spearing in 1978 in the wake of the "Sydney Hilton bombing" (ibid:5). In response to the terrorism threat of this event, the Tactical Assault Group (TAG) was created. Their role, aside from counterterrorism, was to respond to threats on land and overseas with the

safety of the homeland in mind. The creation of this team, it is argued, acted as the catalyst for the creation and normalization of tactical units in Australia.

The first tactical group was created in Victoria in 1977. The Special Operations Group was primarily tasked with counterterrorism and external threats. McCulloch (1998) argues that the creation of this operations group is the "harbinger" to more militaristic modes of policing that involve high levels of confrontation, more lethal weapons, and a greater range of weapons and more frequent recourse of deadly force. The presence of Police Tactical Groups (PTG) throughout the country rose sharply in this decade, with eight units rising up across the country. The roles of these PTGs is counterterrorism, high-risk situations, operational support, and the arrest or armed and dangerous offenders, with specialist sniper positions meant to protect the public (see: McCulloch 2021, White 2019) Research has argued that the tactics used by these units in their specialized policing has progressively integrated into everyday policing, outside of democratic traditions (McCulloch 1998), and has become the new standard for internal policing.

More recently, Australian police have acquired military style equipment. The police tactical groups have acquired a number of armoured vehicles and assault rifles. The New South Wales police, for example, has a total of three Lenco Ballistic Engineered Armoured Response Counter Attack Trucks (BearCat) armoured vehicles[2] which they introduced to the public via YouTube in 2012. The BearCat quickly became the standard for armoured vehicles in the country, with Victoria acquiring one in 2018 (which was proudly announced via Twitter/X) and The Western Australia police following suit in April 2022. The same Western Police also received AR-15 semi-automatic rifles, as has the Victoria Police (White 2019). The justification rhetoric behind the acquisition of these vehicles and weapons is that they are first and foremost

[2] The Lenco BearCat is also a popular vehicle amongst Canadian police forces.

meant to keep officers safe which, in turn, keeps people safe from criminals and crime[3]. As will be demonstrated, these weapons are not always used for their intended purpose and instead tend to insight an increase in violence by the police.

Since record keeping began in 1989/90, the Australian police have killed roughly 164 people with guns, a 78% increase came between 2018-2020 (Doherty and Sullivan 2021). One explanation for this increase, McCulloch suggests, is that the equipment police are acquiring to "fight terrorism" and use only in the direst situations, are progressively being integrated into everyday policing (2021:6). Like Canada, since police began acquiring these weapons in Australia, there has been an increase in violence. Between 1980 and 1990, fatal police shootings increased (ibid). This essentially led to a culture of gun violence whose presumed solution was arming the police with more assault rifles. These assault rifles have been disproportionately used against Australian Aboriginals (who already face drastically high imprisonment rates). In the last 5 years, there have been several fatal shootings of Aboriginal men and women, with some being killed in their homes and in front of their families (Cunneen 2020). Police have also been recorded as using more violence during protests, with mounted police using pepper spray to break up anti-Covid lockdown protests. The police claim that the aggressive behaviour of citizens warranted their use of force (BBC News 2021) and continue to justify their actions in the name of "protecting" citizens. This behaviour has become normalized and engrained into the fabric of Australian police and has made the dangerous practice of police militarization ubiquitous across the country, leading to an increase in violence and the continued justification of use of force in non-threatening situations as the new mode of policing.

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[3] As will be noted in chapter 2, similar rhetoric is used by Canadian police forces.

The types of militarization that are occurring across the world take on many forms and present unique dangers and consequences to police-citizen relations and the sociopolitical fabric. Globally, the commonality amongst forces that tend to militarize is that their creation is based on some sort of violent internal or external threat, either real or perceived. In Australia, for example, there is a great deal of police violence directed towards Aboriginal peoples. Canada, like Australia, has a large Indigenous population that tends to be disproportionately subject to police interventions. The behaviour and training required by these specialized groups to combat these threats has slowly integrated into common police practice (McCulloch 2021), manifesting itself mostly on oppressed groups and protestors. As a result, police have started to acquire deadly weapons to combat perceived threats and violence (which is arguably a result of citizens' reactions to police violence). The various wars on crime, drugs, sex trafficking, and terror that fit the policing narrative have conjured a sense of fear that has aided in the expansion of police powers and "between militarization momentum" (McCulloch 2021:6). The resulting justification rhetoric has eroded the line between police and military and has blurred the line between what constitutes internal and external threat while demonstrating the dangers of police militarization in a place where the threat is manufactured and not always real.

In places like Latin America, the threat of violence from drug cartels or drug traffickers poses a real risk that requires the use of strong police and military intervention to combat. In the US, for example, the rising threat of gun violence has also warranted a more specialized method of policing in order to ensure public safety. In places like Australia and Canada, however, crime levels are relatively low (albeit not non-existent), which begs the question as to why police are using the same forms of militarization seen in other countries with high levels of violence. To better understand what is driving police to militarize in Canada, the following section will

consider the idea that fear and the perception of risk are driving police to utilize these new, violent modes of policing in an attempt to understand what is driving militarization.

3. Fear and Risk as Possible Motivators of Militarization

"Militarization reflects an approach that divides the community into those to be protected and those seen as a threat" (Jude McCulloch 2021:7).

Variations in the intensity and degree of the militarization of police have been arguably driven by several factors. One of the more common theoretical approaches by scholars has been to evaluate fear and risk as drivers and incentives for police to militarize and adopt military attitudes and behaviours for everyday policing. Some research has suggested that the militarization of policing is driven and modified by the presence of minorities and immigrants. In the US, for example, it has been found that areas with high concentrations of African- Americans is positively correlated with police acquisition of armoured vehicles (Ajilore 2015). Hall-Blanco and Coyne also found that police tend to interact more violently with minority groups and are more likely to carry bullet-proof vests and automatic weapons when dealing with situations in predominantly Black neighbourhoods (2016), even when not deploying their tactical units/SWAT teams. While the presence of those who are perceived to pose a risk has been demonstrated tirelessly in the US context, there is still uncertainty surrounding the idea that the same factors may be driving the rise of police militarization in Canada.

If fear and risk are driving factors behind the uprising of police militarization, the source of this fear and risk still remains largely unclear. On the one hand, it has been argued that what is perceived as fearful or posing a risk comes directly from the dissemination of crime statistics, through the news media, academic research, and government officials through reports and

rhetoric. This information, used to create crime statistics and information, is directly disseminated by the state. Neocleous (2000) claims that, when a state actively defines what is meant to be fearful for its citizens, its roots are in the governments permanent state of fear about what may or may not be happening and their attempt at eliminating whatever poses a risk to their ideologies. These definitions eventually trickle down to the individual level where people also begin to perceive some sort of risk to themselves, their ways of life, or towards those who are not like them. Historically, upholding the peace meant protecting the nobility against those who posed a threat to their way of life. In contemporary times, it has been argued that [political] elites utilize law enforcement to uphold their ways of life against members of society whom they deem threatening (ibid). The idea that fear and risk rhetoric comes from those at the top, as a means of preserving their ways of life and oppressing and subjugating the underclass, begins to reveal a possible source of the creation and perpetuation of risk and fear in modern society.

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The following theoretical section will expand on the idea that fear and risk definitions are created by elites as a means of upholding their ways of life and ideologies while actively suppressing the underclasses of society. This is especially important considering that, in Canada, there is a large population of immigrants, Indigenous peoples, and poor populations that, in traditional sociologically literature, present a "risk." These elites, as it will be revealed, have significant influence over policymaking that affects decision-making for police at the local level. These ideas will be explored further by looking at how fear and risk is fabricated and how those who pose a risk are managed by these elite groups through changes to policing policy and practice. These theoretical paradigms flourish on the idea that policing, especially in a militarized state, is based on the notion of proactive policing, relying on pre-emptive and risk management

as opposed to reactive policing that responds to actual threats, crime, and violence. Given that there is a large population of those who constitute a "risk" in the Canadian context, it is pertinent to understand if their presence has contributed to an increase in militarized style policing.

3.1 The Risk Society: Who (or what) presents a risk?

In several works, Ulrich Beck contends that society lives in a constant state of fear and that government officials work to mitigate this fear through risk management; this defines the risk society (1992, 1995, 2006). In his writings, he suggests that modern risks (which are attributed to late modernity) are reflexive, self-induced, and mostly man-made through human activity and thought. Beck argues that modern societies attempt to pre-emptively manage risks that they have constructed to anticipate and counter catastrophe (Beck 2006). These definitions of risk, he argues, stem from a privileged group who seek to maintain their status. These definitions are then disseminated through social institutions (like police, education, and the media) which help to render them meaningful (Beck 1992, 1995). What results are definitions that get turned into law, policy, and research findings. Institutions then adopt these definitions and internalize them in their policy and practice. As a consequence, institutions like the police are aiding in the legitimization of these definitions through policy, practice, and behaviours.

Beck expands on this idea by suggesting that government, science, and law are the agents through which these definitions of risk manifest (Beck 1995) as they are charged with risk assessment and management. As general practices of the elite, they are arguably in charge of creating and managing the rhetoric on fear and risk. These channels assist in the dissemination of definitions and ideas of what (or who) is a risk. When this information is disseminated, it may be used to position a certain group or groups as a threat to a perceived status quo, being later

internalized by the masses. What results is the perception that these groups pose a risk to elite rhetoric, majority lifestyles, and political leanings. These beliefs, it can be argued, serve as a driving force for the adoption and implementation of policies that focus on the management, subjugation, and elimination of these "risks."

While the research has continuously demonstrated that the presence of minority groups, Indigenous peoples, and those living in poverty has contributed to police militarization in other parts of the world, in the Canadian context, it is still unclear if these same characteristics are inspiring police militarization. Considering that Canada is home to vast demographic diversity and increasing wealth polarization, it is plausible that the narrative surrounding risk and fear has come to include these individuals and has made its way into policing rhetoric. As was discussed, when police are militarized, they are more likely to use violence, especially against minority groups and the poor (see: Delehanty 2020, Delehanty et al. 2017, Lawson Jr. 2018, and Perez et al. 2015). Given that police have moved to a pre-emptive model of fear and risk management, it is increasingly likely that these individuals will become the targets of police militarization, continuously shaping and re-shaping the narrative of "protecting the public" through risk elimination. Overall, the goal of this work is to comprehend what is driving police in Canada to militarize and to better understand the consequences of this militarization. In the Latin American context, a lack of oversight and accountability has harboured distrust in police and only increased police-citizen violence, revealing the dangers of militarization. In Canada, if police militarization goes unchecked, it will lead to the destabilization of democracy and the creation of a police state where no person, save those whom police serve and protect, is safe.

4. Research Questions

The motivation for this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the degree to which Canadian police are militarized and what is driving this militarization by exploring policing at the city-level. As such, the follow two primary research questions motivate this dissertation:

(1) To what extent are Canadian police departments militarizing relative to other militarized countries?

(2) What are the conditions driving police militarization in Canada?

Overall, it is the main goal of the first question to understand if the conditions that are guiding militarization of police in other countries are similar or different to the ones guiding it in the Canadian context. This will reveal the degree to which Canadian police are militarized. The second question seeks to comprehend what underlying characteristics are driving this militarization through better understanding what is driving local police departments to adopt military weapons and tactics in their policing. To guide these research questions, and to understand how to identify militarization empirically, there will be primarily utilization of Peter Kraska's framework of police militarization indicators taken from his 2007 work "Militarization and Policing – Its Relevance to 21st Century Police." This framework guides the selection of indicators of Canadian police militarization employed in this dissertation.

5. Data and Methods

5.1 Data Collection

The dataset that will be used is completely original and was curated from several different sources. Data for all variables was collected according to Statistics Canada census years 2011,

2016, and 2021 at the city level, encompassing cities, municipalities, and conglomerates across all Canadian provinces that have a population of over 50,000 as of 2011 using the census subdivision counts measure[4]. In total, this captured 68 cities/regions across the country[5] resulting in a total of 204 cases for analysis. Independent variable data for population size, Indigenous identity, and low-income measures in census year 2011 was collected from the National Household Survey (NHS) while the same independent variable data for census years 2016 and 2021 was collected from the Census. Data for police personnel was gathered from the Police Administration Survey for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Crime statistics for violent crime, homicide, and firearm incidents were also collected from the Uniform Crime Survey for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Dependent variable data was collected from various sources including police force websites, newspapers, and official press releases for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. In the following sections, there will be a breakdown of the variables being used in the analysis, their sources, and any details of their use and issues.

5.1a Dependent Variables: Indicators of Militarization – a Framework

The framework that will be utilized as the dependent variable measure of militarization is an adapted version of Peter Kraska's indicators framework from his 2007 article "Militarization and Policing – Its Relevance in 21st Century Policing." In this article, he proposes a theoretical framework to identify police militarization. Within this framework, Kraska suggests that there are four "indicators" of police militarization. These indicators include: material (martial

[4] The Census subdivision measure (CSD) was chosen over other measures of population offered by Statistics Canada as it measures municipalities as singular areas as opposed to surrounding areas that they may encompass. As such, this measure gives a more accurate count of the municipal population when compared to other measures of population at Statistics Canada and for the purpose of this work.

[5] The regions of Peel, York, Durham, Halton, Waterloo, and Niagara are conglomerates that have between three and nine cities within them. For the purpose of this work, these regions will be counted as one city.

weaponry, equipment, and advanced technology), cultural (martial language, style (appearances), beliefs, and values); organizational (martial arrangements such as 'command and control' centers, and elite squads of officers patterned after military special operations patrolling high-crime areas (as opposed to traditional officers on the beat)); and operational (patterns of activity modeled after the military such as in the areas of intelligence, supervision, handling high-risk situations, or war-making/restoration (e.g. weed and seed)) (2007:503). Within the context of this work, focus will be placed on organizational/operational indicators when focusing on tactical units and material indicators when focusing on the presence and use of armoured vehicles and assault weapons. The decision to use both operational and organizational perspectives to analyze the presence of tactical units is due to the organizational aspect offering elite squads of officers patrolling high crime areas (as opposed to traditional response) and the operational aspect that positions SWAT teams as handling high-risk situations with war like tactics, making both aspects of this framework viable for this analysis. As for the material aspect of the framework, parts of material (carrying of weapons), cultural (martial language, appearance, beliefs, and values), and aspects of operational and organizational will be left out of the official analysis as they are outside of the scope of the project's analysis. In the case of material indicators, the presence of martial weaponry and equipment is well-suited to this indicator. As such, the dependent variables will be tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons as proxies for Kraska's framework.

5.1b Measuring Risk

To measure the presence of risk, focus will be placed on the presence of visible minorities, Indigenous populations, and poverty. These measures, in line with the literature on risk and fear mentioned in section 3, will best represent the measurable presence of each of these

variables across Canadian provinces and cities. Detailed breakdowns of each variable can be found in the substantive chapters throughout this dissertation. In the following section, there will be an explanation as to how each variable was curated and how they will be used.

Visible Minority

The presence of visible minorities is measured as persons, who are non-Aboriginal, non-Caucasian in race, and non-white. Data on the presence of visible minorities was collected for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. For the year 2011, data was collected from the National Household Survey (NHS) under "total visible minority population." For both 2016 and 2021, data was collected from the census under "total visible minority population." For these variables, the counts were utilized, divided by the population number of the municipality to create a percentage of the population for the purpose of analysis.

Indigenous

To measure the presence of Indigenous peoples in each city, data was collected for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Indigenous identity refers to persons who identify with Indigenous peoples in Canada (see appendix for detailed definition). For 2011, data was collected from the NHS under "Aboriginal population profile." For both 2016 and 2021, data was collected from the census. In 2016, data was collected from the "Aboriginal identity" section of the census. In 2021, the data was collected from the "Indigenous identity section." To transform the data, raw counts were used and divided by the population of the given city to create a percentage of the population. This rate will be used for analytical purposes.

Poverty

The low-income measure that will be utilized for this dissertation is the “low-income measure, after tax” (LIM-AT). This measure encompasses a fixed percentage (50%) of median-adjusted after-tax income of private households while also considering the size of the household and the sharing of personal income within the household. For 2011, data was derived from the NHS “In low income in 2010 based on after-tax low-income measure.” For 2016, data was derived from the census under the “In low income based on the LIM-AT" (2015 measure). For 2021, data was derived from the census under the "LIM-AT" (2020 measure). To utilize this variable in the analysis, it was converted to a rate by utilizing the count and dividing it by the population to create a percentage of the population in low-income status.

5.1c Control Variables

Measuring Crime

To measure the presence of crime, three separate variables have been considered: homicide, violent crime, and firearm incidents. Data for each of these variables was curated from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Specifically, the “Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations by province” dataset was used. To measure these variables, the actual number of incidents was utilized and converted to a rate per 100,000. The measures of homicide and firearms incidents fall under the umbrella of violent crime, according to Statistics Canada. As such, in the analytical aspects of this dissertation, either violent crime or homicide and gun violence will be used to measure crime.

Police Presence

The presence of police was measured utilizing the Police Administration Survey, specifically the "Police personnel by gender, municipal police services" dataset for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. To capture the total number of police, the count was collected per city by considering the number of Full-time equivalent officers. This count was converted into a rate of police per 10,000 to make the variable more manageable and comparable across cities. By creating a rate for police, it acts as a secondary way to measure the population of a city and its growth.

5.1d Other considerations

The number of data points in the original data set was 237, covering roughly 79 cities with a population of over 50,000. Due to either missing or unreported data, there was a loss of 33 cases and 11 cities, resulting in a remaining total of 204 cases and 68 cities after cleaning the data. The original number of cases in this study represent police forces with RCMP detachments. Preliminary modelling found that running models with the RCMP led to a lack of variation in the data, rendering almost ¾ of cities to "possess" tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons. With the removal of the RCMP, the number of cases is reduced further to 147, for 49 cities. Modelling without the RCMP will be used throughout this dissertation as it captures cities that have actively made the decision to curate militarized units and technologies as opposed to cities who merely have access to them via these detachments. This ensures that the decision-making process to purchase and acquire these militarized indicators is fully captured.

5.2 Data Analysis

This dissertation will employ mixed methods. Qualitatively, archival research will be used, specifically the ecological approach. An historical approach, this strategy "measures the degree of similarity and difference of specified structural characteristics among a large number of organizations and provides evidence and insight" (Mohr and Ventresca 2002:7). The ecological method, according to Mohr and Ventresca, involves utilizing directories, encyclopedias, government sources, census data, and prominent firm information (ibid:18) to conduct a deep, historical dive into the processes driving a certain phenomenon. For this dissertation, the ecological method will involve the close historical analysis of police records (such as purchases) and will also involve a deep historical overview of policing in Canada to better reveal the process of militarization over time. Considering the gap in the literature regarding the processes through which Canadian policing has militarized, an historical approach is necessary to provide insight into how this process unfolded.

To statistically analyze the data, a multivariate fixed-effects, pooled time-series, cross-sectional regression technique will be utilized, focusing specifically on binary outcomes. According to Ward and Leigh (1993), this type of model allows for differences among individual variables by including a separate covariance for each data point. In addition, pooled time-series cross-sectional estimators are robust to shifts in the number of cases included in different periods (Johnston and DiNardo, 1997, Wooldridge 2002). Such an approach offers multiple benefits over a simple logistic regression or regression. In most part, the variable variance is increased and multicollinearity is reduced in these types of models (Kent and Jacobs 2005) which presented itself as an issue with certain proxy and control variables in this study. Using a fixed-effects, pooled time-series offers increased statistical power while also reducing issues that may arise from omitted variable bias (ibid). A fixed effects approach also allows for the capturing of

cultural differences, politics, and police culture (Kent and Carmichael 2014) that can be difficult to capture. All substantive chapters will run regression models utilizing a fixed-effects pooled time-series estimation, preferring odds ratios with the panels focusing on 2011, 2016, and 2021.

Given the nature of the panel data, all presented models will contain a single analysis containing all years, depicting estimations of police acquiring the dependent variable as outlined in the chapter. In all models, population will be measured using the total number of sworn police officers. Consistent with the literature, the size of a city police force correlates with the size of their population, making it an ideal proxy for population[6]. Additionally, crime will be measured using either violent crime (as a rate per 100,000) or both homicide (as a rate per 100,000) and firearm violence (as a rate per 100,000), but never both in the same model as violent crime encompasses both homicide and firearm violence and is redundant in its measuring capacity. To measure risk, measures of Indigenous populations, poverty, and visible minorities will be utilized, consistent with the theoretical paradigms presented in the risk literature. Additionally, the visible minority variable will be transformed through squaring as it has been found to be non-linear. In initial modelling, it was found that the non-linear nature of the variable skewed the data analysis, and the squared version showed statistical significance. By transforming the variable, the results were found to be more consistent with the literature.

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In the following chapter, there will be an exploration of how the history of Canadian policing has contributed to its militarization in the 21st century. Building on the foundations of militarization presented in this first chapter, the second chapter will consider the historical processes that have led Canadian police to arrive at a state of militarization. Starting at its pre-

[6] When a test for multicollinearity was run between total number of police and population, the resulting VIF level was 16.95, indicating a high level of multicollinearity. No other variables have issues with multicollinearity.

Confederation British, French, and American colonial roots with a focus on peacekeeping efforts, the history of how the Canadian police moved towards professionalization, and how this inspired the acquisition and normalization of guns, bulletproof vests, tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault rifles as part of everyday policing efforts, will be explored. The second chapter will review how policing in Canada has evolved by considering the implementation of policing programs, such as the community policing model, that was pertinent to Canadian policing for over a century. In addition, this chapter will also shed light on the historical processes and policy changes (such as the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the immigration boom of the 1960s and 1970s) and how these moments of change shaped Canadian history and demographics, while also changing the very fabric of Canadian society and how it is policed.

To begin the chapter, an historical overview of Canadian policing will be presented, focusing on the inspiration of Sir. Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police on shaping police work in Canada. This section will also explore how definitions of policing have changed over time and how these changes have shaped our perceptions of policing. To follow, a focus on pre- and post-confederation policing will reveal how Canadian police have evolved over time and how the changing Canadian landscape has influenced new tactics of policing and has driven police towards increased militarization. Focusing on the complex historical tensions between police and certain groups, and the increasing presence of "threat" populations as key to ongoing militarization will marry the historical and contemporary processes that are driving Canadian police to militarize. It is the goal of this chapter to illustrate how the evolution of policing in Canada has contributed to the militarization of police in the 21st century to better understand the historical, cultural, and political events that have inspired Canadian police to normalize militarization in their policing practices at the local level.

Chapter 2: An Historical Overview of Policing in Canada

The defining characteristic of police is its "direct aim at securing and promoting public welfare" (Ernst Freund 1904:3).

1. The Origins of Contemporary Police

Police, as a commonplace part of the fabric of contemporary society, are a relatively new social invention. Before the turn of the 19th century, the governance of civil society was entrusted to a state governed body to enforce public, legal rule through state issued powers for the regulation of general welfare and social order (Neocleous 2000). This system was in place for roughly 500 years before the emergence of formal police at the turn of the 19th century in Scotland and Ireland. In Britain, the success of the Royal Irish Constabulary influenced Sir Robert Peel to establish a uniformed police through his Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. As a solution to the overcrowded prisons and Britain's punitive laws, Peel's new police was meant to provide society with preventative (not punitive) policing, tracking down and deterring criminals while making the prison system more manageable (Kennan 2019). Peel also revolutionized the police uniform and regulations for becoming a police officer. To distinguish new metropolitan police from the military, uniforms reflected the common blue suit and top hat of civilian men, adding brass buttons bearing the word "police" (Lyman 1964); a change that signalled a departure from the red coats of the military. On the recruitment side, candidates were required to be under the age of 35, in good health and strong, and at minimum five foot seven (Kennan 2019). Considered the dawn of the era of the professionalization of police, Peel's new mode of policing intended to decentralize the military model of organization (Scott 2010) in favour of a community-based mode of policing that would signal a revolution of law enforcement.

Peel's professionalization of police signalled the birth of modern policing in the Western World. As part of the nine original principles[7] laid out in the Metropolitan Police Act, the training manual emphasized the role of the police as a peacekeeping group. Within these principles, it is suggested that the ability of the police to perform their duties was dependent upon the public approval of police existence, actions, behaviour, and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect (Lee 1901) as opposed to operating at the will the aristocratic and bourgeoise elite. Due to the widespread success of Peel's model, modern policing transitioned into an institution concerned with building and maintaining a relationship of trust and support between police and the public, departing from being a tool available only to social elites to help maintain their positions in society. The idea of reciprocal trust between police and society would eventually become the ideal of policing in nation-states for almost two centuries, demonstrating that the military model was not a publicly successful or ideal mode of policing.

The shift towards fostering a relationship of trust between police and the community paved the way for the rise of the community police (CP) model. In the CP model, police are meant to not only serve community members but also work with them (and community-led organizations) to ensure public welfare. As part of the decentralization of the military model, the CP model promoted the elimination of political influence (Walker 1980), rendering the police as a self-governing institution free from outside influence. While this turn towards eliminating political influence may have signalled a desire to reduce corruption in policing, this model was not entirely successful since the rigid, structural environment of policing tends to foster and invite corruption (Pereira 2015). While professionalization and the CP model may have

[7] It is important to note that Peel himself never formalized these nine principles. They first appeared in a training guide for the Metropolitan Police in 1829 and were later semi-formalized in Melvin Lee's *A History of Police in England,* published in 1901 (Pereira 2015).

temporarily helped to reduce crime rates and revolutionize policing, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, police have never been able to completely avoid outside influence. The shift towards professionalization, in its attempt to flee the military model, may have invited a renewed structurization that could be considered the turning point towards the contemporary militarization of policing.

While it can be argued that the professionalization of police may have helped to usher in the spread and normalization of police militarization in the 21st century, the characteristics that allowed it to flourish around the world tend to vary in intensity. In the Canadian context, it is still unclear if the historical structure and later professionalization of police (which are quite similar in nature and historical trajectory to Peel's police due to Canada's colonial history) has influenced militarization to manifest in Canadian police departments, to what extent, and why. To fully comprehend the degree of the militarization of Canadian police, it is pertinent to explore the history of Canadian police and the historical trajectory that police followed to arrive at their current militarized state to understand what drove and keeps driving this militarization.

2. A Brief History of Canadian Police

The Canadian model of policing is based on policing traditions originating in Britain, France, parts of continental Europe, and the American system (Chrismas 2013, Ross 1995). Like the US, the first Canadian police trace their roots to the mid-17th century as a watchman system modelled after both English and French traditions (Brodeur et al. 2020). The residual impact of these influences created a rich, complex history of both the establishment of Canada as a country and its subsequent legal traditions. To best capture the nuances of these influences, the history of the police in Canada can be broken down into two eras: pre- and post-Confederation. In the pre-

confederation era, police were directly influenced by the English and French models. This influence, however, dwindled in 1867 with the establishment of Confederation when the Constitution Act gave Canada's provinces the authority to establish police forces within their jurisdictions (Ross 1995), forging contemporary Canadian police. While the effects of external influences still exist in contemporary policing, the establishment of Canadian police forces follows a unique trajectory and outcome deserving of its own complex historical overview.

2.1 Pre-Confederation (pre-1867)

Before Confederation in 1867, Canada was divided into Upper and Lower (East and West) Canada, with most control lying in the hands of the British. The watchman system that existed in New France (known today as Québec) was also prominent through much of British ruled Canada (Upper Canada), alongside a constabulary system (ibid). The watchman system, which originated in 13th C England, was erected as a means of patrolling the streets of London at night (until sunrise) to examine all "suspicious" persons, guard against crime and fire, and ensure that citizens were not philandering during the night (Beattie 2000). While the watchman was not paid, it was considered a privilege to serve the King and patrol his lands. The constabulary system, which oversaw the watchmen, was established in 1066 after the Norman Conquest in England. The role of the constable, established under King William, was to uphold the Magna Carta and to also keep the militia and armaments of the King safe (Musson 2002). Over time, the constabulary became an arm of the military throughout Britain with those acting as constables elected directly through the King as the "best men" throughout the land.

During this period, most inhabitants lived in rural settings and were not subject to more formal methods of "policing." As a result, informal methods of peacekeeping (which was the

main method of policing), relied on a watchman system and a justice of the peace tradition that also finds its roots in English legal tradition. The justice of the peace tradition was established after the constabulary and watchman system that had already been in practice for some time. As part of the Justice of the Peace Act of 1361, the appointed justices of the peace were ensured with deterring felonies and trespasses through a "keeping of the peace" (Maudsley and Davies 1964) method. Their role was to hear and deter while inflicting punishment reasonably according to the law and the severity of the deed (ibid) while also upholding order in the king's land.

The role of peacekeeper was considered the cornerstone of the colonial criminal justice system. Justices were appointed by a lieutenant governor and were expected to promote an orderly society based on deference and paternalistic ideals (Marquis 1993) that existed through informal norms. The choice of candidates for the position was usually restricted to bourgeoise landowners, businessmen, and clerical members, creating a social distinction believed to cement the authority of an already ruling class. Although these individuals were not trained in law and were mostly unqualified for the positions, the prestige of the position granted them an authority that allowed for the success of the program alongside the watchmen system (which hired in a similar fashion). These individuals also became informally known as constables. This peacekeeper system, alongside the watchman system, infiltrated the rest of French-ruled Canada in 1759 (Brodeur et al. 2000) and became common throughout the land. In 1764, following the English model, parts of Canada began appointing paid constables to serve warrants, escort prisoners, and attend court (Marquis 1993) while also aiding the unpaid constables that comprised the watchman and justice of the peace positions. This system prevailed until the 19th century, especially in rural parts of Canada.

The expansion and movement of populations to urban centers lead to radical changes in policing systems across the country. In 1835, the first official police department was formed in Toronto and was modelled on the English Metropolitan Police Act (Brodeur et al. 2000). This relatively modern concept only gained traction in a small number of other cities and towns (Marquis 1993), with the next modern police department formed in Montréal, Québec from 1838-1840 and later Québec City, Québec. To follow, Kingston, Ontario formed a police force in 1841, followed by Ottawa, Ontario in 1851, and Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1864 (Beahen 2008). Rural parts of Canada were still cut off from the idea of a professional police force, continuing to rely on informal policing and peacekeeping methods like justice of the peace and the watchmen systems. It was not until the industrialization period in the 1850s that a linked system of urban centres was established (Marquis 1993), allowing for the expansion of urban institutions into rural settings and giving rise to the first state police in Canada.

This urban expansion also promoted social change, technological advancements, and population growth that ultimately changed policing needs. These changes led to a surge in the formation of urban police departments in the late 1860s as a means of monitoring and controlling these expanding populations. This period also signalled the start of these newly formed police forces regularly carrying weapons – a practice that only a few police forces practiced at the time. These police departments curated their weapons from both the US and British militaries, purchasing rifles and later revolvers. Outside of these local policing units, federal policing bodies began carrying Winchester carbines (Gooding 2013). These weapons were used in the suppression of the North-West rebellion and helped in the establishment of Canada as a country as part of its emancipation from the colonial powers in the late 1860s.

2.2 Post Confederation (post-1867)

Before 1867, the lack of a centralized police system owed itself to the division of powers in The British North American Act of 1867 (ibid). To remedy this, the first centralized police, The Dominion Police, was established in 1868 and was considered the protector of parliament and all of Canada (RCMP 2020). Shedding its colonial influence, policing became increasingly centralized and professionalized. Around 1871, previous informal policing systems transferred their governing authority from appointed lieutenant governors and councils to the majority political party or the coalition of elected assemblymen in municipalities (Gooding 2013). This change signalled the establishment of a professionalization of police at the local level which focused on the training and hiring of professional officers as opposed to appointed officials, ushering in an era of expansive police work at the local level,

While many changes were occurring at the local level, at the federal level, the professionalization of police work led to the formation of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873 (later known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP]) under Sir. John A. Macdonald (Chrismas 2013). The role of the NWMP was to carry out a federal plan to create an orderly settlement in Western Canada modelled off the Royal Irish Constabulary (Marquis 1993) and the French model, both of which operated like a military organization more than a traditional police force (Brodeur et al. 2000). To execute his plan, MacDonald sent mounted riflemen (modelled off British forces in India) throughout Western Canada to "monitor restless native populations" (ibid:42). The NWMP attempted to use their forces to extinguish Aboriginal claims to land to pave the way to agricultural assimilation through the Indian Act. The NWMP also used their strength to police illegal liquor trading and to incite Canadian Indians (First Nations) to violence in order to integrate them into Canada (ibid). These instances, according to

Marquis (1993), also mark the insertion of a former military man as the first commissioner of the constabulary for the North-West Police.

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In the pre- and post-Confederation periods in Canada, modes of policing rapidly changed and grew due in large part to urbanization, rapidly changing demographics, and technological changes. Alongside these changes, the establishment of Canada as a country ushered in shifts in its modes of policing, turning attention to assimilating those who were deemed other in the pursuit of country. What was once a largely informal system governed for and by elites changed to a professionalized model based on colonial belief systems. While Canada desired to separate from its colonial powers, their belief systems, engrained into the establishment of federal, and later local, police forces, led to unprecedented violence against Indigenous people during this era. The treatment of Indigenous populations by federal policing bodies ushered in an era where police brutality and violence against the "other" was deemed justified as a means of control and assimilation. As will be demonstrated in the next section, this mindset expanded towards new immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. Since the inception of police in Canada, the fear of the other, or those who do not fit a colonial British or French ideal, has been handled through violence and subjugation. The dangerous militarization of police only works to reinforce these fears and turns to violence as the best and only solution – a practice that is still in use today.

2.3 The turn of the 20th Century

At the turn of the 20th century, police shifted their focus from policing Indigenous populations to placing attention on policing new immigrants (specifically from South Asia) into Canada (Parnaby and Kealey 2003). Canada order-in-council PC 27, which passed on January 8,

1908, prohibited entry of immigrants who did not travel by continuous journey from their country of birth into Canada (ibid). As an effect, a great deal of police work was confined to policing the railways for illegal immigrants. The large immigrant population of the time settled in the West; this area was controlled by the NWMP. MacLeod (1978) argues that the NWMP always considered the Canadianizing of the foreign-born to be one of their responsibilities (this mindset began with Indigenous/First Nation groups in Canada). As a result, the diverse demographic makeup of Western Canada was used as a rationalization to use force in the prairie regions for the purpose of assimilation. Consequently, the use of violence against immigrant populations who defied colonial beliefs became deeply rooted in police tradition as the norm.

By the mid-20th century, newly expanded local Canadian police forces were en route to becoming more mechanized, scientific, and information-driven, emphasizing education in recruiting and training (Beahen 2008). By the mid 1960s, the professionalization of police became normalized in Canada. Like the US, an educational requirement was placed on becoming a police officer. This growth coincided with the expansion of legislative, bureaucratic, and surveillance procedures in policing from 1961-1975, which also aligned with the maturation of the welfare state (Marquis 1993). In addition, this period saw an over 50% increase in material expenditure and the number of police officers in relation to the Canadian population (ibid). Not far after, with the implementation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, and the hiring of women officers, a cultural shift returning to a community policing model occurred. This shift, meant to move away from the rigid, bureaucratic, and militaristic model of professionalization, preferred a communicative relationship with the communities that police were serving. Indeed, police officers were to respect everyone in society and not bring prejudices or generalizations about groups of citizens to work (ibid) in an attempt to create a reciprocal

relationship of respect. This shift towards community-based policing was arguably responsible for the implementation of programs such as CrimeStoppers and Neighbourhood Watch (ibid). The movement toward community accountability also paved the way for police to deal directly with local governments and local communities in their efforts to address crime while prioritizing proactive instead of reactive policing that is associated with police and violence.

The 1980s was also a transformative period for police-citizen relationships. The introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 enhanced the rights and powers of most individuals vis-à-vis the police (Murphy 2007) by limiting police powers and subjecting police to more strenuous review and legal repercussions for their actions. Provision 10 in the Charter specifies that, upon arrest or detention, everyone has the right "to be informed promptly of the reasons therefor; retain and instruct counsel without delay and to be informed of that right; and to have the validity of the detention determined by way of habeas corpus and to be released if the detention is not lawful" (Department of Justice 2022). For the first time, these provisions held police accountable for their actions and allowed citizens to question their arrest or detention. This limiting of police powers, argues Schwartz (2012), is one of the most significant changes for accountability in policing. The shift from the pre-Charter era, where police frequently fell outside of their powers into a "grey area" that went unpunished to one of police accountability, shaped not only citizen-police relationships, but also police accountability. Indeed, the shift from police being able to utilize violence and punishment without much oversight shifted towards one where police would be held accountable for their actions. However, while this shift is arguably one of the most profound changes to the political aspect of policing shaping Canadian policing into the 21st C, as will be demonstrated, these rights and freedoms are far more idealistic. The

overshadowing of community policing due to the redux of overt traditional, militarized modes of policing would render these changes symbolic and not afforded to all Canadians.

2.3a Changes to Policing Indigenous Canadians

While community policing and changes to police accountability were for the most part successfully expanding throughout much of Canada in the second half of the 20th century, changes were also occurring for policing in Indigenous communities in Canada. Several Indigenous communities were left out of the community policing shift of the 1960s and were instead subject to continued traditional modes of policing that favoured violence and punishment instead of a relationship of mutual respect. Up until the 1960s, the RCMP was mostly responsible for policing First Nation communities, especially in Ontario and Québec (Clairmont 2006). Indeed, the "control" of Indigenous communities was regarded as being "the exclusive responsibility" of the Federal government, by virtue of its special responsibility for "Indians and Lands" under the British North America Act of 1867 (Jones et al. 2014). Before this period, tensions between the police and the Indigenous communities were tense and arduous, with police being responsible for attempting to colonize Indigenous communities – a tension that would only find relief with security and policing autonomy being given to Indigenous peoples.

Historically, First Nations who signed treaties (especially in Western Canada), had their own form of social control (ibid) with variations in agents of enforcement. In his establishment of a vision of an expansive Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald pursued the elimination of the "threat" (ibid) of American Indians through the purchase of lands of the Hudson's Bay Company while persuading First Nations to enter treaties that would render authority to the colonials. This attempt at assimilation included policing. After the 1968 withdrawal of the RCMP, the

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development established a policy on policing Aboriginal communities. This policy focused on self-policing initiatives. It was not until 1991 that the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) was approved by the Federal Government. The FNPP was introduced as a national approach for policing Aboriginal communities through culturally appropriate policing (or, culturally responsive policing) (Jones et al. 2014). This change also involved providing long term funding to Indigenous communities; this was administered through funding their police forces in an attempt to provide autonomy to Indigenous communities in a place where a militarized style of policing, focusing on harsh punishment and violent tactics, still reigned supreme.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there was an escalation of police-driven repression of Indigenous resistance to interment and killings across Canada. Several uprisings across Canada demonstrated that, while Indigenous communities had been granted autonomy and the right to self-govern through federal policy, the neo-colonial spirit of the governing bodies did not honour these changes (Gouldhawke 2020). The most famous of these uprisings, the Oka Crisis in 1990, also known as the Kanesatake Resistance, was a 78-day standoff between protestors, the Québec Police, the RCMP, and the Canadian Army (de Bruin 2013). Over the two and a half months that the protests endured, 2,000 police and 4,500 soldiers (backed by armoured vehicles, helicopters, fighter jets, and the Navy) bombarded small Mohawk communities (LaPier 2020). The protests occurred due to a proposed expansion of a golf course onto land that the Indigenous community deemed to be a disputed Mohawk (Kanesatake) burial ground (de Bruin 2013). This event, it is argued, marked a critical transition in the state's use of not only the military, but extreme force, against its own people and, as LaPier argues, the "rise of militarized police in North America" (2020). Eventually, this militarization would trickle down to the local level of policing.

Today, the Oka Crisis serves as an iconic example of the dangers of militarization and its consequences by demonstrating that there is no limit on the force that can be used on one's own citizens when they pose a threat to profits or the desires of the elites. This sentiment has made its way into local policing, where Indigenous peoples, minority groups, and the poor, in their position as "other," constitute a threat solved only by brute force. The use of violence against these communities, especially in times of crisis, serves as a method of justification for militarization. The brutality against Indigenous people, argued to be the "inception of the militarization of policing," solidified violence and brutality against those who resist as the norm.

Figure 2: An Historical Timeline of Police Militarization in Canada (Pereira 2024).

2.4 The 21st Century: Changes in Modes and Definitions of Policing in Canada

At the turn of the 21st century, one of the most significant events in North America was the Twin Tower terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York City. Arguably, this event has had a lasting impact on the military, police, and national security around the world. While this event did occur in the US, it had a profound effect on Canadian national security and policing. Murphy (2007) argues that the events of 9/11 ushered in a securitization of public policing that was also exacerbated by other events in Canada (such as the Maher Arar case) while putting the country on edge regarding possible terrorist incidents. The result of this securitization has been a broadening of the police mandate, which expands the role of police by increasing their power and resources, contrasting the shift from the limitation of police powers that occurred only 20 years earlier under the Charter. This has, arguably, shifted police towards a more "integrated, security-based policing model" (ibid:449). The consequence of securitization has been a more aggressive national security agenda that has altered the role of police, at both the national and local level, and has expanded police powers, trus, and public discourse surrounding police behaviour, all resulting from a change in the meaning of homeland security.

For many years after the events of 9/11, the Canadian landscape became securitized. Securitization, according to Buzan et al. (1998) is a politically and socially constructed process of governments and media presenting threats to national/state security in a way that shapes and persuades public discourse. In the Canadian context, this change manifested itself in the form of a more aggressive national security agenda (Murphy 2007). As part of this new national security agenda, several agencies saw a drastic increase in funding after many years of fiscal prudence and budget cuts. This "new era" of policing spending became rationalized as part of a new $7.8 billion (over five years starting in 2001) federal budget which increased spending to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the

Communications Security Establishment, and various military security agencies (ibid:454). Local police also saw a drastic increase in their budgets. According to Murphy, during this period, aggregate police spending "increased from $6.8 billion to $9.8 billion dollars" (ibid). While budgets were increasing, so too was the number of police being hired, which ultimately led to an increase in costs and an expansion of police power.

At the legislative level, Bill C-36 capitalized on the changes to securitization and police power. The bill, which received Royal Assent on December 18, 2001[8], expanded police powers drastically. Police were now able to get search warrants, detain without charge, change their definition and scope of legal surveillance, and even establish reasonable suspicion as grounds for police action (House of Commons 2001, Murphy 2007). While all police at all levels were subject to this new legislation, local police began to play a role in national security. Once reserved for the military, police were now being placed under a sort of federal vision for national security. This was cemented in 2003 with the creation of "Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada" (PSEPC)[9]. This department is argued to be the Canadian counterpart to the US Department of Homeland Security (Murphy 2007). The expansion of police powers allowed, for the first time, the overt display of militarization on local Canadian streets in the name of national security. These changes, as will be revealed, lowered the threshold of what constitutes a threat and, arguably, ushered in the normalization of police militarization.

During this same period, other changes were occurring within policing culture. As part of the increased visibility of police due to their expansive powers, they began adopting new technological practices to mediate their increased public presence. The use of Web 2.0

[8] Statutes of Canada 2001, c. 41 (https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/en/bill/37-1/c-36).

[9] PSEPC includes Canada Border Services Agency, CSIS, Correctional Service of Canada, the Parole Board of Canada, and the RCMP (Wilner 2022)

technologies, for example, has significantly altered police relationships with the public. In Canada, police use sites like Twitter and Facebook to inform the public about a range of issues, including but not limited to statistics, missing persons, arrests, suspect information (even asking the public for help identifying a suspect), traffic/accidents, and events (see: Brainard and McNutt 2010, Crump 2011, and Lieberman et al. 2013). The use of social media was especially helpful during the 2011 Stanley Cup Riots in Vancouver with police reporting live updates on the events. While social media helps to build connections with members of the community, it also increases visibility and accountability for police. Platforms like YouTube, O'Connor argues, have framed police shooting deaths of individuals in real-time, ahead of statements by police (2017). This has left police more open to public scrutiny than at any other time in history and signals a form of openness that was not available to the public in the past (ibid). As such, the implementation of these technologies as tools for police practice has drastically changed the visibility of their role by increasing their accountability with members of the community they serve and beyond.

Due to changes in visibility and accountability, police are facing more scrutiny than at any other time in history. This has led to judicial-level changes to police practices. Numerous bills have called for more accountability and oversight into the practices of police. 2012 Bill C-42 (41-1) enhanced the accountability of the RCMP by providing more oversight. It suggests that

> "This enactment enhances the accountability of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by reforming the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act in two vital areas. First, it strengthens the Royal Canadian Mounted Police review and complaints body and implements a framework to handle investigations of serious incidents involving members. Second, it modernizes discipline, grievance and human resource management processes for members, with a view to preventing, addressing and correcting performance and conduct issues in a timely and fair manner" (Parliament of Canada 2013).[10]

[10] A copy of Bill C-42 (41-1) can be found here.

Other bills, such as 2019 Bill 68 (41-2) amended Ontario Police Services, suggesting that Ontario police officers were to police First Nations peoples more fairly and with "equitable levels of policing" (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2019). While social media cannot be deemed responsible for these new police actions and accountability measures, it can be argued that the presence of these platforms changed community expectations for police and influenced political decisions towards police conduct. Social media has worked to help revolutionize policing in Canada while at the same time shedding light on the systemic issues inherent in policing as a practice. As such, this calls into question how police continue to carry deadly weapons, deploy SWAT teams, and use armoured vehicles for violent means with what appears to be little oversight and consequence for their actions. This concept will be explored in greater detail in the next section and chapters three, four, and five.

3. The Weaponization of Canadian Police

It has been found that there are clear similarities between the histories of Canadian police and the police of other democratic nations. However, unlike these other countries, there is no clear turning point or major event where one can argue that the Canadian police became militarized. While some scholars argue that the Oka Crisis and the use of the military to resolve civil matters (LaPier 2020) was a turning point, others argue that the events of 9/11 in the US, and the ramping up of their security and military prowess served as an inspiration. Some even argue that the resulting expansion of powers afforded to Canadian police post 9/11 was the turning point toward militarization (Murphy 2007). On the other hand, other scholars argue that the police have always been militarized in Canada (Shantz 2016) and this militarization has been suppressed during certain periods (like the attempt at community policing that arguably failed)

and has always lingered in the background. Shantz suggests that it is through the situation of [police's] ongoing inherent military character that explains why "mechanization and police expenditures on military technologies, training, and tactical alliances are increasing in an era where crime rates have been declining for decades" (ibid:4). The process of militarization, he argues, is mistaken for the acquisition of material and discounts practice. Roziere and Walby complement this argument by suggesting that it is the involvement of tactical units in community policing that highlights their expanding role in policing (2018) and denotes militarization. This, Kraska argues, highlights a degree of normalization that is indicative of militarization (2007). While these scholars argue that militarization is inherent in police and that this extends into the Canadian context, there is still research that needs to be conducted to capture the more nuanced aspects of militarization to figure out what is, and may have always been, driving militarization.

Beyond examining the presence of militarization of law enforcement, it is important to better understand what contributes to this behaviour in the first place. One factor that may have contributed to more aggressive policing in Canada, argue Roziere and Walby (2018), is the presence of marginalized populations. In areas with large, marginalized populations (such as people of colour, minority groups, Indigenous peoples, and those living in poverty), police patrols and raids tend to be more intense (Gama 2016), and police are more likely to use tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons. Considering that Canada has a long and arduous history of minority presence and has been an agent in marginalizing the "other," it is unsurprising that there is violence where there is "other." This is something to be especially mindful of considering that, over the last 60 years, Canada has become a panacea of multiculturalism and diversity and, as a result, a breeding ground for increased police violence.

When police are militarized, it inherently changes what police officers do (Hill and Berger 2009). The consequences of this militarization, as history has demonstrated, tend to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of minority groups, the poor, the mentally ill, and those expressing (hegemonic) political disdain (Weiss 2011). The consequences of this are changes to the function of police from being protectors of the public to protectors of elite interests; multiple variations in police function have tried to turn away from this historically unviable mode of policing. In the Canadian context, as has been mentioned, there is still a lack of clarity on what is driving police to militarize. It is also essential to note that cities are militarizing at varying degrees, if at all. To shed light on this notion, the following section will historically explore indicators of militarization by looking at the history, acquisition, and use of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons. It is the goal of this section to shed light on how the acquisition of these materials is leading to changes in policing that favour the adoption of military tactics and, in turn, more violent and drastic methods of policing to hopefully shed light on the extent Canadian police are militarizing.

3.1 The rise and normalization of the SWAT team/tactical unit

The second half of the 20th century saw an increase in the use of SWAT/tactical units and the beefing up of their weapons and protection units, pointing to the idea that the nature of police was to be in constant preparation for large threats and high-risk situations. In non-Indigenous Canada, policing from the 1970s onwards saw a rise in the development and expansion of tactical units, even though a community policing model was still favoured. While tactical units have existed in Canada since the 1960-1970s with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) Emergency Task Force (ETF), and the Emergency Response Team (ERT) (RCMP), over the last 40 years,

their use has increased drastically (argued to be a 2,100% increase from 1980 to 2016) (see: Roziere and Walby 2018). Between the 1960s to 1980s, there was a drastic increase in the acquisition of tactical gear by all levels of police. Starting with the TPS ETF in Toronto in 1965, the curation of machine guns, tasers, tear gas (riot gear), and the use of bulletproof vests (Toronto Police, n.d.) also saw an increase. During this same period, the TPS ETF also purchased and used an in-house computer for the processing of law-enforcement data (ibid). The ETF was also equipped with standard machine guns and rifles and was at the forefront of the introduction of police-specific body armour. Although bullet proof vests had been in circulation for almost 50 years at this point, and used mostly by tactical units, it was not until 1972 that Canada introduced the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Ballistic-Resistant Body Armor Standards and Testing Program (NIJ 2014). These new rigorous standards meant that vests were to undergo testing to accommodate the changes to weapons rights for both police and private citizens (considered a danger to police). During this same period, bulletproof vests began to contain Kevlar technology which was manufactured by DuPont (Canadian Police Research Centre 2008). While vests were undergoing rigorous technological changes, their use did not become mandatory until the 1990s (when other Canadian police started to use them as a part of their regular uniform) when police began participating in more community-based policing and widening their jurisdiction.

According to Roziere and Walby, Canadian tactical units have been increasingly used in both reactive and proactive police work that falls outside their intended function (2018). The use of these units, they contend, became entrenched in the popular community policing model of the 1990s. Considering that by the 1990s, community policing was still in use (Horne 1992), police interaction with members of the community became more widespread, thus creating ample opportunity to deploy (and in the process normalize) tactical units which prioritized a more

violent and forceful method of policing. While their "mission" was one of peacekeeping, where the responsibility of community relations would be placed on all officers as opposed to specialized units (Ziembo-Vogl and Woods 1996), the use of tactical units to solve community problems was on the continued rise (like the US case), which eventually led to a normalization of tactical units as part of routine policing efforts. The normalization of tactical units in community policing led to their widespread adoption and implementation across Canada in the 1990s as a consequence of the CP model. Many of these teams were established across Canada rapidly, with their presence exploding since the turn of the 21st century and even infiltrating the routine policing of smaller municipalities with smaller population counts.

Across the country, each province has multiple police forces with tactical units. Aside from provinces like British Columbia and Alberta, which fall under the jurisdiction of the RCMP ERT, Ontario, where some municipalities utilize the OPP Tactics and Rescue Unit (TRU), and Newfoundland, where some municipalities use the Newfoundland Constabulary's Tactics and Rescue Unit, most cities have their own unique SWAT team/tactical unit. Considering that the deployment of SWAT teams has risen drastically in Canadian cities and are used more frequently than those in the US (Roziere and Walby 2018), the normalization of their presence and use in routine policing is consequential considering that members of these units have specialized training use deadly force when necessary. Considering that the bar has been lowered for what poses a threat, the increase in interactions with the community creates more opportunities for the use of force by these groups. As such, a more detailed account of the history, rise, use, and consequences of the tactical unit in Canada will be explored in the third chapter.

3.2 Armoured Vehicles

The rise of normalizing tactical units was followed by a surge of municipal police forces owning and operating used military or military-style equipment, namely armoured vehicles. The use of armoured vehicles in Canada finds its origins in military work. The first armoured type vehicle was used in combat during the First World War in 1916 as a British war tactic. It was not until the Second World War that the use of tanks became normalized in battle for the Canadian Army. During the 1930s and 1940s, Canadian Provost and Military Police generally used an armoured "soft skinned" vehicle to carry out field operations and enhance mobility (Thobo-Carlsen, n.d.). 50 years later, during combat missions in Afghanistan, armoured vehicles were used to navigate the most dangerous situations and to manoeuvre around ballistic and explosive threats (ibid). Slowly, this technology began to infiltrate policing at all levels.

One of the earliest uses of an armoured vehicle by a municipal police force was in 1974 by the Calgary Police Service's (CPS) tactical unit. The vehicle, which was borrowed from the Canadian Armed Forces (CF) base in Calgary, was first used during an incident, now known as Black Friday, which involved a shootout that killed one officer while injuring several others (Harding 2014). This event, it is argued, acted as a catalyst for the city (and arguably others) to develop tactical units and equip them with high level equipment and specialized tools for enhanced police protection. The trend of borrowing armoured vehicles from the CF by police expanded. In the 1990s, for example, the RCMP borrowed nine Bison Armoured Personnel Carriers from the Canadian military during a standoff with First Nations protestors in Gustafsen Lake, British Columbia from August 1995 to September 1995 (Barrera 2016). It was not until the turn of the 21st century, however, that most municipal, provincial, and federal police forces began to either purchase (with tax dollars) or be gifted armoured vehicles for their forces.

The proliferation of armoured vehicles in policing took off around the 2010s. In 2010, the Ottawa Police acquired a Lenco G3 BearCat armoured vehicle (CBC News Ottawa 2010) at a cost of $341,000. Police claim the vehicle provides enhanced protection for police during high-risk operations while also being ideal for crisis interventions containing firearms and hostage takings (ibid). A similar Lenco BearCar was purchased by the Vancouver Police in 2010. The $350,000 armoured rescue vehicle, which the police claim will help police and civilians in dangerous situations (Palmer 2010), was purchased following several shooting deaths in the city. In 2014, the Hamilton Police purchased a $279,180 Terradyne to replace a retrofitted Brinks truck that it had been using since 1991 (Carter 2014). In 2014, it was revealed that the Department of National Defence (DND) donated a Grizzly armoured carrier to the Edmonton Police (2007), two Cougar armoured vehicles to the BC RCMP (2010), and a Cougar armoured vehicle to the New Glasgow, Nova Scotia Police and the Windsor, Ontario police in 2013 (MacDonald 2020). Over the next 5 years, numerous Canadian municipal forces would begin buying/adding, upgrading, and even replacing armoured-type vehicles in their fleet, expanding their use into day-to-day community policing measures. As these vehicles became more common in local police force arsenals, the language surrounding them also started shifting from combat preparedness to a narrative focusing on rescue, community policing, citizen protection, safety, and proactive policing all while fighting threats to the community. These ideas will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

3.3 Canada gets assault weapons

While the use of guns has become normalized in modern policing, police were not always equipped with these weapons. The first police to acquire weapons in Canada was the Dominion

Police in 1868. Before this, policing bodies were likely to carry a nightstick made of wood and later composite materials. The Dominion Police's weapon of choice was a service revolver .476 Enfield with British origins (Van Leersum 2014) (which they carried until 1920). Shortly after, the NWMP began carrying Winchester Model 1876 carbines in 1885 (Gooding 2013). The NWMP eventually transitioned to a Colt New Service which became their standard issue sidearm (Van Leersum 2014) and was carried until 1920 when they were disbanded. As police owning guns began to trickle down from the federal to the local level, the type of gun favoured changed. The service revolver was eventually replaced with semi-automatic pistols, with most municipal forces carrying either a form of Glock, SIG, or Smith & Wesson pistol. While the use of a gun is standard practice in everyday policing, an alarming trend where forces began purchasing assault rifles for their special operations unit allowed them to slowly infiltrate routine police work.

It is argued that police began to carry guns due to changing gun ownership laws in Canada. Before 1892, citizens were only allowed to carry guns if they had reasonable fear for their lives (RCMP 2020). During this period, permit requirements came into effect, and, in the early 20th century, police had the ability to arrest and jail someone for not carrying a gun permit (ibid). As guns became more popular and easier to own, with British subjects not requiring a permit (ibid), potential gun violence became an issue in Canada. As "pistol fever" grew in Canada in the late 1800s (Brown 2009), a growing concern that these pistols would lead to an increase in shooting accidents, suicides, and murders emerged. This perception of more violence attached to guns led to the police arming up to ensure that they could protect themselves and the community at large from this new danger (a rhetoric that still underlies police action to this day).

While standard-issue Glocks and pistols reigned supreme in policing, over time, the introduction of assault rifles, which coincided with tactical unit formation, changed policing.

One of the earlier municipal forces to purchase and adopt assault rifles was the TPS which acquired C8 carbine assault rifles in 2000 (Lancaster and Fowler 2016). In 2008, the Calgary Police purchased 120 Colt C8A2 rifles to be issued to 120 specially trained officers across the city, consisting of regular forces and the Calgary Police Tactical Unit (CBC News Calgary 2008). The RCMP approved the use of carbines (semi-automatic rifles) for its officers as early as 2011, buying a set of 527 in 2012 (Pinkerton 2019). Pinkerton explains that this was later expedited by the RCMP in 2014 following the Moncton shootings whereby the 5 officers who had been shot were claimed to be "outgunned" (ibid), leading to a purchase surge. In 2016, the Toronto police purchased an additional 50 C8 carbine assault rifles (similar to those used by CF and their TPS), for use in the city's 17 divisions (Lancaster and Fowler 2016). The Vancouver Police Department also acquired C8 carbine rifles, citing their use in "pre-emptive preparation for a terrorist attack" (Pablo 2018). In 2018, the City of Montréal made public its interest to purchase 49 assault rifles for its Groupe Tactique D'Intervention (Riga 2019). The acquisition of assault rifles by local forces for local forces demonstrates that these weapons are no longer exclusive to tactical units or special operations forces, normalizing their use on the streets.

The ubiquity of assault rifle acquisition and use can partially be explained by a military surplus program. Indeed, in a 2020 article, Ethan Lou revealed that it was reported that 68 police forces in Canada acquired 2,012 assault rifles from the Canadian military starting in 2016 through a formal government program to dispose of surplus equipment (Lou 2020). While the CF claims that they chose to donate their weapons to the police as "disposal options were limited," (ibid), they instead contributed to and helped build a culture where police turn to military-style weapons to conduct regular police work and are more likely to shoot and kill with

lower standards than before – this is a direct consequence of militarization. These ideas, their history and progression over time, and its consequences will be further explored in Chapter Five.

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In this chapter, a historical overview of policing was provided. It was found that police in Canada have a unique history modelled off British and French policing, engraving in them a colonial influence that is still felt today. The introduction of the professionalization of policing, which gave police distinctive uniforms, also had a lasting influence on how police have come to be identified, paying homage to its history in the military. The shift towards community policing that followed ushered in an attempt to move away from traditional, military style modes of policing that were not working in the broader community in favour of a model that operated on mutual respect for officers and citizens. These changes, it was demonstrated, were not offered to the Indigenous community or ethnic minorities who seemingly still face these perils to this day.

The origins of militarization were also explored. The idea that militarization in Canada began when the military was called in during the Oka Crisis was discussed, alongside the argument that the events of 9/11 in the US set off a militarization wave in democratic nations. Other arguments claim that police have always been militarized. Regardless of its origins, it is essential to note that its occurrence in Canada has not been evenly distributed across the country and that some places are militarizing faster than others. To explore this idea, indicators of militarization were presented in a way that demonstrated why some units acquire them over others, demonstrating that policing in Canada is not homogenous and that militarization is indeed a complex process, and its underlying causes can differ in magnitude and complexity.

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In the following three chapters, there will be a substantive overview and analysis of three indicators of militarization to empirically analyze what is driving local Canadian police forces to militarize. Focusing specifically on Kraska's operational/organizational and material procurement indicators, the presence of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons will be analyzed to better understand what is driving police to acquire and use these materials at the local level. To analyze the underlying driving forces behind the procurement of these materials, each chapter will focus on their acquisition patterns between 2011 and 2021 to reveal how and when local police forces made the decision to own these items. To provide a deeper understanding of the decision to own and use these tools, several indicators will be analyzed. In each chapter, the size of the police force, alongside traditional indicators of crime will be analyzed against the presence of each of these militarized indicators to reveal if the rhetoric surrounding an increase in crime as the underlying force for acquiring militarized tools is sound. Taking a more sociological and theoretical approach, indicators of fear and risk, as presented in the first chapter, will be analyzed against the presence of each of these militarization indicators to comprehend if these groups are the driving force behind police acquiring militarized weapons. It is the overall goal of the next three substantive chapters to reveal what is driving Canadian police in towns of 50,000 people or more to militarize. By combining the sociohistoric processes with an empirical and analytical analysis of militarization in Canada, these chapters hope to provide a better understanding of police militarization in Canada and to fill a gap in the literature that does not consider the role of these indicators on such a large scale.

In the next chapter, there will be an in-depth historical and analytical overview of the role of tactical units in the militarization of Canadian police at the local level. The chapter will begin by providing an overview of definitions and insights into tactical units and the "mission creep"

of how the use of these units by patrol officers in routine policing activities has helped to normalize their use and presence. To follow, a comprehensive overview of the operational and organizational aspects of Kraska's framework will be provided to situate tactical units within the discourse on militarization. The next section will begin with an historical overview of tactical units in Canada, looking at the inception of these units and the origins of their use to better understand how something that was meant to be temporary made its way into permanent policing culture. To situate these units in contemporary policing, an overview of how they are being used in contemporary policing will be provided. This will take an empirical perspective where examples will be provided of situations where tactical units interacted with members of the public and the demographic and social characteristics of these situations, highlighting their (mis)use at the city level. To follow, an overview of potential drivers of the rise of the tactical unit will be provided. This section will focus on the role of crime and risk factors as potential driving forces for the acquisition and use of tactical units at the city level, taking both a sociological and rhetoric-driven approach. In the final sections of this chapter, a regression analysis will be undertaken that seeks to comprehend what is driving the militarization of police through the rise of the tactical unit. It is the overall goal of this substantive chapter to provide historical and empirical contexts that will assist in analyzing the rise of the tactical unit in Canadian policing while better understanding its overarching sociopolitical consequences.

Chapter 3: SWAT Mania: The Rise and Normalization of Tactical Units

"SWAT teams are being used by public police for more routine policing, which includes things like responding to mental health crises and even domestic disturbances" (Brendan Roziere and Kevin Walby 2018).

1. Introduction

Over the last fifty years, countries like Canada and the United States (US) have experienced a sharp rise in the use of tactical units in both specialized and domestic policing endeavours. In some places, these units have infiltrated and replaced routine policing operations. What has resulted is an expansion of the role and scope of tactical units, leading to the normalization of their presence in local policing efforts. This normalization, according to Kraska, is indicative of militarization (2007). In the US, vast research has been conducted on the consequences of the expanding role and scope of tactical units, their role in domestic policing, and how this may be indicative of, or a result of, militarization. This research has provided much evidence of the dangers and consequences of the use of tactical units in domestic policing and the dangers of militarization across different jurisdictions (see: Kraska 1999, Balko 2006, Kraska and Kappeler 1997, Gama 2016, Delehanty et al. 2017). In Canada, however, scant research has been conducted on the dangers of tactical unit use and normalization in routine policing and its consequences in the realm of police militarization. As the expansion of these units is linked to police militarization, it is imperative to understand what is driving it in the Canadian context.

A special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team, or tactical unit, is defined as a "group of selected police officers trained to handle certain crises beyond the capacity of regular police forces" (Davidson 1979). Members of these elite teams are highly trained in explosive management, hostage situations, negotiations, executing warrants, accessing barricaded persons, high-risk takedowns, remote surveillance, and sniper tactics (Ottawa Police 2022). As part of

their original purpose, tactical units were designed to be small teams of officers who respond to high-risk calls (Klinger and Rojeck 2008) deemed too dangerous for non-tactical police. Employing these units is largely seen as an effort to minimize the risk of harm to conventional police units and the public and are meant to be distinguishable from standard patrol officers due to their specialized equipment, training, and rhetoric (Hill and Berger 2009). In Canada and the US, these specialized units can often be referred to as SWAT, Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and Special Response Teams[11] (Cyr, Ricciardelli, and Spencer 2020).

To respond to threats that regular police forces are "ill-equipped" to deal with, such as high-risk situations that require specialized training and equipment to minimize harm to officers and the public (Brooks 2010, Klinger and Rojek 2008, Jenkins et al. 2020), tactical units are equipped with specialized armour and equipment (Roziere and Walby 2018). This often includes an array of military equipment and technology that rebrands tactical units as "heavy weapons units" (Kraska and Kappeler 1997) that have "militaristic features." This can include, but is not limited to, tanks/tactical vehicles, firearms, helmets, and even surveillance equipment. The use and acquisition of these tools have been a distinguishing feature between tactical units and domestic police, even adding to their prestige. While these tools may enhance the unit's arsenal of weapons and may allow them to respond more steadfastly to terrorist threats or extreme violence, their use is not meant to be frequent or as part of a response to a domestic call.

Over the last three decades, the acquisition and deployment of these specialized teams by police has increased in frequency, especially in North America (see: Kraska 1999, Kraska and Kappeler 1997, Roziere and Walby 2018, Balko 2006). In Canada, there are currently 44

[11] It has been found that the use of the word SWAT and tactical unit are used interchangeably, with preferences based on regional differences and colloquialisms. For the purpose of this work, the word tactical unit will be given preference. The use of SWAT or otherwise will be used if preferred within the scholarship being cited.

municipal/subprovincial tactical units, not counting federal RCMP detachments or provincial units (Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Sûreté du Québec (SQ)), meaning that just 28% of Canadian municipal and subprovincial police forces have and use a tactical unit[12]. As the resources tactical units require become easier to acquire, their continuance is likely to increase (Cyr et al. 2020). With this anticipated expansion, it is expected that the scope under which tactical units operate may change and turn its attention to routine policing efforts. Given that research has shown that an increase in the use of tactical units is tied to militarization, it is imperative to comprehend if the "creeping" of tactical units into everyday policing in Canada is also tied to a rise in police militarization at the local level.

1.1 Mission Creep

Research has shown that "SWAT teams are being increasingly used by patrol officers for routine police activities such as warrant work, traffic enforcement, community policing, and responding to mental health crises and domestic disturbances" (Roziere and Walby 2018:30). The original function of a tactical unit was to respond to terrorism, hostage situations, and extreme violence, not handing out traffic violations. Considering that a warzone-like state does not currently exist, it calls into question why tactical units are fighting a war with average citizens. In the US, the police have been met with criticism regarding their use of specialized units in a growing set of contexts, situations, and operational outcomes (Balko 2006, Kraska 1999). In Canada, however, these units have not been met with the same criticism or oversight. This is concerning especially considering that scholarship has found that an increase in the use of

[12] By the time this dissertation is complete, there may be other city-level police forces that have acquired tactical units, thus increasing the percentage shown.

tactical units can have a significant impact on police violence and the use of force (see: Jacobs and O'Brien 1998). Roziere and Walby argue that it is difficult to provide such oversight and criticism when police tend not to publish data related to their SWAT units (2018) leaving scholars unable to count deployments and activities or even know the scope of what is going on aside from reading news articles or seeing videos on social media platforms. As such, the tediousness of researching this subject in Canada could be one of the reasons why there is so little research and a lack of criticism and oversight of these policing practices.

Part of the issue with police militarization is that it changes the intended function of policing and changes police behaviour by promoting the use of violence in routine policing. Delehanty et al. (2017) argue that [tactical units] bring police ever closer to the territory of militarization and can expose police to more aggressive policing and an increase in the use of lethal force, leading to an increase in citizen shooting deaths. One of the implications of this militarization is that police are more likely to target already marginalized populations where patrol raids tend to be more increased already (Gama 2016), increasing contact. As militarization changes the inherent function of police (Roziere and Walby 2018), more research needs to be conducted into the circumstances under which tactical units are being used and what role they play in the militarization of Canadian police. Considering that police rhetoric claims that regular patrol has now become too risky for regular duty policing (Walby 2022) with the equipment they have, tactical units may become the norm for policing in the future.

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It is the goal of this substantive chapter to understand what factors may lead Canadian municipal police departments to acquire tactical units and how the use of these units contributes to the rising militarization of Canadian police forces. To conceptualize, definitions of

militarization will be considered that will include its origins, concerns and consequences, and how tactical units are indicative of militarization. To follow, there will be an overview of the evolution of tactical units in Canada, narrowing in on the brief histories of these units and how they are being (mis)used in a contemporary context. A rhetoric-based and theoretically driven overview of what is potentially driving the rise of these tactical units will then be presented, with specific attention being paid to the idea the rise of these units is being driven by either an increase in violent crime or by changes to threat and risk perceptions. Finally, to test the three hypotheses laid out in section four, a fixed-effects, panel regression analysis will be conducted. It is the goal of this data analysis to better understand what is driving Canadian police to acquire and normalize the use of tactical units. A discussion of the findings will follow.

2. The Militarization of Police

The idea that the police are militarized, or possess military qualities, is not novel. This debate has been part of the global policing scholarship for at least the last half-century, with a large portion of its focus on how to characterize and identify militarization in policing. Within this debate, there is no agreed upon, clear-cut point at which one can identify the police as having become militarized. Some scholars argue that this is because police, due to their foundations being the same as the military, render them militarized by nature (Kraska 1994). Shantz even goes so far as to argue that the police have always been militarized in Canada (2016). Arguments contend that militarization began with the professionalization of policing in the early 19th century, specifically when police started wearing uniforms. While there is no agreed-upon time or way that police became militarized, understanding the origins of the term, its various definitions, and how it became associated with police is an ideal starting point.

2.1 What is militarization? Tactical Units as Operational/Organizational Indicators

The word militarization finds its roots in the word militarism. Peter Kraska, an internationally recognized expert on the issue, defines militarization as an ideology that looks at problem-solving through a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that favour the use of force as the best way to solve problems (1994). This use of force manifests as the use of "weapons, hardware, military power, organization, operations, and technology" as problem-solving tools (ibid:503). Other scholars contend that militarization is foremost an attitude and ideology rather than a physical state, citing the constant preparation for war and battle as both a normal and desirable social activity (Mann 1984). Mann's idea is extended by Catherine Lutz who claims that, for militarization to exist, there has to be the application of military ideology to a place where there is no inherent set of universal military values (Lutz 2001). For militarization, utilizing military power and prowess is a problem-solving tool rooted in its ideology. However, militarization cannot exist as an ideology alone. When coupled with the utilization of technology, tools, and strategies, militarism can be on full display and militarization can begin to manifest itself in places that are not inherently military-like policing.

One tenant of the militarization literature extends on these ideas and claims that the process of weaponization, especially with military equipment, is characteristic of militarization. Nolan (2020) contends that militarization is itself the process in which law enforcement agencies increase their arsenal of weapons and equipment to be deployed in an array of situations. He continues that this is discernable through the overt transfer of equipment from the military to the police (ibid). This approach to militarization, known as the material approach, suggests that the mere presence of military style weapons or armour in places not inherently military (such as police) denotes militarization. Fisher (2010) builds on this argument by suggesting that the presence of SWAT teams is enough to suggest militarization due to the use of military weapons,

tactics, and operational strategy. The procurement of military weapons by police, continues (Johnson 2011), is highly indicative of militarization and is cause for concern considering that these practices are used by tactical units in Canada and the US. This material approach, focusing on the procurement and use of weapons, coupled with an operational and organizational approach, concerned with behaviours patterned on military special operations, the handling of high-risk situations, and the war-making mentality, is an ideal starting point through which to understand militarization and the role played by tactical units in its expansion and normalization.

While definitions of militarization take diverse approaches, the central commonality is that it is discernable by the presence of military-style qualities in places not traditionally military. While the [Canadian] police were indeed formed out of military groups and soldiers (Kraska and Kappeler 1997, Roziere and Walby 2018), the role of police has never been to duplicate the military in modern society, but rather to serve as protectors from internal threats[13]. Scholarship builds on this idea by suggesting that there is a clear distinction between the function and jurisdiction of the police and military, with the former expected to respond to internal threats and the latter expected to respond to external threats; new policing strategies have conflated these roles and blurred these jurisdictional boundaries (Salter 2014, Weiss 2011, Leichtman 2008). While the Canadian police, and arguably worldwide police forces, formed out of the military, there is no clear-cut date of its inception or turning point at which one can identify its dissemination into policing. In the US, it is argued that increased militarization arose after the events of September 11th, 2001 (9/11) (see: McLaughlin 2006) when police began using military-style, lethal responses for domestic policing in a constant fight against terrorism and

[13] For more details on the history of Canadian police, see: Chapter 2 section 2.

undefined threats[14]. In Canada, however, there is no clear-cut point at which one can argue a rise in the presence of threat, fear, or terror occurred, rendering the rise of tactical units and their use questionable and conflated. As a result, there is currently no consensus that can explain or justify the rise of militarization, its lack of separation from the military mentality, and why tactical units continue to be used, alongside military tactics and lethal violence, in routine policing.

Despite the extensive research on police militarization in US cities, there is a paucity of research and literature on this phenomenon in the Canadian context and a lack of focus on police militarization at the city level. Current research that does exist finds that the rise of the tactical unit has political, legal, and ethical consequences beyond that of routine police work, but ultimately fails to explain the scope or institutionalization of public police militarization in Canada (Roziere and Walby 2018). One reason for this sparse research in the Canadian context may be an assumption that Canadian society is less violent than that of the US (Meyer and O'Malley 2005), meaning that there is no need for militarized police in Canada. Other scholars suggest that there is a lack of research on police paramilitary units (PPUs) in general due to an assumption that they are sociologically and politically insignificant (Kraska and Kappeler 1997). Militarization research that does exist tends to focus on protest management and public order maintenance (Roziere and Walby 2018) while ignoring the idea that militarization may have infiltrated the cultural and behavioural fabric of Canadian police. By focusing on peacekeeping efforts, comparing Canada to the US when measuring the intensity of militarization, and continuously undermining the possibility that North American police can be militarized outside of the US, a dearth of research on Canadian police militarization has been created that has left this potentially dangerous and consequential area under-researched and with little oversight.

[14] For a more detailed account of when militarization of police became identifiable in policing, see: Chapter 1, section 2.3a.

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The following section will address the rise of the tactical unit in Canada by exploring the history of these teams and the reasoning behind their creation. It will focus specifically on the creation and use of early tactical units in Canada and will explore the expansion of these teams over the last 40 years. There will also be special attention paid to specific tactical units in Canada, with city-level examples of the deployments and their consequences. In addition, there will be focus placed on studies that have been conducted on tactical units in Canada in hopes that they will reveal part of the decision-making process that occurs behind the use of these units in both specialized situations and routine policing. Ideally, these studies will reveal the rationales employed to justify the adoption of these units. The goal of this section is to better understand the connection between tactical units and militarization in Canada while revealing how tactical units have contributed to the rise of militarization amongst local police forces in Canada while acknowledging its real-world consequences for police and the public they serve.

3. The Rise of Tactical Units in Canada

Since their inception in the 1960s, tactical units have become increasingly popular in Canadian policing. The Emergency Task Force (ETF), the first tactical unit in Canada, was created by the Toronto Police in 1965 to deal with high-risk labour strikes across the City of Toronto (Toronto Police Service 2022) deemed too dangerous for regular patrol officers to handle. What resulted was the creation of the "riot squad[15]" which was tasked with diffusing potentially violent situations by halting the disorder quickly (Harman 1995). During this period, the ETF was also among the first units in Canada to acquire machine guns, tasers, tear gas, riot

[15] The Toronto Police Riot Squad was eventually transformed into the Public Order Unit and still operates under the Toronto Police as a branch of their tactical unit.

gear and bullet-proof vests that helped to usher in their use amongst police forces across the country[16]. Following the Toronto Police Service (TPS), in 1973, the Edmonton Police Service Tactical Unit (EPS) was created. Shortly after, in 1974, the Calgary Police Service established its tactical team following the events of Black Friday[17] (Harding 2014). In 1975, the OPP Tactics and Rescue Unit (TRU) was developed in connection with the 1976 Summer Olympics (held in Montréal with venues and events across Ontario). The purpose of the TRU was to respond to potential terrorist threats at the Olympics (Ontario Provincial Police 2006). The trend of acquiring tactical units expanded greatly at the local level in Canada, seeing a 2,100% rise (see: Roziere and Walby 2018) in their acquisition and use at all levels between 1980 and 2016.

While there has been an increase in the presence of tactical units over the last 40 years, there is still no clear-cut explanation as to why they are expanding so rapidly. Historically, these units were created to handle potential situations deemed too dangerous for patrol police while highlighting a special skill set and training that regular patrol police officers did not possess. The reliance on these units has resulted in groups that were supposed to be temporary becoming permanent fixtures of municipal departments. In contemporary times, tactical units are being used to respond to mental health calls, domestic assault, and events involving people of colour and the poor at disproportional rates. Considering these are situations patrol officers are trained to handle, the use of a tactical unit calls into question why these scenarios are too dangerous for

[16] Bulletproof vests were first introduced into Canadian policing in 1923. It was not until 1972 that the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in the US introduced the Ballistic-Resistance Body Armor Stands and Testing Program which forced police to undergo rigorous testing of their body armour that led to an increase in oversight. The RCMP was amongst the first force to adopt vests for all of their officers, making their use optional. As the technology used in these vests improved, more police forces began adopting them. Their use did not become mandatory in Canadian policing until the 1990s when they became part of the standard policing uniform.

[17] The events of "Black Friday" occurred on December 20, 1974, when Calgary Detective Boyd Davidson was shot and killed by a man named Philippe Laurier Gagnon, who was said to be high on plastic glue (Harding 2014). Davidson was said to be responding to a call by a store clerk claiming to have been abused by Laurier-Gagnon just east of the downtown Calgary area where he was eventually shot in the neck by a bullet fired by the assailant (ibid).

patrol officers and why they lack the training to handle them. The idea that these units are being used more frequently due to their increasing popularity in Canada does not explain why they are being used outside of their intended function. It is pertinent to understand why these units are being increasingly used and to explore if and how their intended function has changed over time to better understand what is driving this rise and normalization of tactical units.

3.1 How are these units being used?

Tactical units were developed, it is claimed, to respond to threats that the police were "ill-equipped" to deal with, such as high-profile situations that required specialized training and equipment to minimize harm to officers and the general public (Brooks 2010, Klinger and Rojek 2008, Jenkins et al. 2020). This intended function tends to justify the growth of these units and their use amongst police forces. However, research has found that tactical units are being used to respond to calls where there is a lack of patrol resources and when there is a need for reduced threat to the officer and the public (ibid), sometimes going outside the scope of their intended function and into traditional policing territory. Roziere and Walby (2018) found that Canadian PPUs are being deployed at a higher rate than in the US for both reactive and proactive police work that falls outside of their intended function and public knowledge. To support this idea, a second study by Roziere and Walby, conducted in 2020, found that since the 1990s, the use of SWAT has increased with the average deployment per agency sitting at 60 deployments a year. One case even found that the Winnipeg police are using their SWAT team for routine police work as part of their community policing strategy (ibid). The main drivers behind this increase in deployments were found to be mental health crises and suicide threats (which they found to make up roughly 10% of all deployments) and the use of SWAT teams for traffic offences,

domestic disturbances, and noise complaints (ibid). The implication of this functional overreach is a normalization of the use of SWAT teams in routine police work that can be indicative of a change in the function of police.

Delehanty et al. (2017) argue that, when police go beyond their intended scope and function, they tread into the realm of police militarization, which, consequentially, exposes the public to more aggressive policing, including a stronger likelihood of the use of force. When tactically trained police are called into domestic policing situations, it is more likely that they will use more aggressive modes of policing. In addition, the use of tactical teams for traffic stops, or even lone shooter situations, renders what used to constitute "regular patrol work" too dangerous for patrol officers. While it is believed that using these units helps to reduce danger to the police and the public, the aggressive appearance of these tactical units may incite more violence due to their presence alone (Hill and Berger 2009). Although the original intent and purpose of tactical units were to be deployed in rare situations, making the visibility of this team sparse, their growing use has put their identifiable militaristic characteristics on display (Kraska 2007). The consequences of this changing scope are convoluted definitions of the intended function of the tactical unit, an increase in the use of violence and threat tactics, and potentially dangerous outcomes for the public they are meant to protect. Instances where police have used their tactical units outside of their intended scope and function will be highlighted in the following section in hopes of revealing the deadly consequences of these changes.

3.2 Tactical Units and Civilian Encounters at the Local Level

As tactical units become more popular among municipal police forces, they are increasingly used to respond to civilian calls of varying natures. These calls can involve

everything from domestic assault, mental health crises, and even drug-related calls (Jenkins 2019). Research has found that, when police are called to mental health cases specifically, civilians are more likely to be killed at the hands of police, with this figure rising when police utilize their tactical units to respond to these calls. Nicholson and Marcoux (2018) suggest that, since 2000, at least 500 people have died at the hands of Canadian police who were called regarding a mental health crisis. 2022 alone has been cited as one of the most lethal years for Canadian police, with sixty-nine people dying at the hands of Canadian police officers (Gillis 2023). These instances give rise to questioning why police are utilizing tactical units to respond to mental health or domestic assault calls, why they are choosing to use lethal force or other brutal tactics to respond to these sensitive issues, and why the tactical units are being used to respond to calls involving poverty and people of colour who pose little public threat.

3.2a Tactical Units as Mental Health Responders

Since 2020, there have been several high-profile incidents where police have entered a civilian home and either directly confronted and killed an individual or scared them to their death. In June 2020, Peel Regional Police shot and killed Ejaz Choudry, a 62-year-old Mississauga man known to suffer from schizophrenia, during a mental health crisis (Sidhu 2023). Reports claim that Choudry's family called the non-emergency line over concern that Mr. Choudry was not taking his medication and suspected that he had a knife (Nasser 2021, 2023). Peel Regional Police responded to the call with their tactical unit who shot Mr. Choudry within eleven seconds of breaking down his door (ibid), citing concern for their own safety and mental health, even though he did not threaten the police. Police claim that they did not dispatch any crisis units to the scene, citing that there were none available at the time (ibid). While Mr.

Choudry did indeed have a knife, he did not wield it at police, nor did he threaten them (ibid), rendering the decision for the Peel tactical unit to shoot Mr. Choudry a split-second decision that relied on the potential (not actual) for violence as the main justification for their actions.

Months later, in October 2020, Ottawa Police's tactical unit rushed into the home of a 23-year-old black man named Anthony Aust after receiving approval for a drug warrant. Utilizing a manoeuvre called a "no-knock[18]" or "dynamic" entry (Andrews 2022), which police deemed necessary given the nature of the high-rise building (Yogaretnam 2023), police entered the apartment (video of the entry) To escape police, Aust threw a baggie of drugs out the window and then proceeded to fall twelve storeys to his death trying to escape police (Andrews 2022). Documents show that, while police expected to find a handgun, they only found a small amount of drugs (ibid). Like the situation with Mr. Choudry, police chose to utilize their tactical unit and conduct an entry that scared an individual to their death instead of choosing tactics that would support conversation and consider any mental health issues.

The trend of police sending their tactical units to respond to mental health crises continued well into 2022. In October 2022, Taresh Bobby Ramroop, a 32-year-old Toronto man, died after a violent encounter with the Toronto Police ETF. Police were called to the Jane and Finch neighbourhood, home to high levels of immigrants, poverty, and crime (Leon 2010), for a mental health call (Nasser 2022). Police were called to the sixteenth floor of Ramroop's North York apartment after calls came in about furniture and other items being thrown from the top floor to the street below (Nakhavoly and Marchesan 2022). One hour after the call, the Toronto

[18] Dynamic entries, also known as no-knock or "hard entries," involve police utilizing force to gain rapid entry into a property. They may employ specialized equipment, such battering rams, flash bangs, or other distraction devices to quickly enter the premises and subdue occupants. These entries are meant to give police the element of surprise, which is believed to avoid the destruction of evidence of prevent suspects from taking up arms, bolstering a defensive position from the common law "knock and announce" principle, which grounds itself in the safety of occupants of a residence, the safety of police, and a respect for privacy (Definition provided by Roziere and Walby (2020) on page 41 in "Analyzing the Law of Police Dynamic Entry in Canada." *Queen's Law Journal* 46(1):39-68).

ETF responded to the call with an attempt to negotiate with Ramroop, who was cited by family as suffering from depression (Nasser 2022). While Ramroop was barricaded inside his apartment, without any weapons and posing no danger to the police, the ETF locked his family in the superintendent's office and did not allow them to participate in the negotiations (ibid). It was later found that the police knew that Ramroop was going to jump and did nothing to stop him, had no safety mechanisms in place, nor did they call the crisis unit, despite having responded to a mental health call (ibid). Ramroop later fell to his death from the sixteenth floor.

3.2b The Lasting Effects and Consequences of Tactical (mis)Use

Outside of these examples, it has also been found that police tactical units tend to raid incorrect homes or incorrect people and encounter individuals who are not involved in any sort of criminal activity (Sidhu 2023), having long term consequences for those involved. In 2005, Calgary Police received information about a cocaine trafficking operation involving Jason Cornell and others (R v. Cornell 2009). As part of a search warrant, masked Calgary Tactical Unit police entered Cornell's home (without the warrant in hand) where they pushed Robert Cornell, Jason's 23-year-old mentally disabled brother, to the ground and secured his arms behind his back (Roziere and Walby 2020a). Upon destroying windows and doors, police found a bag of cocaine belonging to Jason Cornell (ibid). Claims suggest that after much emotional distress, police removed the handcuffs from Robert (R. v. Cornell 2009), leaving him traumatized. In 2022, a Brantford family was the subject of a wrong address in the execution of a warrant by the Brantford Police Tactical Intelligence Generated Enforcement and Response Unit (Hristova 2022). The unit executed a no-knock raid/dynamic entry, a flash grenade, and even damaged the door to gain entry (ibid). An officer was cited as kicking one resident in the head

and two adults were put into handcuffs while a thirteen-year-old was told she too would be arrested if she did not calm down (ibid). Research by Sidhu has found that these encounters lead to traumas for civilians, leading to nightmares, insomnia, flashbacks, and a state of hypervigilance (2023). Sidhu contends that it appears as if police are treating the city as a warzone where the average citizen is an enemy and war-like tactics are the necessary means to respond to these threats (ibid). The consequences of this militarization mindset, it can be argued, is an increase in police violence towards citizens that results in unnecessary killings and abuse of power, and, as Mummolo (2018) claims, an "erosion of public trust."

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The examples above demonstrate how local police are (mis)using their tactical units to respond to crisis calls that are meant to be dealt with by patrol officers. In an attempt to justify their forceful responses, police claim that they acted appropriately since they feared for their own safety and mental health (Nasser 2023) while ironically ignoring the safety and mental health of their victims. In the examples presented above, police did not face any consequences for their actions. In the case of Aust and Ramroop, police were found to not be liable for either man's death (see: Lord 2021, Lavoie 2023), were cleared of all wrong-doing, and were found to have "acted accordingly" (ibid). When no criminal negligence is found, it reiterates the idea that police are behaving appropriately and increases the likelihood that they will continue to utilize these methods and behaviours in the future. With a lack of oversight, consequences, or punishment for their behaviour, police will continue to utilize their tactical units inappropriately and outside of their intended function all while lowering the standard of what constitutes a threat and danger in their pursuit of justifying their bad behaviour.

3.3 Recruitment and Enrollment

Joining a tactical unit in Canada has rigorous standards. The rhetoric surrounding these units refers to members as "elite" and "specialized." The Ottawa Police, for example, claims that the members of the SWAT unit are among their most elite police officers who have high scores on the Ontario Police fitness test (at least 90%) and pass job specific physical tests (which mimic unit activities) (Ottawa Police 2022). While this specialized training is a must for members of these elite squads, most Canadian police agencies that have tactical units tend to subscribe to the "PPU activation protocols" and operations methodologies put forth by the Canadian Police College's Critical Incident Commander program. With very few exceptions, the senior officers who command SWAT teams from different agencies across Canada have the same training - one that includes negotiation, de-escalation, legal authorities training, and sensitivity to the issues surrounding police militarization (Cyr et al. 2020). While the practices of these units tend to vary from district to district, the training they receive is similar and adheres to similar principles.

The language of specialization, prestige, and mystery that surrounds tactical units may explain its appeal. Courses offered by the Canadian Police College expose trainees to techniques and procedures that prepare them to work in tense situations. Most of this specialized training is for warrant execution, hostage rescue explosive forced entry, explosive disposal, lethal weapons and sniper observations, apprehending dangerous criminals, VIP security duty, and rappelling (or high-angle operations) (see: Calgary Police Service 2022, Edmonton Police Service 2022, Regina Police Service 2022, Vancouver Police Department 2022, SVPM 2022). Some units also offer specialized training for sub-units consisting of hostage negotiators, explosive disposal, sniper units, stress negotiation, and a Chemical Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Explosive team (see: Edmonton Police 2022, Toronto Police Service 2022, SVPM 2022). These units also train with the FBI, the Canadian and American militaries, The Los Angeles Police Department

SWAT, and numerous other similar agencies (Calgary Police Service 2022). The specialized training required for these tactical units is time-consuming and expensive and sheds light on why tactical units tend to be small and specialized.

To join a tactical unit in Canada, most forces state that you must be an exceptional patrol officer with a minimum number of years of service/police experience, a willingness to work extremely hard and well on a team, be physically fit and commit to ongoing training, be on call 24/7, have excellent decision-making skills, and work well without supervision (see: Calgary Police Service 2022, Edmonton Police Service 2022, Toronto Police Service 2022). Additionally, language surrounding recruitment contends that only those who pass rigorous standards of testing and training lasting on average 10 to 12 weeks, which includes a weeklong stress test (ibid), will make it onto the tactical unit. The Toronto Emergency Task Force, for example, currently consists of 70 members who cover 10 different sub-units within the larger tactical unit (SVPM 2022). This works out to roughly 1.2% of the Toronto Police. The Calgary Police, whose tactical unit was established relatively recently (created in 2018), consists of 37 members (Robertson 2018), which works out to roughly 2% of their force. While the number of members per tactical unit is not displayed on the websites of all police forces, what is clear is that the number of officers on these teams is a relatively small percentage of their total police force, making it curious as to why they require so much expensive, high-powered material.

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The recruitment standards for joining a tactical unit in Canada are undoubtedly rigorous, costly, and highly specialized. This may explain why these units comprise such a small percentage of a police force. It does not explain, however, why such small teams are being utilized with such frequency across Canada for routine patrol work, especially given that certain

crime and violence rates have gone down across the country over the last decade. In Canada, for example, crime, gun use, and serious crime rates have fallen. As such, periodic upticks in crime are not enough to explain the overall trend of the increased use of these units in routine police work (Roziere and Walby 2020b). If this is the case, then, what is driving the increased deployments and use of tactical units in Canadian policing? The following section will explore potential drivers and explanations for this infiltration of tactical units into routine policing efforts across Canada to better understand the expansion of their intended scope and function.

4. The Rise of the Tactical Unit in Canada: Potential Drivers

"There's a reason why you separate military and the police. One fights the enemies of the state, the other serves and protects the people. When the military becomes both, then the enemies of the state tend to become the people" (Commander William Adama – Battlestar Galactica).

The normalization of the use of tactical units outside of their intended function in routine Canadian policing has rapidly increased with no clear explanation as to what is driving this phenomenon. In the US, it has been found that police militarization is driven by the presence of racial diversity and poverty. The race riots of the 1960s[19] are said to have led to the introduction of new forms of policing that included an increase in violence and use of force that paved the way for the creation and use of tactical units (Pereira 2015) and eventually led to militarization. The effects of this militarization, it is argued, have been disproportionately aimed at both minority groups and those who are perceived to pose a threat to existing institutions of government (Palmiotto and Unnithan 2010). It has also been found that there is a relationship between poverty and the presence of police militarization and use of lethal force amongst police

[19] Events like the Watts Riots in Los Angeles, the Civil Rights Movement, The Vietnam War Protests, and the later War on Drugs are argued to have been catalysts to the militarization of police in the United States.

(see: Hirschfield 2015, Lawson Jr. 2018, Meeks 2006). The idea that police are militarizing and using tactical units due to a high presence of racial diversity and poverty in society goes against traditional explanations of police militarization which suggest that their use is a direct result of increases in crime, violence, and gun use. Given that rates of crime are decreasing (Roziere and Walby 2018), the explanation for increased police militarization is still unaccounted for, especially in the Canadian context. Taking inspiration from the US, it is worth exploring if the same sociodemographic characteristics are driving militarization and tactical (mis)use in Canada.

Policing scholarship has also explored the idea that social control and fear and risk management drive police militarization, increased police violence, and the use of tactical units. Monkkonen argues that there is an inherent culture of fear and risk that exists in police practice that may lead to the overuse of military-style tactics of control (1992). This risk perception tends to drive police behaviour towards certain groups, with scholarship finding that the means of punishment is determined by the perception of threats from minority group interests (see: Vold 2002, Carmichael 2005). What results is an increase in police violence to suppress these groups and maintain control of the underclass (Meeks 2006) while upholding elite interests. This use of violence is justified through police rhetoric that an increase in the use of military tactics and equipment is the ideal response (Kurtz and Upton 2017) to these "social threats." What remains unclear, however, is how definitions of threat and risk are agreed upon. Given the evidence of how police use their tactical units, it appears that risk and threat perception management has been one of the driving factors of the use of tactical units (Ericson and Haggerty 1997) and may account for the increases in the deployment of these units and their lethal weapons use against certain groups over others. It is worth exploring, then, if the increased presence and use of tactical units by Canadian police is being driven by perceived fear and risk management.

Attempting to understand the potential drivers of militarization and tactical units in Canada is essential for several reasons. First, given that law enforcement is the core power of the state and wields an incredible power (Seigel 2018), the consequences of their actions can have drastic repercussions on how this power is exerted and how citizens view and interact with the state. Second, since Canadian police are receiving a surplus of materials from the military for their tactical units, how these tools are being used should be questioned. Nolan has found that when police receive a surplus of materials from the military, twice as many civilians die that year (2020). Finally, it has been found that militarization may result in the targeting of certain groups and the restriction of their civil rights, allowing the state to interfere in the lives of citizens and do so with force (Weiss 2011). Indeed, when using SWAT teams, Kappeler and Kraska (2013) find that there is an increase in shootings and police violence, especially towards racialized groups (Meeks 2006). Having these surplus materials encourages the police, in all their power, to wield them and utilize violence as the first means of defence against the defenceless.

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In the following section, there will be an exploration of what has been deemed potential drivers of police militarization in Canada. First, the section below will examine if and how the presence of visible minorities and Indigenous groups may lead to an increase in tactical units. It will then explore how the presence of high levels of poverty might contribute to police procuring more tactical units. Both explanations will touch on the idea of social control and threat and risk perception in their discussion. Finally, a more traditional explanation that high crime and violence rates lead to police utilizing stronger force though the procurement and use of tactical units will be considered.

4.1 Racial and Ethnic Diversity as the Risk Society

Seminal work by Blumer (1958) and Blalock (1967) argues that dominant groups are threatened by growing minority populations since it is believed they pose a risk to hegemonic norms and values. Ericson and Haggerty (1997) argue that the attempt to control these groups has extended into policing, shifting police work from traditional models of crime control and order maintenance (proactive policing) to the provision of technologies that are designed to identify, predict, and manage risk (reactive policing). In the Canadian context, the notion of "risk policing" has existed since the turn of the 20th century, with the NWMP focusing their efforts on new immigrants (Parnaby and Kealey 2003) to prevent their entry into Canada. Over time, this idea permeated Canadian policing, with scholars arguing that an increase in police militarization may be tied to an increase in the perception of risk and danger (Roziere and Walby 2018) posed by these outgroups. Building on the idea that an increase in tactical units has been a driver behind police militarization (Ericson and Haggerty 1997), it is essential to understand if there is a linkage between an increase in tactical unit expansion and "risk" populations.

Scholarship has suggested that police are more likely to use force against minority groups (Terrill and Reisig 2003) than non-minority groups, including racial minority (non-white) and Indigenous groups in Canada. It is argued that this may be due to perceived socioeconomic and political risks that these groups pose, either real or imagined (see: White and Saunders 2010, Gordon 2006, Beck 1992). Blalock (1967) claims that elites work, through political and economic avenues, to subordinate these groups to prevent them from achieving upward mobility. These behaviours, manifested through the criminal justice system, tend to lead to harsher punishment for members of these outgroups. Given that Canada has a large minority population that continues to grow due to liberal immigration policies, and increasing economic polarization, the idea that police are militarizing to subjugate these groups is worth exploring.

Studies have also found that Canadian police are more likely to deploy tactical units for routine policing targeted at marginalized populations (Roziere and Walby 2018). One explanation for this is that, as minority group presence increases, so too does the number of police officers (Liska et al. 1981, Carmichael and Kent 2015) in a particular jurisdiction given the population growth. Greenaway (2000) has found that this same phenomenon holds in Indigenous centres in Canada. Scholarship has found that an increase in the size of a minority group also tends to increase the rhetoric around these groups posing an "ethnic threat[20]." What results from this increased threat perception is an expansion of out-group fear that is tied to the use of certain styles of policing that are associated with militarization (see: Stamper 2011, Hirschfield 2015, and Ariel et al. 2018) which can also lead to a call for harsher punishment for minority group members (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001). While the presence of minorities has historically been associated with increased policing, the research to date has not explored the possibility that threat explanations can help us understand police militarization at the local level in Canada. As such, the following hypothesis is posed to determine if there is a connection:

Hypothesis 1: *The presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

4.2 Social Class (Low Income)

The relationship between the presence of poverty and the use of lethal force by police officers has been examined in scholarship (e.g. Hirschfield 2015). The explanation for this is twofold. First is the idea that a large poor population poses a sort of economic threat that is

[20] The idea of ethnic threat builds on Hubert Blalock's racial threat hypothesis, that suggests that the size of racial and ethnic minorities (especially as it increases) leads the majority group to perceive them as a growing threat to their political, economic, and labour power used by the majority group to control and subordinate these groups.

shaped by economic position and not by race (Garland 1990)[21]. This means that these groups, with any potential for upward mobility, pose a threat to the ways of life of dominant groups (see: Garland 1990, Chambliss and Seidman 1980) through potentially overtaking their elite positions in society and displacing their status. Additionally, if there are more individuals with high socioeconomic status, the prestige that comes with occupying these positions will lessen, and more individuals will have access to scarce and luxury resources, making them less appealing to those already occupying these positions by reducing their status and prestige. Second, as a means of ensuring these individuals cannot achieve upward mobility and displace elites, social control and coercion work to keep them in poverty (see: Chrismas 2013, Chevigny 1990, 1995). This form of coercion and control is enforced by dominant groups through the officials that work for them (such as the police), which guarantees that they retain their supremacy and spot in the social strata (Chambliss and Seidman 1980). Blumer (1958) and Blalock (1967) suggest that this works because economic competition is removed through coercion and control, enforced by police, which eliminates any opportunity for upward mobility by placing these individuals in the hands of the justice system, thus ensuring these individuals remain in a state of poverty.

Research has found that poverty rates tend to be higher amongst recent immigrant and Indigenous groups in Canada, with Indigenous experiencing the highest poverty levels as they tend to have significantly lower income and education levels compared to non-Indigenous people in Canada (Collin and Jensen 2009). As a means of controlling these groups, who are believed to

[21] It has been argued that punishment in general is a political phenomenon (see: Chambliss 1994. Foucault 1977, Garland 1990, Savelsberg 1994) and based solely on individual characteristics such as race and ethnicity. To this extent, scholars have questioned if there is a connection between the political climate and the propensity for varying punishment outcomes (Jacobs and Carmichael 2004, Helms and Jacobs 2002). Helms and Jacobs suggest that political factors in local court environments influence criminal sentences (2002). This form of punishment begins with policing. David Garland reiterates this idea by suggesting that governments use the system to manage the underclass (1990) and treat the poor as social problems. This evidence indicates that ideology does indeed play a role in the conduct of the criminal justice system and that political ideology may indeed influence punishment.

pose a potential economic risk to elites, violence and the use of force are used as these groups often lack the resources to dispute these accusations, making them easy targets. Poverty also tends to be associated with danger and an increased risk to officers (Terrill and Reisig 2003) due to a belief that high-poverty areas are associated with higher crime rates. Hsieh and Pugh (1993) argue that this leads officers to feel unsafe in areas they patrol, leading them to use more aggressive tactics. As such, the following hypothesis is posed to determine if there is a connection between the presence of poverty and police militarization:

Hypothesis 2: *The presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

4.3 Presence of Crime

One of the most conventional explanations for variations in policing has to do with shifts in the magnitude, severity, and presence of crime. Lawson Jr. (2018) argues that violent crime is related to the use of force by police and can include, but is not limited to, gun violence, homicide, serious assaults, and even violence with a deadly weapon. As a result, increased levels of violence lead police to utilize more violent tactics to combat these crimes. To better understand this phenomenon, the following section will explore two different forms of crime: the "community violence hypothesis" and the "conflict hypothesis" to better understand if crime is truly an underlying force in the militarization of police and the use of tactical units.

According to the community violence hypothesis, police officers use deadly force only when necessary (Sorensen et al. 1993). This perspective argues that any use of force by police in a high crime neighbourhood or situation is deemed to be legitimate (Wortley et al. 2021). This perspective contends that police response is directly and only related to the levels of crime and

violence in a given jurisdiction (Sorensen et al. 1993) without influence from other factors. To counter this idea, the conflict hypothesis suggests that the use of force by police is not evenly distributed solely amongst areas with violent crime and that there are indeed underlying factors that determine the use of force. This explanation believes that there are external influences on whom police choose to use force against (ibid) and what is defined as a high crime area. As a result, this perspective argues that police are not responding to violent crime so much as they are reacting to those who threaten the status quo (Harring 1977), labelling them high crime. Given these two conflicting perspectives, it is essential to explore whether violent crime is objectively the reason for an increase in police use of force, or if there are other underlying factors at play.

With the increase in immigration in Canada, Zhang suggests that political rhetoric has linked the presence of immigrants to an increase in crime rates (2014). Ousey and Kubrin (2018) find that immigration does not increase local crime rates and that immigrants are less likely to cause crime than their native-born peers. Douyon finds that the link between an increase in immigrants and crime levels is a myth (2016). He suggests that it is instead anti-immigration and anti-minority policies behind this ideology (ibid) and not an increase in crime that would justify increased police violence. Zhang continues that the presence of immigrants may appear to increase crime rates indirectly due to increasing inequality and displacement of workers (2014) and not because they are directly committing more crimes. What results is a perceived increased crime across that justifies the use of force by police, legitimizing their militarization.

The idea that police fight violent crime to protect the community at large is one of their central tenets. Shantz suggests, however, that crime has been declining for decades and that the only explanation for an increase in police expenditures is a desire for militaristic technologies and tactical unit training (2016) and not an increase in violent crime. While the presence of high

crime rates has been traditionally associated with police use of force and more aggressive modes of policing, the research to date has not explored the possibility that high crime rates are no longer viable explanations that can help us understand the militarization of the police. As such, the following hypothesis is posed to determine if traditional explanations of crime rates are viable in understanding the increasing militarization of Canadian police:

Hypothesis 3: *Increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

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Attempting to understand what is truly driving police to militarize and use tactical units in routine policing is a complex task. On the one hand, it is argued that the presence of minority groups leads police to utilize more violent tactics due to the threat that they present to those in power. Other scholars argue that high levels of poverty pose a similar form of threat to those in power, and the police are used to ensure their subordination and the denial of upward mobility. From a traditional standpoint, the argument for police militarizing is simply that there is more violence and crime that needs to be addressed with aggressive policing. It is unclear which of these factors, or a combination of, is currently driving police to militarize and acquire and use tactical units in Canada and why this is expanding into routine policing. To test the above hypotheses, the following section will analyze and discuss the data collected to better understand exactly why there has been a rise in tactical unit use amongst Canadian police.

5. Data, Measures, and Methodology

5.1 The Dataset

The dataset used in this chapter is original and was collected from a variety of sources. Data for all variables was collected according to Statistics Canada census years 2011, 2016, and 2021 at the city level, encompassing cities, municipalities, and conglomerates across all Canadian provinces that have a population over 50,000 as of 2011. These particular years were chosen due to the available census data (given that this particular topic can have data/privacy difficulties) and the ease of finding the necessary demographic and crime-related data. Initially, the data covered cities with a population of over 100,000. However, primary analysis revealed that this captured only 46 total data points as opposed to the 78 total data points collected by lowering the population count to 50,000, allowing for a richer data analysis. Lowering the population count to 50,000 also allows for the capturing of nuances in types of policing based on city size and demographic composition. The original case count before cleaning the data for missing and incomplete data was 234, capturing 78 cities and regions[22]. After cleaning the data, 68 data points and a case count of 204 remained.

Demographic data was collected from Statistics Canada. For the year 2011, data was collected from the National Household Survey (NHS0. Data for the years 2016 and 2021 was collected from the Census. For city boundaries, census subdivisions were utilized. A census subdivision (CSD) is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories). For population measures, risk variables

[22] The regions of Peel, York, Durham, Halton, Waterloo, and Niagara are conglomerates that have between three and nine cities within them. For the purpose of this work, these regions will be counted as one city.

(Aboriginal population, visible minority population, and low-income measures), the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), and the 2016 and 2021 censuses were used. To gather data on police, the annual Police Administrative Survey was utilized for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Crime statistics for each city in the sample were taken from the Uniform Crime Survey for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. Finally, data on the presence and history of tactical units was derived from the police departments' publicly available websites or using archival sources on government websites, news articles, and official publications by the department or corresponding agencies. The collection of these variables will be explored in greater detail below.

5.2 Method of Analysis

To statistically analyze the data, a multivariate, fixed-effects, pooled time-series, cross-sectional regression technique will be utilized, focusing specifically on binary outcomes with odds ratios as the preferred outcome measure. Fixed-effects models can produce estimates that are the net of the (un)observed variables and not biased by cohort or selection effects of individual differences that are time-invariant (Johnson and Wu 2002). When combined with a pooled time series analysis, this method produces a set of techniques that demonstrate changes to the outcome variables over time (Ward and Leigh 1993) and demonstrates how the variability in the independent variables influences those changes. A fixed effects approach also allows for the capturing of cultural differences, politics, and police culture (Kent and Carmichael 2014) which can be difficult to capture. As such, a pooled time series, fixed-effects approach will measure the intensity of the shifts in relationships (Kent and Jacobs 2005) between the presence of risk groups, for example, and militarization over time, rending it the best approach towards

understanding shifts and trends over the chosen period. Additionally, a fixed-effects, pooled time series works well with a dichotomous outcome variable.

For this work, a fixed effects model is chosen over a random effects model as the preferred estimation technique since its estimators are robust to shifts in the number of cases included in different periods (Johnston and DiNardo, 1997. Wooldridge 2002 and it holds constant all unchanging case attributes that are not included in models (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001). Fixed effects models tend to be constant across cases, repeated over the time panels, and exhausts the population at the city level, rendering it the better option over random effects as it fits the fixed nature of the variables in this study such as ethnicity, poverty, and Indigeneity are fixed. Relying on the assumption that the nature of these variables does not change over time, fixed effects work allows for the controlling of group-level effects on the outcome variable and works best to explain intra-group variation on the likelihood of a city having a tactical unit.

The panels that will be used for modelling purposes will cover census years 2011, 2016, and 2021 and are presented in Table 2. Utilizing pooled panels allows for a more robust analysis of how variation and changes in the independent variables might influence the likelihood of acquiring a tactical unit over time. Another advantage of panel design is its sensitivity to historical shifts. Given that some factors may be more influential during certain periods, it considers how these fluctuations can affect the outcome variable (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001). The purpose of using a panel regression is to capture the trends that are occurring over a 10-year period to understand changes in tactical unit acquisition and the social/cultural indicators that may be driving changes to police militarization with a particular focus on tactical units.

The outcome of the regression analysis will be presented in three models. The first model will consider the size of the police force as a proxy for population and the role of traditional

explanations of crime on the likelihood of a city owning a tactical unit. The second model will analyze the presence of risk variables against population size and the presence of crime to reveal if these variables play a role in the tactical unit acquisition and to what degree. In the third and final model, the transformed visible minority variable will be analyzed against a full model. This transformed variable will be included to mitigate the effects of the non-linear behaviour of the visible minority variable presented in the second table. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

5.3 Variables and Data Operationalization

5.3a Dependent Variable: Indicators of Militarization

The dependent variable used for modelling will be based on Kraska's framework of militarization[23], specifically focusing on the operational/organizational indicator of tactical units. The hybrid use of operational/organizational indicators captures the use of elite squads of officers who handle high-risk situations with "war-like" (ibid) responses. Additionally, given that tactical units have special operations for patrol, patterns of activity modelled off the military, and special command and control centres, the use of this indicator captures the essence of tactical unit use in Canada. For more detailed information on Kraska's framework, and on operational/organizational indicators, reference can be made to Chapter 1, section 5.1a.

Data on the presence of tactical units was collected from several sources. Limited numbers of official police force websites contained information on their tactical or emergency response units. When this information was available, it was used as the primary source of

[23] Kraska, Peter. 2007. "Militarization and Policing--Its Relevance to 21st Century Police." *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 1(4):501–513. https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pam065

confirmation. In most cases, information regarding a local police force owning and utilizing a tactical team came from official newspaper reports/articles, government reports, or even photos posted online. The collection of this data served to confirm that these forces had a tactical unit before or starting in 2011, and continually through 2016 and 2021. To operationalize the dependent variable, Kraska's original framework was adapted. While Kraska presents his militarization framework on a continuum, in this work, the dependent variable will be presented instead as a dichotomy. The information required to assess militarization on a continuum, such as the number of members of a tactical unit, is not readily available to the public and requires a substantial number of freedom of information requests that fall outside of the scope and timeframe of this project. The adapted dichotomy measures the presence of each indicator as either "yes" or "no" instead of a degree or range and will later be converted into a count of 0 (no) and 1 (yes) for analytical purposes. By utilizing a dichotomy, the presence of each indicator becomes more concrete, and a clear line is drawn between "yes" or "no" that removes any interpretation that results from using a continuum, such as researcher misinterpretation and error. Additionally, considering that there is no information provided in the article as to how one should measure or count these indicators and where they would fall on the continuum, a dichotomy enables one to measure, with certainty, the presence of these items at a concrete time.

5.3b Control Variables

Police and Population

To measure the presence of police, data was collected from the Police Administration Survey from Statistics Canada for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021 which captures the number of total personnel working in a city's police force. Data was collected from the number of sworn

officers (taken from full-time equivalent officers[24]) variable. To operationalize the variable, it was transformed into a rate of police per 10,000 per capita to create a variable that measures the frequency of police force size in relation to population. To measure population, census subdivision counts were used for cities with a population of over 50,000 for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021 from the census profile. When running preliminary models, it was found that using both police and population variables produced similar results. A VIF test was run to test multicollinearity between population and police a level which produced a VIF of 16.47 which far exceeds the acceptable threshold of 2[25]. As a proxy for population, the total number of police per 10,000 will be used since it captures the reality that bigger cities with larger populations tend to have more police and vice versa. Since population is the strongest driver of police force size, it can also denote the number of resources that these police forces are likely to have.

Crime

To measure crime, data was collected from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. To measure violent crime, a catch-all category for most types of crime listed within the survey, data was collected using the "violent crime" measure for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021 which encompasses violent offences/crimes against the person and involves the use or threatened use of violence against a person, including homicide, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, robbery, among others (Statistics Canada 2023). Data for the "homicide" and "firearms offences" measures was collected for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021.

[24] Total number of police officers (Full-time equivalent FTE) includes: Commissioned officers (Includes personnel who have obtained senior officer status, normally at the rank of lieutenant or higher, like chiefs, deputy chiefs, staff superintendents, superintendents, staff inspectors, inspectors, lieutenants, and other equivalent ranks), Non-commissioned officers (Includes personnel between the rank of constable and lieutenant, such as staff-sergeants, sergeants, detective-sergeants, corporals and all equivalent ranks), and constables (Statistics Canada 2021b).

[25] All variables were checked for their probability of collinearity and no others besides population and total police produced a VIF above 2.

To operationalize the variables, each was collected as a raw count (actual number of incidents) and transformed through population to create a rate of 100,000 per capita. The presence of violent crime, homicide, and firearms incidents were considered in preliminary modelling. In models with all three variables present, little variation was found. This may be related to violent crime encompassing homicide and firearm incidents. In this case, a decision was made to either utilize violent crime rates or homicide and firearm incident rates in modelling, but not both.

5.3c Proxy Variables

Presence of Risk

To measure the presence of risk, as denoted in previous chapters, three separate variables will be presented: the size of the visible minority population, the Indigenous population, and the population living in poverty. Data for all variables was collected for census years 2011, 2016, and 2021. In 2011, data for the visible minority population was collected from the NHS using the "total visible minority population" measure. In 2016 and 2021, data was collected from the census under the "total visible minority population" measure. Visible minority refers to non-Caucasian and non-white persons as defined by The Employment Act[26] (Statistics Canada 2021c). To measure the size of the Indigenous population, data for 2011 was taken from the NHS under the "Aboriginal Population Profile" measure. In 2016 and 2021, data was taken from the census using the "Aboriginal Identity" and "Indigenous Identity" measures respectively. The Indigenous population measure encompasses First Nations peoples, Métis, and Inuit, as defined

[26] As of the writing of this article, "visible minority refers to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean" (Statistics Canada 2021c).

in the Constitution Act (Statistics Canada 2022a). To measure poverty in 2011, data was taken from the NSH using the "in low income in 2010 based on the after-tax low-income measure (LIM-AT)." For 2016 and 2021, data was taken from the census using the "In low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (2015 measure)" and the "In low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (2020)" measure respectively. The LIM-AT measure refers to the fixed percentage (50%) of the median adjusted after-tax income of private households and is adjusted to take economies of scale into account (Statistics Canada 2021a). To operationalize all variables, data was collected as a raw count and transformed into a rate of 100,000 per capita (the numbers produced when using a 10,000 rate were too large for the models), considering the fluidity of these populations and indicators of the economy over time.

The visible minority variable underwent further operationalization after preliminary modelling revealed it to be non-linear. While this variable explains the broader political process, this effect declined as the population became larger. What resulted was the size of the visible minority population becoming less impactful and significant as it grew. However, research has shown that, as the visible minority population grows, police tend to become more punitive. To overcome this discrepancy, the variable was squared to produce the variable "visible minority squared." Secondary modelling found that the transformation of this variable produced results more consistent with the literature. Indeed, as the size of the population grew larger, there was more correlation between punitive response and the presence of the dependent variable in the city, which holds more consistent with the literature. In addition, modelling also found that this transformed variable produced a parabola when modelled, demonstrating that only in its transformation is it linear. As such, the squared variable will be utilized in the data analysis.

5.3d Additional Considerations

An additional consideration[27] when running the models was the inclusion or exclusion of RCMP cases. The initial case count of 204 cases includes cities that utilize RCMP detachments for their policing needs, rendering these cities to always have access to tactical units but not own one themselves. As a result, this presented a lack of variation in the results and did not account for city-level decision making and funding. It was also found that the inclusion of cities that use the RCMP for their policing needs skewed the data and did not produce any variability. Indeed, Preliminary modelling found less variation in the variables over time with RCMP included, with 75% of all cases having a tactical unit. By this logic, all police forces have access to a tactical unit, overrepresenting the number of tactical units and misrepresenting the city-level decisions and potential demographic characteristics driving their creation and use. As this paper is more concerned with cities that make a conscious decision to acquire, fund, and train their own tactical unit, the removal of cities that use RCMP detachments allows for more variability in the data. Removing these cities reduced the case count to 147, covering 49 cities. Early models run with this smaller case count produced richer results and more variation at the city level that was consistent with the literature. While it is not ideal to run these models with a smaller case count, it is arguably more representative of city-level decision-making that drives tactical unit acquisition and use to exclude cities with RCMP. As such, the models below will not include cities that utilize RCMP detachments.

[27] It is also important to note that an attempt was made at collecting data for city budgets to analyze what percentage of budgets were allocated for policing. Availability for this data was limited and collecting information for all cities would have been impossible within the scope of this work.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Descriptives

Table 1 provides a descriptive summary of the expected relationships between the explanatory variables and dependent variable tactical units. It shows the means, standard deviations, ranges, and expected relationship for these variables for each of the three pooled, time-series panels. It is expected that there will be positive relationships between the independent measures and the dependent variable given the traditional and sociological literature regarding drivers of police militarization. These statistics demonstrate that, on average, more police forces are acquiring tactical units over time with an average of 70% of forces owning one by 2021. In addition, it is revealed that the size of the police force is growing over time, denoting population growth. While some of the smaller cities in the dataset have small police forces, with the minimum number of officers at 40, the largest force has 5,776 officers, denoting variation in police force size and underlying decision-making processes for tactical unit ownership and use.

Variable	Predicted Sign	Mean 2011	Mean 2016	Mean 2021	St. Dev. (Overall)	Min (Overall)	Max (Overall)
City-Level Descriptives (n=147)							
SWAT/Tactical		.67	.71	.71	.46	0	1
Total Number of Sworn Police Officers	+	660.06	665.81	669.96	1032.9	40	5,776
% Visible Minority	+	14.69	18.02	22.73	15.65	.87	68.25
% Indigenous	+	2.96	3.81	3.88	3.42	.42	18.94
% Poverty (LIM)	+	14.61	13.92	10.62	4.06	5.07	25.79
Homicide rate per 100,000	+	1.39	1.55	2.34	1.80	0	8.33
Firearm Violence rate per 100,000	+	3.40	4.62	8.19	4.88	0	26.5

Table 1: Predictive Signs and Descriptive Statistics for Tactical Units

The table also reveals variation in the visible minority population, with this population experiencing substantial growth over the course of a decade - demonstrating that their growth has coincided with population changes over time. These results show a substantial development that

coincides with ethnic threat and risk theories in police militarization through tactical unit creation and use at the city level. The Indigenous population remains relatively stable and does not experience much change. Economic stratification does experience a decline over time, potentially signifying that people are being lifted out of poverty. Finally, homicide rates remained relatively stable over time, experiencing marginal growth between 2011 and 2021. Some places, with smaller populations, experienced no homicides in a given year. Firearm violence, however, experienced substantial growth over time, with some cities experiencing an average of 26 homicides a year. As a result, it is unlikely that homicide will produce any variation in the data but an increase in firearm violence may reinforce traditional explanations of crime as driving forces for police militarization.

6.2 Regression Results

Table two presents the results from the regression models predicting tactical unit ownership at the city level. In the first model, traditional explanations and justifications for tactical unit ownership, increasing crime levels, were considered. In this limited model, the most significant indicator of the presence of a tactical unit is the size of the municipal police force, which indicates that a larger population increases the likelihood of a city owning a tactical unit. This effect holds after multiple measures of violent crime are held constant. These initial results suggest that, as the size of the population and, as a result, the police force grows, the likelihood that they will own a tactical unit also increases which is likely due to larger police forces having extensive budgets that would allow for the creation and training of these teams. In this minimally specified model, it is revealed that the presence of crime, specifically homicide and firearm violence, as a proxy for violent crime, holds no significance and does not explain why cities are

creating these units. As such, the most significant indicator of tactical unit ownership when considering traditional explanations for crime is the size of the police force.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control Variables			
Police Per 10,000	1.43***	1.20*	1.18
	(0.000)	(0.097)	(0.141)
Crime Measures			
Homicide Rate	1.30	1.30	1.28
	(0.140)	(0.149)	(0.173)
Firearm Violence Rate	0.99	0.94	0.94
	(0.936)	(0.451)	(0.433)
Threat / Risk Measures			
Low-Income Percent[a]	–	1.27**	1.30**
		(0.019)	(0.014)
Indigenous Percent	–	1.15	1.18
		(0.210)	(0.155)
Visible Minority Percent	–	1.22***	1.32***
		(0.000)	(0.003)
Visible Minority Squared	–	–	1.00
			(0.243)
Constant	0.9935	0.9990	0.9993
Observations	147	147	147

[a] Low Income is measured using the Low Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) as measured by Statistics Canada
Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Fixed Effects, Pooled Time-Series Panel Regression Predicting City-Level Tactical Unit Ownership by Local Police

The second model introduces theoretical risk explanations for the rise of tactical units at the city level while still holding traditional explanations of crime and the size of the municipal police force constant. The addition of these variables builds on the idea that individuals within these groups are contributing to violence and crime rates within the city. With the introduction of these variables, the size of the municipal police force loses significance as the sole indicator of

tactical unit ownership. What results is the size of the visible minority population and the presence of poverty as the most significant indicators of local police forces acquiring a tactical unit. Indeed, as the size of these populations increases, so too does the likelihood that police will acquire one of these units, making the presence of a risk a strong predictor of tactical unit ownership in the city. The presence of Indigenous populations does not hold any significance in these models, despite its association with poverty and high crime levels. These findings hold consistent with risk literature that contends that police are more likely to use force against minority groups (see: Terrill and Reisig 2003, Ericson and Haggerty 1997) and those living in poverty (see: White and Saunders 2010, Gordon 2006, Beck 1992) as a means to subjugate and control them and may explain why police are so quick to acquire tactical units and to militarize.

The third and final model introduces the transformed visible minority variable that linearizes the initial variable. The addition of this measure is highly significant, and its presence indicates that, as the presence of visible minority groups grows, police are now more likely to acquire tactical units than when a non-linear variable is presented. In addition, this variable also slightly increases the significance of the presence of poverty, with police now being more likely to acquire a tactical unit when as the population of those living in poverty increases. Overall, the results of these three models indicate that larger cities with more ethnic and economic diversity are driving police to acquire and use tactical units at the local level. These findings hold consistent with the literature (see: Hirschfield 2015, Garland 1990, Chrismas 2013, Chevigny 1990, 1995) that suggests that police militarization is driven by the presence of risk groups, such as the poor and ethnic minorities. This phenomenon becomes more apparent as these populations become larger and the police gain more resources in their pursuit of neutralizing these risks through the creation and use of lethal tactical units at the city level.

7. Discussion

In trying to understand why police at the local level are acquiring tactical units at such a rapid pace, research has presented two conflicting notions. On the one hand, it is suggested that police are acquiring these militaristic units due to a rise in crime and gun violence that requires police to utilize more force and have lethal tools to combat this rise in crime. On the other hand, sociological literature, and the conflict hypothesis, suggest that police tend to militarize and acquire tactical units due to an increase in the presence of minority groups and poverty at the city level, which are increasing as the Canadian population also increases. When considering the idea that crime is driving police to acquire tactical units at the city level, it was found that the presence of police, and the size of the population, is the most significant indicator of tactical unit ownership at the city level. Indeed, when accounting for crime as the explanatory measure for tactical units, it is found that the size of the police force accounts for a 43% increase in the likelihood of tactical unit presence and is significant. One explanation for this phenomenon is that police forces in larger cities tend to have access to more resources and, in turn, bigger budgets that would allow for the procurement of these units and the costly and timely training of specialized officers. In this case, crime holds no significance, rendering the traditional explanation of crime as driving police militarization as a non-starter. As a result, hypothesis 3: increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities, is rejected.

When controlling for the traditional explanations of police militarization, police force size (population) is rendered the most significant predictor of tactical unit ownership at the city level. However, with the introduction of risk variables, the significance of force size decreases and only accounts for a 20% increase (less than half of the explanatory power when considered

solely against indicators of crime) in the likelihood of tactical unit ownership with weak significance. When holding police force size and the presence of crime constant, the size of the visible minority population accounts for a 27% increase in the likelihood of tactical unit ownership and is highly statistically significant. When a linear version of this variable is presented, the likelihood increases to 32% with high statistical significance, rendering this variable a strong indicator of police tactical unit ownership. The presence of Indigenous populations, however, does not hold any significance, rendering hypothesis 1: the presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities, is partially accepted. When considering the significance of the presence of poverty, it is found that the size of the population in poverty accounts for a 27% increase in the likelihood of tactical unit ownership and is significant. When the linear minority variable is presented, this relationship increases, signifying a 30% increase in the likelihood of ownership. As such, hypothesis 2: the presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of tactical units and police militarization in Canadian cities, is accepted.

8. Conclusion

This chapter uncovered the underlying drivers of the acquisition and use of tactical units by Canadian police at the local level. It was found that the presence of ethnic minorities and growing economic polarization, not increasing crime rates, are the strongest driving forces behind police acquiring these units. Meeks (2006) suggests that an increase in the use of violence by police has been linked to the presence of marginalized and racialized groups. This violence is correlated with an increase in militarization as manifested through the acquisition of tactical

units, which themselves are linked to an increase in shootings and police violence (Kappeler and Kraska 2013). When comparing these findings to places like the US, where crime is a viable explanation for police militarization due to high levels of homicide and gun violence, it becomes clear that, in places that do not have these same characteristics, something else is driving militarization. In the Canadian context, it appears as if city level police forces are acquiring tactical units to respond to growing numbers of minority groups and high levels of poverty and not crime. This finding is consistent with the literature that demonstrates that cities with large minority populations are also likely to have large police forces, rendering them more likely to have a tactical unit and is also consistent with the conflict hypothesis.

The disproportionate use of force against minorities (White and Saunders 2010) has led to what Nolan calls an "us" vs. "them" mentality (2020) to become engrained in policing. There are varying explanations as to what is driving this. One explanation holds that this narrative is being driven by politics, with far-right fear-mongering manufacturing images of dangerous, criminal immigrants "flooding" Canada and associating these groups with poverty and criminality. This fear, when legitimized through economic, political, and legal conventions as a means of social control, perpetuates and solidifies the idea that minority members are a danger to society and eventually becomes disseminated into the rhetoric and narratives used by those who are shaping and creating our laws and legislation. These belief systems become especially dangerous when perpetuated through local police institutions, leading to an increased likelihood that police will use lethal violence on these groups out of manufactured fear and perceived risk.

As Canada continues to become more racially and ethnically diverse, economic polarization increases, and population increases lead to the hiring of more police officers, the use of tactical units may become the norm in routine policing. This may damage the reputation that

Canada has on the world stage as a place of acceptance and peace for people of all races and ethnicities, and as a place of opportunity. As these populations grow, police may use tactical units to police and control these groups, going against the rhetoric of Canada as a post-racial country. In places like the US, this police behaviour is more normalized given the discourse surrounding race. In the Canadian context, however, there is still a lot to be understood and explained as the conversation about race and ethnicity does not mirror the one in the US. As these groups become labelled as dangerous and are continually pushed into poverty due to political policies and fearmongering, it is only a matter of time before the Canadian context mirrors that of the US.

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At the start of this chapter, it was suggested that the consequences of police militarization and the use of tactical units at the city level, aside from the increased marginalization of already marginalized groups, are widely unknown in the Canadian context. It is also unknown if threat discourse is contributing to militarization, where tactical unit use at the city level is seen as a solution to risk prevention and threat management. It has now been found that cities where there is more ethnic diversity and poverty are more likely to own a tactical unit. When considering that those in poverty, for example, are unable to retaliate against the police without facing jail time, and are unable to legally fight back, this seemingly makes it easy to target these individuals to control and subjugate them. This same reality likely extends to some ethnic minority groups, especially new immigrants or those without knowledge of the legal system. It seems as if police are going to extremes to keep these individuals subordinate and second-class citizens to maintain the rights and privileges of the elites who control them.

The consequences of militarization, especially one driven by manufactured risks, are vast. For one, people will likely lose trust in police – and with an expanding minority population in

Canada, the consequences of mistrust will likely result in more aggression towards these populations due to their unwillingness to comply and accept police violence. This holds especially true given that race/ethnicity has been found to be one of the strongest predictors of citizen attitudes and experiences with the police (Weitzer 2010). In a country with a growing minority and poor population that is seemingly the cause of city level police obtaining tactical units, the only outcome of this increase in police militarization and violence is a mistrust in police that will completely shift how police function and may render them unable to do their job without constantly feeling the need to execute force.

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The fourth chapter will focus on Kraska's material indicators of militarization by considering the role of armoured vehicles in the militarization of Canadian police at the local level. Like the third chapter, the chapter will open with definitions of armoured vehicles, followed by an overview of militarization, with a special focus on how armoured vehicles play a role in the rise and continuity of militarization in policing. The third section will emphasize the role of armoured vehicles in Canadian policing, placing special attention on the context in which police forces are choosing to use them. This section will provide an historical overview of armoured vehicles, commencing with their rich history in the First and Second World Wars and the influence of the British military on their use in Canada. This section will also consider the context within which the first police bodies in Canada acquired an armoured vehicle and for what specific purpose it was used – this will help contextualize these vehicles within the broader sociopolitical process and understand how their history influences their modern role in policing.

To follow, an overview of how these vehicles are procured by Canadian police will reveal how they are transferred to police by the military, donated by private firms, or purchased by the

city. This section will question the interest groups who donate these vehicles while also illuminating the exorbitant amounts of money that police are willing to spend on these vehicles. The following section will provide an overview of the justification rhetoric used by police in their attempt to justify the purchase of these vehicles and their use, with special attention being paid to the emphasis on fabricated crime statistics. To contextualize these vehicles, an empirical overview of how they are being used by police will be presented that focuses on how these vehicles are being disproportionally used on people with mental health disorders, people of colour, and as assault vehicles to knock down doors and attack spaces with limited information. To follow, an overview of potential drivers of the rise of armoured vehicles will be provided. This section will focus on the role of crime and risk as potential driving forces for the acquisition and use of these vehicles at the city level, taking both a sociological and rhetoric driven approach while also contributing to the overall conversation on the dangers and consequences of police militarization. A regression analysis will follow that will analyze whether traditional explanations of crime or sociological and theoretical indicators are driving police to procure these vehicles. It is the overall goal of this chapter to contextualize the growth of armoured vehicles in local police forces within a broader sociohistorical and sociopolitical context to better comprehend what is driving police to acquire these tools and what the broader consequences are within the everchanging Canadian landscape.

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Chapter 4: Armoured Vehicles as Assault Vehicles

"Images of police officers riding in armored vehicles and carrying military-grade weapons have become part of the public consciousness" (Brian Lockwood et al. 2018:113).

1. Introduction

Images of armoured vehicles (AV), known colloquially as tanks, conjure ideas of the military, combat, and war-fighting efforts. Over the last half-century, the use of armoured vehicles has exceeded the military sphere and become increasingly commonplace in policing efforts in certain parts of the world, being associated primarily with police tactical units and emergency response. Vast research on the use of AVs in domestic policing and their role in the militarization of police has been conducted in the United States (US) context. US-based research has found that the intensification of AVs in policing began in the 1980s with the War on Drugs (Lockwood et al. 2018) as part of specialized drug units. In contemporary times, it has been found that certain programs like the 1033 Program have increased the presence of AVs in policing, rendering them normalized even in forces that do not possess a specialized unit (Radil et al. 2017). In the Canadian context, scant research has been conducted on the role of AVs in local policing and their potential link to the militarization of Canadian police. Existing research has found that, like the US, police primarily acquire AVs to respond to dangerous, high-risk incidents such as police standoffs involving high-calibre weapons and extreme violence (Towns et al. 2023). Over time, however, these vehicles have been utilized outside of this scope and have become increasingly normalized in routine policing efforts, with no explanation as to why. Considering the ease at which local police departments can obtain military vehicles and other relevant equipment, contend Lockwood et al. (2018), it is imperative that police militarization be

empirically examined. As AVs become more normalized in Canadian policing, it is essential to understand what underlying forces are driving their acquisition and use at the city level.

Basic definitions of armoured vehicles define them as a wheeled or combat vehicle that can conduct surveillance, security, command and control, and armoured transport of personnel and equipment (Government of Canada 2018). Other definitions contend that an armoured vehicle is a military vehicle that is fitted with partial or complete armour plating for protection against dangers like bullets, shell fragments, and projectiles and is designed primarily as platforms for assault troops (Mansoor 2015). Extending on this idea, Hall and Coyne (2013) define an AV as a bullet and explosive-resistant vehicle that weighs approximately 7,000kgs. Some definitions also extend to cover the intended function of these vehicles. According to Lenco, a company that supplies several Ballistic Engineered Armoured Response Counter Attack Trucks (BearCat) to Canadian and US police, these vehicles are meant to be used for homeland security, counterterrorism, force protection, and military policing missions (2023). Lenco claims that their vehicles are based on Ford F-550 heavy-duty commercial trucks but emulate a traditional military style seating with a troop section at the rear (ibid). While some definitions intend to move away from traditional military definitions of AVs, it is clear that these vehicles were originally designed for military use in combat zones. The question remains as to how and why AVs, given their origins, have made their way into city level policing in Canada.

Language surrounding the acquisition of AVs by police focuses on their use as "rescue vehicles," claiming that these vehicles are necessary for dealing with hostile and life-threatening situations (Postmedia News 2014). Rhetoric also suggests that there is an increase in violence, violent crime, and gun violence in Canadian cities that warrants the purchase and use of these vehicles. In the US context, it was found that increasing military equipment like AVs to police

does not work to reduce crime or do much to protect officers (Hutchinson 2020). Indeed, Hutchinson continues, transferring equipment like AVs does not reduce nor increase crime (2020). Delehanty et al. (2017) build on this by suggesting that militarization is more likely to make police turn to violence to solve problems, and this issue is intensified when police have access to militarized equipment like AVs. When police have access to AVs, they are more likely to use force, violence, and kill more civilians than police who do not have access to this type of equipment (ibid). Hall and Coyne (2013) suggest that it is imperative to understand the role of AVs, as a direct form of militarization, on the conduct of local police forces. However, to this point, it is still unclear if the presence of AVs has led to local Canadian police becoming more violent and, in turn, killing more individuals due to their having an armoured vehicle.

While the question of what is driving the continuing acquisition of AVs in Canada remains, there exists a paucity of literature on the driving forces behind police militarization, the consequences of the use of AVs at the city level by police, and how it relates to militarization in the Canadian context. In the US, there is ample literature on the acquisition, use, consequences, and the underlying driving forces behind the purchase of AVs and their connection to police militarization. US-based research has found that police deem the use of AVs as necessary due to an increase in violence and drug/gang crime (Radil et al. 2017). What has been found is that police are targeting those living in dangerous and disadvantaged neighbourhoods that have become perceived as negative contacts – determined by characteristics like age and race (Lockwood et al. 2018). While police claim that AVs are meant to target danger and keep communities safe, it appears that, in the US context, police are using AVs to target certain groups while normalizing these dangerous and powerful technologies as part of routine policing efforts.

It is still unclear, in the Canadian context, if these same factors are driving police at the city level to acquire AVs – it is the goal of this chapter to test this idea.

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In this chapter, there will be an exploration of armoured vehicles in the context of local Canadian police. There will first be a contextualization of militarization as it relates to the material procurement of AVs at the city level. To follow, an exploration of the use of armoured vehicles at the city level will include a brief overview of the history of AVs, from the First World War to contemporary policing, and will then shift to understanding how AVs became part of contemporary local policing. An analysis of how police acquire AVs will consider how police acquire AVs through military transfers, private donations, and private purchases. To follow, justification rhetoric for the purchase and use of AVs will be presented. Empirical examples of how police utilize these vehicles will follow. The following section will explore potential drivers of the acquisition and use of AVs at the city level, focusing attention on how the presence of ethnic minorities, poverty, and Indigenous individuals may contribute to police militarization through AVs. To finish the chapter, consideration will be paid to a data analysis considering factors like crime and risk and how they interact with police who have AVs to better understand the true driving forces behind this militarization. It is the goal of this chapter to better understand what is ultimately driving police to acquire, (mis)use, and continue to require armoured vehicles to better understand the role they place in police militarization in Canada.

2. The Militarization of Canadian Police: Armoured Vehicles

"Militarization plays a role in the fabrication of social order" (Mark Neocleous 2000).

In the 1st and 3rd chapters, definitions of militarization were discussed in detail. In this chapter, Kraska's framework will again be utilized to understand police militarization but this time through a material lens, with special focus being placed on armoured vehicles. A complete and detailed definition and exploration of the concept of militarization is presented in Chapter 1 sections 2.1 and 2.2, and Chapter 3, sections 2 and 2.1. In the following section, there will be a brief exploration of the concept of militarization through the lens of material procurement, with a specific focus on how armoured vehicles denote militarization.

2.1 Militarization as Material Procurement

"Armoured vehicles are known as "high-visibility property" - testifying to the materiality of police power" (Derek Denman 2020).

The material approach to militarization contends that the acquisition of material items, such as martial weaponry (armoured personnel carriers) and equipment is indicative of militarization (Kraska 2007). Nolan (2020) suggests that militarization is the process whereby law enforcement agencies increase their arsenal of weapons and equipment to be deployed in an array of situations. This is discernable, he continues, through the overt transferring of equipment from the military to the police (ibid). Contrasting Nolan, Cyr et al. (2020), suggest that Canadian police do not necessarily need to rely on the military to acquire equipment. Indeed, they contend that there are commercial distributors who are able to provide "military equipment," albeit at a significant cost (ibid). In these situations, police tend to shoulder the cost of the vehicles (Quan 2014) which can be exponential depending on the needs and desires of the forces. Regardless of

whether police acquire their AVs from transfers from the Department of National Defence (DND), through donations, or purchase them outright, the sheer action of procuring these vehicles is considered to be an indicator of police militarization which will be henceforth referred to as "material approach" to militarization as defined by Peter Kraska (2007).

The material approach of militarization suggests that the transfer of AVs from the military to the police, coupled with the mere presence of military style weapons in places not inherently military (such as police), denotes militarization. Towns et al. suggest that the reliance of domestic police on military-style [tactics] and equipment to meet their original function and safety is indicative of a "new domain of militarization" (2023:1-2). Some scholars argue that, since armoured vehicles have become a central feature of the conversation about the militarization of police (see: ACLU 2014, Barry 2015), there has been an illumination and conversation about the lethal power of police (Denman 2020). Building on this idea, Madsen claims that the sheer presence of AVs only reinforces the perception of militarization towards the general public (2020). With the idea that the presence of AVs denotes militarization, their function creep into the public domain and routine policing has made their presence a cause for concern. As the trend of purchasing AVs continues to grow in the Canadian context, it is imperative to understand how the procurement and use of armoured vehicles contributes to police militarization and what underlying forces are driving police towards this behaviour.

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The following section will explore the history of AVs in the Canadian context, acknowledging their roots in the military while also exploring their use in contemporary Canadian policing at the city level. Additional focus will be placed on specific instances of AV acquisition in Canada, exploring the context, cost, and use of these vehicles in routine and

specialized policing at the city level. Special attention will be given to instances where these vehicles have been used and the consequences of their use. It is the overall goal of this section to shed light on the material aspects of militarization, the role of military transfers to local-level police, the outright decision to purchase AVs, and its consequences on police-citizen interactions, while also exploring and acknowledging how the presence of these vehicles contributes to the militarization of police in Canada.

3. Armoured Vehicles in Canadian Policing

"A TAV has been described as consisting of 'half-inch-thick military steel armoured bodywork, .50 caliber- rated ballistic glass, a blast resistant floor, and custom-designed gun ports'" (Jeff Shantz 2016).

Between 2000 and 2023, the number of city-level police tactical units that acquired armoured vehicles increased exponentially. Whether through military transfer, donation, or purchase, there was an intensification in how many police forces acquired and utilized a new or used armoured vehicle. The use of AVs in the Canadian context has been a longstanding tradition across multiple levels of police, with most federal and provincial forces being the first to acquire these vehicles in the 1970s, followed by an onslaught of local police forces acquiring AVs starting in the early/mid-2000s. Mostly falling into the hands of tactical units (Towns 2022), these vehicles have traditionally been used in high-risk, high-intensity situations where there is direct risk to the officer and the community at large. While these types of situations are generally characterized by danger and violence, over time, crime rates, gun violence, and overall rates of crime have fallen in the Canadian context. Even with this downward trend, police have continued to bulk up their arsenal of armoured vehicles, citing an increase in gun violence and crime. As the sophistication and power of these vehicles increases, it is imperative to understand how and

why local Canadian police forces are choosing to use them as part of their response to mental health calls, and what specifically is driving their use over traditional policing tactics. To better uncover this trend, it is essential to understand the history of AVs in the Canadian context.

3.1 A Brief History of Armoured Vehicles in the Canadian Armed Forces

While the use of AVs has become commonplace in contemporary Canadian policing, these vehicles have a rich history in combat scenarios in the Canadian military as early as the 1900s. The advent of the First World War generated new demands for a type of armoured, self-propelled set of weapons that could navigate diverse types of terrain (Skaarup 2011). One of the earliest types of armoured vehicles, the Armoured Autocar, was first used by the Canadian Expeditionary Force (a branch of the Canadian military) during the First World War (Loyal Edmonton Regiment Museum 2010) and was manufactured by the Autocar Company. The Armoured Autocar contained a two-ton truck chassis, 5mm of armour in the front, 3mm of armour in the back, solid rubber tires, a 22-horsepower engine, twin Vickers machine guns that could spew 450 rounds a minute, and a max land speed of 30-40 kilometres an hour (Canadian War Museum 2008). This vehicle was also referred to as a motor machine gun (Canadian Soldiers n.d.) since there were machine guns mounted onto pre-existing motorized vehicles. The use of these machines eventually led to the creation of the Automobile Machine Gun Brigade No. 1 which had several armoured autocars equipped with mounted machine guns (Pulsifer 2001). As one of the earliest conceptions of a "tank" by the Canadian military, their use, coupled with the advent of the tank by other countries in the later years of the war, would serve as the inspiration for armoured vehicles in the Canadian military, and later policing in the 20th century.

Figure 3: The Armoured Autocar from the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade.
"With a crew of five, these cars carried two Vickers machine-guns and combined mobility with firepower"
(George Metcalfe Archival Collection, Canadian War Museum 2008).

It was not until the end of The Second World War in Germany, however, that the Canadian military employed their own armoured vehicles and subsequent tank units (see: Canadian Soldiers n.d., Thobo-Carlsen n.d.). Given their experiences in the First World War, and the usage of British Tanks to cross into enemy territory with ease, the Canadian military decidedly changed their approach to combat. During the First World War, Skaarup (2011) argues that these technological changes to AVs occurred due to a need for an increase in strength (to make up for the shortcomings of the armoured autocar) to cross into enemy territory with ease while also surviving artillery bombardments and machine gun fire. As a result, the purpose of AVs/tanks during the Second World War was for breakthrough fighting and infantry support (Canadian Soldiers n.d.). After the war ended in 1945, the Canadian-made AVs became available to the Canadian Provost Corps for their use (Thobo-Carlsen n.d.). For the next 25 years, the use of armoured vehicles remained staunchly within the realm of the military and combat zones.

During this time, a change to the structure and definitions of armoured vehicles would serve as the catalyst that changed their roles and definitions from a combat zone to a tool for police.

The shift away from the heavy-duty tanks of the Second World War and the military to the modern light armoured vehicles (LAVs) began in the 1960s. In 1964, there was a call for Canada to purchase LAVs after the publication of the Defence White Paper which called for the "creation of a force that would be equipped with a flexible, light, and air-transportable vehicle to serve in United Nations (UN) missions" (Maas 2011). This ultimately led to the creation of the Armoured Vehicle General Purpose (AVGP) program. Considering the changing nature of combat towards more humanitarian efforts, and existing heavy-duty armoured vehicles seeing the end of their operational life, there was a need for new, lighter vehicles that would reduce pressure on limited governmental budgets (ibid). The AVGP, later known as LAV 1 (ibid), would serve as the primary infantry fighting vehicle for the Canadian Army (Government of Canada 2021) and have the capability of holding cannons, light and medium machine guns, and a multi-barrel grenade discharger (Maas 2011). The purchase of these vehicles in the mid-1970s would come to revolutionize not only military combat but also policing practices decades later.

The three main types of LAVs purchased by the Canadian military in the 1970s were the AVGP Grizzly, AVGP Cougar, and AVGP Husky (see: McInnes 2017, Maas 2011). Purchased in 1976 by the Canadian Forces (CF) (Storey 2011), from then General Motors Diesel (now known as General Dynamics Land Systems) (Maas 2011), these vehicles remained as the primary infantry fighting vehicle for the Canadian Army (Government of Canada 2021) for over 30 years. The AVGP Grizzly, known as an infantry carrier, and the AVGP Cougar, known as a fire support vehicle (Maas 2011), are the same models that would later be passed down to local Canadian police forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Ontario Provincial Police

(OPP). Both the AVGP Grizzly and the AVGP Cougar weigh 10.7 tonnes and have a maximum capacity of five persons (National Defence 2006a/b). The AVGP Grizzly, which entered into service in 1976, served as the primary vehicle for the Reserve Armoured Units and was used by The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Bosnia in 2000 (see: National Defence 2006a/b, Storey 2011). In 2007 and 2013, demilitarized versions of both vehicles were donated to local Canadian police forces.

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While some police forces were donated demilitarized LAV 1s from the CF, most police forces that utilized an AV between 1970 and the late 1990s/early 2000s either borrowed from the RCMP, provincial police forces, or utilized the service of the military. In some rare cases, in this interim period, police forces utilized decommissioned security vehicles to meet their needs (ex: Hamilton Police Department's 1969 Brinks Truck). To better understand how a tool that once belonged to the military found its way into policing, the following section will explore how police forces come to acquire armoured vehicles by focusing on three categories: forces who received military donations, forces who have received private donations of either vehicles or funds to outright purchase an armoured vehicle, and forces who have purchased a vehicle outright. This section aspires to better understand the acquisition and procurement trends that have led to the normalization of AVs in Canadian policing.

3.2 Acquisition Trends: Military Transfers, Private Donations, and Purchasing Power

Between the 1970s and the late 1990s, only large policing bodies like the RCMP, the OPP, and the Toronto Police Service (TPS) had their own armoured vehicles. When needed, local police forces tended to rely on borrowing from the RCMP, provincial police forces, or even the

military for AV use (see: Smith 2019, The City of Calgary 2019). For example, in 1974, the Calgary Police borrowed an AV from the Canadian Armed Forces base in Calgary during the "Black Friday" incident (The City of Calgary 2019[28]). Regina police had also been relying on borrowing the RCMP Emergency Response Team's (ERT) AV for tactical situations up until 2018 (CBC News Saskatchewan 2018, Smith 2019), however with the complaint that the vehicle was not always available. This issue of availability and accessibility, ultimately, led to some police forces choosing to acquire their own vehicles – a trend that took off in the early 2000s when several local police forces across Canada began increasing their arsenal of AVs. This expansion will be explored in greater detail in the following section.

3.2a Military Transfers

The process where Canadian police receive decommissioned military vehicles is part of the DND's gratuitous transfer program. Unlike the 1033 program in the US, there are no set regulations defining who gets an armoured vehicle, when, and why. According to a report on the acquisition of decommissioned military AVs, Towns et al. (2023) found that police must sometimes go through an extensive process to procure these vehicles which includes consultation with the Police Services Board. Otherwise, there is limited information on the process that police go through to acquire these decommissioned vehicles. While several items were given away to police forces for free during this gratuitous transfer program, it was found that, between 2010 and 2014, the DND transferred $8.2 million in surplus equipment to police (Boutilier 2014). Of the armoured vehicle donations, the most popular is the AVGP Cougar.

[28] The Calgary Police Service Facebook page. Accessed February 3, 2022. https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157191519689530&id=21374974529&set=a.10150181806644530

Over the course of a decade, several police forces received decommissioned AV donations from the DND. In 2014, the DND confirmed that it had donated five six-wheeled AVs to police agencies since 2007 (Pugliese 2014). This included a disarmed AVGP Grizzly to the Edmonton Police in 2007, two disarmed AVGP Cougars to the RCMP in British Columbia for their ERT in 2010, and one AVGP Cougar each to the New Glasgow Police and Windsor Police in 2013 (ibid). Several police forces claim that their donated vehicles underwent a process of demilitarization, which consists of removing weapons and promising that armaments used by the military would not be fixed to the vehicle upon delivery – a process that removes any identifying characteristics considered to be more suited to the military (see: Boutiler 2014, The Canadian Press 2013, Towns et al. 2023). This is evident in a claim made by the Edmonton Police that they retrofitted their donated Grizzly by removing a 25mm main gun (McCullough 2007). The New Glasgow police claim that all armaments and electronics had been stripped from their $300,000 donated AVGP Cougar (Adshade 2017). In the same vein, Windsor police claim that their decommissioned 9000KG, $300,000 Cougar would be used solely for patrol purposes, however, according to Boutilier (2014) it has never been used. Non-use of old vehicles, as will be seen, did not serve to deter police from not "requiring" an AV or procuring it at all – instead, it created a desire for more sophisticated, expensive technology.

Figure 4: Department of National Defence Armoured Vehicle Transfers (Pereira 2024).
Photo credits: Edmonton: Kaiser (2020), New Glasgow: Windsor Star (2014), Windsor: Baribeau (2014).

Most of these donated vehicles have since been replaced. In 2020, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) replaced their donated 42-year-old Grizzly with a Cambli BlackWolf AV at a cost of $500,000 (CTV News Edmonton 2020). The Windsor Police Service replaced their never-used Cougar in 2020 with a Terradyne Gurkha AV (Borelli 2020). It was also found that the New Glasgow Police ended the use of their Cougar in 2017, looking to donate it to another force (Mulligan 2017). One common reason for replacing these vehicles was cited as lack of use (ibid). However, the presence of these vehicles is a stark reminder of the militaristic roots that these vehicles have, and that the DND is willing to pass on material to police forces (Radil et al. 2017). While replacing gifts from the military with privately purchased vehicles may attempt to denote a shift away from military tools, the idea that police are acquiring these types of vehicles through

other channels, like donations and purchasing, raises concerns and questions as to why the police feel that they need combat vehicles to respond to calls meant for routine policing.

3.2b Private Donations

Another way in which local police forces curate AVs is through private donations. There are two main ways police receive vehicle donations: through the direct donation of a vehicle either from a private entity or directly from the manufacturer, or through the donation of funds to offset or cover the cost of the AV (Gillis 2020, Towns 2022). In 2014, General Dynamic Land Systems in London, Ontario, donated a Tactical Rescue Vehicle to the Durham Regional Police (Carter 2014). GardaWorld (a security firm) donated an AV to the Charlottetown Police Department in 2014 (GardaWorld 2018). The same company later donated a bulletproof, extreme heat-resistant retired cash management AV to the Miramichi Police Department in New Brunswick (ibid). In 2019, the Saint John Police Force received a donation from Commercial Properties Ltd., a local property owner and management company, of a Cambli Black Wolf valued at $350,000 (Perry 2019, Quon 2020). To continue this trend, the Peterborough Police Service received an Oshkosh SandCat AV from Ontario Power Generation (Kovach 2022). To justify the donation, a claim was made that it was a pre-owned model from 2012 that had a value of less than $30,000 at the time of donation (Davis 2020). In media reports, some of these private firms claim that they were donating funds or vehicles to keep the community in which they live "safe" from violence and to protect police.

Local police forces also receive donations of vehicles directly from manufacturers. The London Police Service (LPS), for example, received two LAVs from General Dynamics Land Systems. In 2006, the force received an RG-12 (Dubinski 2019) and an RG-31 in 2011 (Towns et

al. 2023). Between 2006 and 2018, the LPS used their donated AVs roughly 19 times, with some years seeing no deployments at all (Dubinski 2019). Ironically, the LPS is said to be considering spending $500,000 on a new, more advanced AV citing an increase in gun violence (Carruthers 2023a). General Dynamics also donated an RG-31 to the Durham Regional Police in 2013. Finally, in 2023, the Chatham-Kent Police Service (CKPS) received a seven-tonne AV from General Land Dynamics valued at between $750,000 and $1,000,000 (Terfloth 2023). To justify the donation, the CKPS claims they spent $50,000 painting the vehicle (Hill 2023a). The vehicle, built by a company that generally builds vehicles that are used by the US military in Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan (ibid), is said to have no offensive capabilities and is purely defensive in nature (Terfloth 2023). It is also claimed that the vehicle helps keep CKPS members safe from an increase in violence in the city.

Monetary donations are usually made by private firms or are raised through fundraising initiatives. In 2007, for example, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) raised $250,000 through the Vancouver Police Foundation (Eustace 2007) (whose mantra is “building a safer Vancouver together” (Vancouver Police Foundation 2024)), to purchase a $350,000 Cambli International Thunder 1 in 2010. According to the VPD, the vehicle is needed for ballistic protection against firearms commonly found in households and employed by criminals and gang members (McCullough 2007). The extra $100,000 was offset by the City of Vancouver (CBC News British Columbia 2010). In 2014, Essar Steel Algoma donated a portion of the cost for the Sault Ste. Marie Police in Ontario to purchase an AV. The TPS almost received a donation of $275,000 from The Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario who said in a statement that it has a "long history of giving back to the local communities in which we live and work” (CBC News Toronto 2020), rendering this donation part of their efforts to “give back to the

community." The association ultimately pulled the plug due to community backlash. The idea that police are receiving donations, either in cash form or in vehicle form, from private donors, raises the question as to what interest these donors have in these forces acquiring an AV.

Figure 5: Chatham-Kent police unveil donated armoured rescue vehicle on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at the John D. Bradley Centre in Chatham (Hill 2023b).

3.2c Purchasing Power and Trends

When not receiving donations from the DND or private firms, most police forces in Canada purchase their own AVs. The average cost of these vehicles ranges anywhere from $250,000 to $500,000 depending on the make, model, and customizables (see: CBC various years, The Canadian Press various years, Towns et al. 2023). To purchase these vehicles, police do not require military assistance since all desired military-grade equipment tends to be available through commercial distributors (Cyr et al. 2020). The most popular manufacturers used by Canadian police, Cambli, Lenco, and Terradyne, provide vehicles starting at around $250,000.

The purchasing power for these vehicles is taken from police budgets that are set at the city level, generally relying on city funds coming from municipal taxes and other taxpayer-funded sources. Regardless of increasingly exorbitant costs, purchasing trends have shown an increase in the number of AVs acquired by police across the country. Indeed, the rising costs, likely denoting increasing sophistication and technicality amongst the vehicle models, do not seem to deter cities from purchasing these vehicles. In the following section, there will be a brief overview of the trends and costs associated with purchasing these vehicles at the city level, touching on what features money can buy municipal police forces in their crusade against the apparent extreme dangers facing them and the members of the community at large.

Between 2006 and 2021, a study by Towns, Ricciardeli, and Cyr (2023) found that roughly 26 separate police services in Canada had procured at least one AV, with some forces acquiring multiple. One potential reason for this surge in purchases amongst police forces, they claim, is the desire to upgrade their AVs to adhere to a Level IV ballistic rating from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) which is a specified minimum standard of protection required to stop the ballistic performance of certain weapons (NIJ 2014). Level IV, according to the NIJ, is their highest rating, being capable of stopping .30cal steel core armour-piercing rifle ammunition (ibid). This rating of vehicles also offers polyethylene body armour plates, which offer higher protection against rifle rounds and can cost between $500 and $1,000 per plate (Schuler 2023). Most of the vehicles purchased by local police forces after the 2000s contain a Level IV rating, which, when coupled with the rhetoric surrounding increased gun violence at the city level, explains why police have been seeking AVs that have high-level ballistic protection.

The Lethbridge Police was one of the earliest adopters of the Level IV ballistic panels, installing them in 1993. The use of these panels became more commonplace during the early

2000s. In 2010, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) purchased a Lenco G3 BearCat for $365,000 (CTV News Ottawa 2010), considered to be an exorbitant amount at the time. The OPS purchased this vehicle to respond to high-risk calls on Parliament Hill and for high-risk situations at the Ottawa International Airport (ibid). York Regional Police purchased a Thunder 1 "rolling fortress" in 2011 at a cost of $340,000 (Appleby 2011). In 2012, the Hamilton police purchased a 15,000lb Terradyne Gurkha ARV for $279,180 to replace a 1969 refurbished Brinks truck that they had been using as an AV since the 1980s (Carter 2014). The same year, the Saskatoon Police purchased a $342,000 Lenco BearCat (Pugliese 2014), citing its need for high-risk situations. By 2013, the average cost of an AV hovered around $350,000, with the EPS purchasing a Ballistic Armoured Tactical Transport Vehicle (B.A.T.T.) for $315,000 to use in lieu of the Grizzly that was donated by the DND (that was not in use) in 2007 (Johnston 2020). During this period, the Montréal Police also purchased a Thunder 1 for $360,000 from Québec manufacturer Cambli (The Canadian Press 2013). Following a similar logic, the Regina Police purchased a Rescue One with bulletproof walls and glass, which can run on flat tires for a cost of $350,000 (Smith 2019), citing a need to purchase due to the uncertainty of RCMP AV availability, which they had been relying on prior to the purchase.

Figure 6: The 15,000-pound Terradyne armoured vehicle purchased by the Hamilton Police in 2012 for almost $280,000. The proclaimed "behemoth" is said to enhance the tactical units' responses by providing support in "extreme situations" (CBC News Hamilton 2014).

The average cost of an AV rose close to $500,000 starting in 2019. One dominant example of this increase made news when the Calgary Police purchased a Cambli Thunder 1 for $500,000 to replace their "2007 Belkan MK7 that was deployed roughly 500 times in 2018 alone" (CBC News Calgary 2019). Continuing this trend, the EPS purchased a Cambli Black Wolf for $500,000 in 2020, citing that it would last "20 years" (Antoneshyn 2020) albeit with high maintenance costs. In 2021, the Kingston Police Force (KPS) followed suit by purchasing a gently used Cambli Black Wolf for $265,000 to replace a vehicle purchased in 2013 that only lasted four years (Crosier 2021). Part of the purchase was an expectation that the vehicle would last 15 years, even though their former vehicles lasted three and four years respectively (ibid). While the price of an AV now sits around close to half a million dollars in taxpayer dollars (and rising), the individuals paying for and funding these vehicles seem to have little say in these decisions and are showing an increasing concern for their existence on city-level police forces.

Figure 7: Calgary Police's Cambli "Thunder 2" purchased in 2019 at a cost of just over $500,000 (CBC News Calgary 2019)

Concern over AV purchases, in one instance, promoted police to backtrack on their purchase, with Halifax Police rejecting the purchase of an approved $500,000 AV due to public backlash (instead directing the money to anti-Black racism initiatives) (Berman 2020). While one city has taken the steps to begin attempting to combat militarization, the justification rhetoric used for the purchase of these AVs still trumps any public uncertainty and concern that may arise and encourages police to track forward in their pursuit of heavy-duty armoured vehicles. The claim that community safety is more important than cost underlies dangerous gas-lighting towards militarization that has become the go-to for most city police when challenged on their purchase and use of AVs, leaving community members fearful, hostile, and confused.

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While prices continue to rise, an alarming trend emerges where some police forces, who either already have an AV (paid for or donated), are purchasing subsequent vehicles at even higher prices, or replacing vehicles that have not lasted more than five years. These trends are only spotlighting the debate around the cost, necessity, and use of AVs by local police in Canada.

To justify the cost of these vehicles, and to justify replacing vehicles that were received for free, police content that it is preferable to purchase a new vehicle, as opposed to accepting something like a military transfer, since the donated vehicles come at the "end of life" (McCullough 2007). Following this logic, these free AVs are laden with a host of "exorbitant mechanical expenses" and tend to be unwieldy in urban landscapes, making it appear as if the vehicles purchased from private firms for exorbitant amounts of money are "better" vehicles that have lower maintenance costs that are easily absorbed into equipment services budgets, for example (ibid). In the following section, there will be an overview of the rhetoric used by police forces to justify the purchase of AVs at the city level. It will be revealed that, aside from the use of dangerous rhetoric that downplays need and overemphasizes manufactured increases in crime, the curation of AVs stems from a desire by police to wield power and control the narrative surrounding their choices and actions while silencing the public.

3.3 Justification Rhetoric

> *"I just hope that the public isn't going to be dazzled by this display and think the expenses for all this equipment is going to be justified on a cost-benefit analysis...I think it's an exercise in propaganda to try to justify all these expensive military toys they've purchased over the years" (Tom Engle 2020).*

To justify the purchase (and cost) and use of armoured vehicles, several city police forces have made statements, either in news articles or on their formal websites, about the intended use of the vehicle. Towns et al. (2023) found that most claims by police tend to focus on the idea that they are responding to an increase in dangerous and high-risk incidents that warrant the purchase of these vehicles since they assist police during dangerous conflicts. An alarming amount of discourse says that there is a formal and consistent danger that an armoured vehicle is the proper

and sometimes only solution to. Roziere and Walby build on this idea by suggesting that a series of armoured vehicle purchases have been justified by claims of high levels of danger faced by police officers and a need to keep police officers and the public safe (2019). While police safety is an understandable justification for the purchase of safety equipment, there is still an ambiguity in understanding to what degree this need for "safety" is inflated vis-à-vis threat levels.

Language surrounding the purchase of an AV tends to describe it as a "rescue vehicle." The use of terms like "rescue" denotes tending to those in distress and even saving their lives, attempting to add a positive connotation to the ownership of these vehicles. In the same vein, to solidify this positive language, some police forces have even gone so far as to distance themselves from militarization by suggesting that their armoured vehicles are "unlike" military vehicles as they are made to "protect" (Crosier 2021). In a statement made by Kingston Police, they suggested that their vehicles maintain a safe distance between the officer and outside danger, such as groups of demonstrators or falling projectiles, and even evacuate civilians from imminent threats due to the state-of-the-art protection the vehicle offers (ibid). Other forces have also claimed that the purchase of an AV is not a step closer to militarization, that is a "basic tool" that officers need to do their job and protect the public (Pugliese 2014). Rhetoric surrounding the purchase of an AV as a "basic tool" raises concerns as to how police are interpreting the basic policing that they are conducting and why it appears to warrant such a strong piece of artillery.

Analyzing the police rhetoric surrounding these vehicles, it appears as if the dangers that police believe they face that justifies the purchase of these vehicles appear to be inflated. For example, Fraser (2016) found that the Fredericton police chief's argument for the purchase of an armoured vehicle was ambiguous, stating that "policing around the globe has changed, making it necessary to prepare for a 'worst-case scenario'." In addition, a statement made by New Glasgow

police in Nova Scotia claims that, even if a vehicle is unused and sits in a garage (which was what their donated DND AV did), it is necessary [to have] for dealing with [potential] life-threatening situations involving scenarios with barricaded gunmen or active shooters (Pugliese 2014). Roziere and Walby (2019) found that some police forces desired an AV solely because other police forces had acquired one. By continuing to portray these AVS as merely safety equipment, and the act of owning one as a measure towards citizen safety and protection, police forces at the city level continue to justify the ownership and use of these vehicles, even where inherent dangers are not present. This particular trend opens the doors to setting a dangerous precedent where these vehicles become the norm in everyday policing, putting civilian lives in the way of the danger that they claim to be saving them from.

3.4 Beyond protecting police and citizen: AV (mis)use at the city level

Rhetoric surrounding the procurement and use of AVs at the city level, as has been demonstrated, is shrouded in the idea that these vehicles are used to not only protect police from dangerous situations but also protect citizens and the community at large from dangerous individuals. Police policy has stated that AVs are only to be used during critical incidents (Postmedia News 2014). However, reporting on incidents where police use their AVs has demonstrated that their use has been limited to many non-critical incidents and they have even been used to gain forceful entry into a home where they sometimes merely suspect violence or imminent danger. In 2022, for example, police made a single fatal shot from inside an AV in the Pond Hills suburb of London, Ontario (Carruthers 2023b). Police claimed that the individual had wielded and shot a gun at an individual earlier in the day and when confronted by police, he pointed the same gun at them, justifying their need to pre-emptively fire (ibid). It was later found

that the individual did not point his gun at police. The actions of these police officers were later justified as it was found that the individual wielding the gun had the potential to harm the officers inside the AV just by having the gun (ibid) despite claims that the AVs purchased by the LPS are bulletproof and can take "rounds of fire" (Dubinski 2024). The choice to use fatal force on individuals without concrete proof or evidence of danger has called into question how these AVs contribute to police use of force and militarization and also questions why police continue to utilize these weapons to respond to calls that should be part of normal, routine police work.

It has been found that police use their AVs for two main purposes at the city level: as mental health response tools and for the ability to forcefully enter civilian homes, making their armoured vehicles into assault vehicles. In the following section, there will be an overview of how police have (mis)used their AVs during mental health calls and during incidents where they had little evidence and chose to act with force. While the incidents below provide a snapshot into the conduct of local Canadian police, they will shed light on the idea that police rhetoric suggesting that police need to prepare for "worst-case scenarios" (Fraser 2016) is flawed. Instead, it will be revealed that police definitions of what constitutes danger have shifted and how this shift has justified the use of AVs to handle scenarios outside of their intended scope.

3.4a AVs as mental health responders

> *"One of the problems identified was the way mental health and addiction are treated like criminal issues—particularly when the subject is unhoused, a person of colour, and/or Indigenous—and how in many cases, the amount of force and police resources used to address them are excessive" (Brishti Basu and Alec Lazenby 2022).*

In contemporary Canadian society, police tend to be the first point of contact when an individual is having a mental health crisis. Whether this is due to the trust people have in the idea

that police are trained to handle these types of crises, or whether it is due to the stigma surrounding mental health, police tend to be called to handle these sensitive situations. Basu and Lazenby (2022) have suggested that a problem arising from police being the first point of contact for mental health response is that mental health and addiction tend to be treated like criminal issues. They continue that this sentiment is exacerbated when the subject is unhoused, a person of colour, and/or Indigenous, rendering the police, in many cases, to use excessive amounts of force and police resources to address these issues (ibid). What results is sensitive mental illness calls being responded to with excessive uses of force instead of proper care techniques. In the following section, there will be an overview of incidents where Canadian local police forces have utilized their AVs to handle mental health calls with special attention being paid to the nature of the call, police conduct, and how AVs were used during the call.

In June 2022, the Victoria Police Department in British Columbia (BC) responded to a mental health crisis involving a 64-year-old mentally ill Black man named Michael Belfron who had immigrated from Canada from Grenada. After cooperatively speaking with police through his window, Belfron barricaded himself inside his apartment and refused to talk to police (Basu 2022). As a result, police shot Belfron with rubber bullets as he was deemed at risk of becoming violent due to police finding unspecified improvised weapons (ibid). It was also reported that police utilized tear gas and other chemicals to lure the individual from his apartment without first evacuating the building. After many reported failed attempts at negotiation with the man, police called in their AV, which, according to firsthand reports, police climbed atop to break three windows in the man's apartment (ibid). After being taken into custody, and then to hospital, it is reported that the incident left Mr. Belfron with physical and mental trauma.

Figure 8: An image showing Victoria Police officers atop their armoured vehicle breaking the windows of Michael Belfron's apartment during a "wellness check" (Capital Daily 2022).

In a similar situation, in December 2023, Brandon Police in Manitoba were deployed on a mental health call after a request had been made to arrest a man for mental health purposes. Police deployed their AV after it was found out that the man had access to household items like [kitchen] knives and a baseball bat (The Brandon Sun 2023). Police forcefully entered the man's apartment using their AV ladder and arrested him on mental health charges. The situation was deemed peaceful, and the man involved posed no threat to police. Shortly after, in February 2024, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) was involved in the shooting death of a 59-year-old schizophrenic man named Bradley Singer. WPS received a call under the Manitoba Mental Health Act to apprehend Singer and take him to the hospital for a non-voluntary physical examination (Dow 2024). After making several attempts to apprehend the man, police deployed their AV's battering ram to break into the home and later break a window to get inside with the intent to take Singer into custody (Pindera 2024). Police claim that Singer was exhibiting "agitated behaviour," possessed a crowbar, and set off a fire extinguisher upon seeing police (see: Dow 2024, Pindera 2024). In lieu of attempting to offer Mr. Singer mental health help, aware of

his condition since he was found not criminally responsible for previous drug charges due to having a mental disorder (Pindera 2024), police utilized excessive force to apprehend Mr. Singer, which ultimately resulted in his death. The trend of using brutal and excessive force to deal with sensitive situations, as will be explored in more detail in the following section, has become a hallmark way that Canadian police at the city level use their AVs.

3.4b AVs as assault vehicles

Aside from being used as mental health responders, AVs have also been used as assault vehicles to forcefully break windows, knock down doors, or gain some sort of forceful entry into a home. In September 2016, for example, WPS used their Gurkha AV's battering ram (for the first time) to knock down a door to a house to seize a BB gun (Hildebrand-Russell 2016). Police were called after the individual approached people with what appeared to be a gun (ibid). After the WPS claimed they failed to contact the suspect, their AV was summoned and used to break down the front door. While police suspected that the individual was in possession of a potentially high-powered gun (CBC News Manitoba 2016), they confirmed, after utilizing their battering ram, that the weapon in question was an Uzi-replica BB gun (Hildebrand-Russell 2016). The WPS has claimed their AV was to be used only for high-risk situations like bomb threats or hostage taking, calling to question why they summoned their AV over an unconfirmed weapon.

With a similar lack of evidence, in April 2020, the Calgary Police Service (CPS) had been working on a case related to drug trafficking. According to reports, a man named Joshua Bennett entered the suspected trafficker's home and left with a black trash bag, prompting the CPS to follow Bennett home (Dubinsky et al. 2021). After receiving a search warrant from the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team, police used their AV to conduct a "no-knock raid" by

smashing through Bennett's living room with their AV while police fired rounds (ibid). While it was admitted that Bennett visited the same home weeks earlier to acquire medical marijuana (for which he has a prescription), there was no evidence that he was involved in the drug trafficking case (ibid). It was later found that the black trash bag that prompted the search warrant contained Lululemon brand clothing that the suspected trafficker was selling online (ibid). According to the article, the damage to Bennett's property is estimated to be $50,000. Both Bennett and his partner have been diagnosed with PTSD following the incident.

Finally, in an August 2020 event, the VPD received a call for a non-violent domestic dispute at a motorhome (Brown 2020). After the man refused to exit the motorhome, there was a prolonged standoff where police used their Lenco BearCat to poke holes in the side of the motorhome and "smoke the man out" with smoke bombs in an attempt to end the (non-violent) "standoff" (ibid). While the man was wanted on other charges related to immigration and uttering threats (ibid), there was no violence that would warrant the use of an AV or smoke bombs. The owner of the motorhome was arrested on mental health charges.

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Rhetoric surrounding the acquisition of armoured vehicles frequently cites the idea that these vehicles are to be used in the utmost dire situations where police and the community at large are under direct attack and at danger (see: section 3.3). However, from several incidents involving police and their AVs, it has become clear that they are utilizing these vehicles outside of their intended scope. Whether they are responding to mental health crises, involving vulnerable individuals who require specialized attention and care, or responding to calls where they have incomplete evidence that sometimes involve people of colour or those living in poor conditions, the use of an AV appears to be the solution to these issues. While the decision-making

process behind why police are choosing to use AVs to respond to these types of calls is unclear, what is indeed clear is that the use of extreme force to handle a mental health call, for example, is a poor course of action. Indeed, even using an AV to respond to a call with incomplete information calls into question why police are resorting to using extreme force to handle situations that do not pose the extreme threat that the AV is meant to protect them from.

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While these incidents are mere snapshots into the use of AVs by local Canadian police, they do call into question why police are choosing to use AVs for situations that do not involve hostages, terrorism, or bomb threats. In the following section, there will be an exploration of potential drivers of AV acquisition at the city level to try and better understand what is driving the decision, by police, to use force and, ultimately militarization, to handle calls. By considering that the presence of ethnic minorities, poverty, and even large Indigenous communities is affecting police decision-making, it may provide clarification into why summoning an AV has become a dangerously common way of handling police calls in Canadian cities.

4. Potential Drivers of Armoured Vehicle Acquisition and Use by Canadian Police

In the third chapter, the idea that external forces are driving the militarization of Canadian police was discussed (see: Chapter 3, section 4). A lengthy discussion was had on how the presence of risk groups, namely minority groups and Indigenous populations (see: Chapter 3, section 4.1), and large populations living in poverty (see: Chapter 3, section 4.2) has contributed to the militarization of police. It is suggested that the presence of these groups leads to an increase in police violence and the likelihood of police acquire military type weapons either out of fear or as a means of protecting themselves from those they have deemed as the other (see:

Chapter 3, section 4). The idea that high levels of crime and violence are leading police to acquiring military tools, as a traditional explanation for police militarization, was also explored (see: Chapter 3, section 4.3). Overall, it was suggested that a large ethnically and racially diverse population, a large population living in poverty, and the presence of crime may be potential driving forces behind increased militarization in Canadian policing and may explain an increase in the acquisition and use of militarized tools, like armoured vehicles.

Three hypotheses relating to these potential drivers were presented (see: Chapter 3 sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). To analyze if the presence of racial and ethnic diversity, the presence of a large population in poverty, and the presence of crime are related to increased acquisition of armoured vehicles by local Canadian police, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: *The presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

Hypothesis 2: *The presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

Hypothesis 3: *Increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

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The idea that there are potential driving forces that are contributing to the purchase and use of armoured vehicles by local police in the Canadian context, and contributing to their militarization, remains largely untested. The scant research that exists has found that police are more likely to acquire armoured vehicles in cities that are considered too dangerous and also to respond to an intensification in crime, specifically gun violence (see: Roziere and Walby 2019). Some scholars suggest that a large minority group, and a large presence of those living in poverty, leads to more police violence, due to their associations with violence and crime. Other

scholarship contends that these groups pose a threat to police not because of their predisposition to violence, but rather the size of the community and their ability to have power of any sort, namely political or economic. More traditional arguments contend that none of these factors influence police militarization. Rather, it is simply that there are high levels of crime and police need armoured vehicles to respond to these crimes while protecting themselves and the public. Largely, the reason behind the increase in police acquiring armoured vehicles at the local level remains unclear. In the following section, the outlined hypotheses will be considered in an attempt to understand their role in driving police militarization, specifically the acquisition of armoured vehicles, at the local level in Canadian policing.

5. Data, Measures, and Methodology

In the third chapter, an extensive and robust explanation of the dataset, method of analysis, measures, and independent variables was presented (see: Chapter 3 sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3a, b, c, d). In the fourth chapter, the same parameters will hold constant for the dataset, method of analysis, and independent and control measures. The parameters used to measure the dependent variable, specifically referring to Kraska's framework, will experience a shift from organizational/operational indicators to material indicators, providing a more suitable explanation for the presence of armoured vehicles.

5.1 Dependent Variable: Material Indicators of Militarization

The dependent variable for this chapter, the presence of armoured vehicles, is modelled on Kraska's framework of militarization with a focus on material indicators. According to Kraska, material indicators are tangible items used by police to denote militarization, such as

armoured vehicles, automatic weapons, and even technology (Kraska 2007). Data for this variable was collected from a variety of sources for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. When available, primary data on AV ownership was collected from official police websites. Secondary sources included official newspaper articles, social media posts, and government reports. This data was used to confirm the presence of AVs and their dates of acquisition. To operationalize the variable, all information was collected as "yes" or "no" to indicate (non-)presence. This was then transformed into a dichotomy of 0 (no) and 1 (yes) respectively for analytical purposes. While Kraska originally presents his framework on a continuum, there information required to adhere to this original method was unavailable publicly and required access to information outside of the scope and timeframe of this project. Additionally, utilizing a dichotomy removes any researcher bias and error that may arise from the use of a continuum, making it a realistic city-by-city presentation and overview of AV ownership.

5.2 Additional Considerations

The initial decision to exclude police forces that utilize RCMP services either through contracting or detachments is detailed in Chapter 3 section 5.3d. Considering the presence of armoured vehicles, the same decision will be utilized in this chapter to omit any cases that include cities that utilize RCMP detachments. Similarly to tactical units, it can be assumed that cities that utilize RCMP detachments for their policing needs have access to the RCMPs armoured vehicle fleet, rendering the decision to purchase and use these vehicles outside of the scope of city-level decision-making. In addition, RCMP detachment use also fails to capture the rich city-level sociodemographics that inspire police to spend exorbitant amounts on AVs for immediate and frequent use, such as the presence of minorities and economic disparity. As such,

the data utilized for modelling will not include cities that are RCMP detachments since this does not provide evidence of decision-making at the city level to purchase and use these vehicles and fails to capture the necessary crime and demographic data needed for rich analysis.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Descriptives

Table three provides a descriptive summary of the expected relationships between the explanatory variables and dependent variable armoured vehicles. It displays the means, standard deviations, ranges, and expected relationship for these variables for each of the three pooled, time-series panels. A positive relationship between the independent measures and the dependent variable is expected, especially given the traditional and sociological literature regarding drivers of police militarization. These statistics demonstrate that, on average, more police forces are purchasing armoured vehicles over time with the average number of police forces who own one growing by more than 20% over the course of a decade. In addition, it is revealed that the size of the police force is growing over time, denoting population growth. While some of the smaller cities in the dataset have small police forces, with the minimum number of officers at 40, the largest force has 5,776 officers, denoting variation in police force size and underlying decision-making processes for tactical unit ownership and use.

The table also reveals variation in the visible minority population, with this population experiencing substantial growth over the course of a decade. This demonstrates that their growth has coincided with population changes over time. These results show a substantial development that coincides with ethnic threat and risk theories in police militarization through armoured vehicle acquisition in the city. The Indigenous population remains relatively stable and does not

experience much change. Economic stratification does experience a decline over time, potentially signifying that individuals are being lifted out of poverty and experiencing upward economic mobility. Finally, homicide rates remained relatively stable over time, experiencing marginal growth between 2011 and 2021. Some places, with smaller populations, experienced no homicides in a given year. Firearm violence, however, experienced substantial growth over time, with some cities experiencing on average 26 homicides a year. As a result, it is again unlikely that homicide will produce any variation in the data but an increase in firearm violence may reinforce traditional explanations of crime as driving forces for police militarization.

Variable	Predicted Sign	Mean 2011	Mean 2016	Mean 2021	St. Dev. (Overall)	Min (Overall)	Max (Overall)
City-Level Descriptives (n=147)							
Armoured Vehicles		.35	.49	.57	.50	0	1
Total Number of Sworn Police Officers	+	660.06	665.81	669.96	1032.9	40	5,776
% Visible Minority	+	14.69	18.02	22.73	15.65	.87	68.25
% Indigenous	+	2.96	3.81	3.88	3.42	.42	18.94
% Poverty (LIM)	+	14.61	13.92	10.62	4.06	5.07	25.79
Homicide rate per 100,000	+	1.39	1.55	2.34	1.80	0	8.33
Firearm Violence rate per 100,000	+	3.40	4.62	8.19	4.88	0	26.5

Table 3: Predictive Signs and Descriptive Statistics for Armoured Vehicles

6.2 Regression Results

Table four presents the results from the regression models predicting the presence of an armoured vehicle in a Canadian city. In the first model, traditional explanations of crime were considered, utilizing the size of the police force and measuring it against traditional explanations of crime, specifically the presence of homicides and firearm violence. In this preliminary and basic model, the most significant indicator of AV ownership is the size of the police force. Most significantly, this effect holds after multiple indicators of crime and violent crime are held constant. This also indicates that, as the size of the police force increases, so too does the

likelihood that the force will acquire an AV. This may be because the size of the police force tends to be associated with resources – the larger the police force, the more resources they have available to them. This means that police have more money to purchase an AV. The presence of crime, specifically the homicide rate and the firearm violence rate, holds no significance. These initial results suggest that traditional explanations of crime are not underlying the police's decision to acquire an AV, despite what the justification rhetoric surrounding their acquisition suggests. In this minimally specified model, AV ownership is more likely in jurisdictions that have larger police forces and more resources to purchase an AV, and, despite rhetoric to the contrary, do not appear to be associated with violent crime.

The second model introduces the risk variables poverty, Indigenous populations, and the visible minority population while still holding traditional explanations of crime constant. The addition of these variables builds on the idea that individuals within these groups are contributing to an increase in violent crime rates. With the introduction of these variables, the size of the police force loses significance and is no longer the most significant indicator of police acquiring AVs. Importantly, the size of the visible minority population becomes a powerful predictor of AV ownership at the city level. Traditional explanations of crime do not hold any significance in this model despite traditional rhetoric that suggests that police are arming up with assault rifles due to an increase in violence at the city level. The presence of Indigenous populations also fails to hold any significance as an explanation in this model. In addition to this, it appears as if jurisdictions with higher rates of poverty are also more likely to own an AV even though poverty rates are falling. This finding is consistent with studies and literature (see: Gama 2016, Lawson Jr. 2018, Garland 1990, Monkkonen 1992) that have shown that there is a relationship between the presence of immigrants, poverty, and militarization.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control Variables			
Total Police	1.24***	1.15	1.16*
	(0.000)	(0.104)	(0.080)
Crime Measures			
Homicide Rate	0.96	1.01	1.02
	(0.730)	(0.925)	(0.891)
Firearm Violence Rate	1.06	1.02	1.03
	(0.210)	(0.783)	(0.593)
Threat / Risk Measures			
Low-Income Percent[a]	–	1.29**	1.26**
		(0.013)	(0.024)
Indigenous Percent	–	1.02	1.00
		(0.809)	(0.952)
Visible Minority Percent	–	1.19***	1.05
		(0.000)	(0.629)
Visible Minority Squared	–		1.00
			(0.275)
Constant	0.9657	0.9984	0.9974
Observations	147	147	147

[a] Low Income is measured using the Low Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) as measured by Statistics Canada
Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Fixed Effects, Pooled Time-Series Panel Regression Predicting City-Level Armoured Vehicle Ownership by Local Police

The third and final model introduces a linearized visible minority variable. As this variable seeks to better explain the broader political process, when using a non-linear variable, its explanatory power declined as the population grew. What resulted was the size of the visible minority population becoming less impactful and significant. Research has shown that, as the visible minority population grows, police tend to become more punitive likely due to their

political power to push back against punitive police policies. To overcome this discrepancy, the variable was squared to produce the variable "visible minority squared." The addition of this transformed variable renders the presence of visible minority groups less significant. The presence of a large population living below the poverty line, however, becomes the most significant predictor of the presence of AVs in Canadian cities. In addition, the size of the police force begins to have statistical significance in this model, albeit not as strongly as in preliminary modelling. These findings indicate that larger cities, which are more likely to have more diverse populations, larger populations living in poverty, and more police funding and resources, are more likely to have an armoured vehicle. This model holds consistent with literature that suggests that those in power utilize force to control masses of poor individuals and view them as risks in need of control – a phenomenon that becomes more apparent the larger the population living below the poverty line (Kurtz and Upton 2017, Carmichael and Kent 2015). It appears as if police are utilizing militaristic tools to execute this control at the city level.

7. Discussion

When trying to develop our understanding of why police are acquiring AVs at the city level, rhetoric surrounding their acquisition contends that they are necessary due to an increase in crime and gun violence at the city level. However, when considering that crime underlies AV purchase and use at the city level, it is found that the most significant indicator of AV ownership is actually the size of the police force. In other words, the size of the population, which regulates the size of the police force, holds as the most significant indicator that a police force will acquire more sophisticated materials. As this population increases, so too will the relationship between the two variables. Indeed, when only accounting for violent crime as the main explanatory factor

in AV ownership, police force size holds a 24% increase in the overall likelihood of owning an armoured vehicle while crime holds no significance. One potential explanation for this phenomenon is that police forces in larger cities tend to have more access to the funding and resources necessary to purchase armaments and to outfit their forces with specialized units and vehicles. In this case, the idea that violent crime is underlying the move towards militarization is unjustified. As a result, hypothesis 3: increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities, is rejected.

While the size of the police force serves as a strong indicator of the likelihood that police will own more militaristic tools, when introducing the idea of risk factors, the size of the police force loses significance. In line with the literature on militarization, large populations of ethnic minorities and individuals living below the poverty line holds significance in explaining why police are acquiring AVs (Lockwood et al. 2018). Indeed, the presence of visible minorities is related to a 19% increase in the likelihood that police will acquire AVs. In the same vein, the presence of poverty is related to a 29% increase. When considering a transformed, linear variable related to ethnicity, poverty becomes the strongest predictor of police owning an armoured vehicle at the city level. Indeed, this theoretically derived variable, reflecting the socio-demographic and socioeconomic conditions within a city, acts as strong predictors of militarization in the form of armoured vehicles. Given these findings, hypothesis 2: the presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities, is accepted. In addition, hypothesis 1: the presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of armoured vehicles and police militarization in Canadian cities, is only partially accepted given that the presence of large Indigenous populations does not correlate to AV

ownership at the city level. While the presence of minority populations holds significance in the second model, the relationship later loses significance. As such, the presence of a large population living below the poverty line is the strongest predictor that police will acquire an armoured vehicle at the city level.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the question of what is underlying the decision of local police forces in Canada to acquire armoured vehicles at an alarming rate was explored. It was found that traditional explanations of aggressive police tactics that tend to focus on crime, and rhetoric used by police surrounding the purchase of these vehicles, do not provide a significant explanation as to their increasing popularity. The results of this chapter identified that, instead, it is the presence of large groups of individuals living in poverty, and the presence of minority groups (which tend to be associated since a large proportion of ethnic minorities tend to live in poverty), that is driving police to militarize and acquire armoured vehicles. Corresponding to the sociological literature contending that the presence of large ethnic minority populations and poverty is related to an increase in police violence and use of force (see: Garland 1990, Hirschfield 2015, Chrismas 2013, Carmichael and Kent 2015, Liska et al. 1981, Meeks 2006), the results of this chapter demonstrated that police and their overseers are relying on militarization in an attempt to control and subjugate these populations in an attempt to maintain power.

Burkhardt and Baker suggest that agencies that acquire military equipment tend to disproportionately have warrior tendencies and follow a pattern of militarization consistent with a model of governance that views citizens as both opportunities and threats (2019). The nature of these threats, as has been demonstrated, appears to be misinterpreted and misconstrued by police.

Indeed, it appears as if the standard of what constitutes a severe threat, that would warrant the use of an armoured vehicle, has been drastically lowered to encompass an individual having a mental health crisis, rendering force as the primary means of response legitimized. This behaviour is consequential. When police use force that is considered excessive or unjustified, police-citizen relations and overall social cohesion can weaken (Carmichael and Kent 2015). Carmichael and Kent continue that adverse structural conditions, like poverty, can work to influence police action in a way that produces greater reliance on [this] force (ibid). Treating the poor as easy targets for police use of violence and as a means to justify the continued purchase of militaristic toys renders these defenseless individuals easy targets of police aggression – a trend that calls into question the training and conduct of Canadian local forces.

One explanation as to why police target poor populations, according to Chambliss and Seidman (1980), is that an increase in stratification in society leads to the dominant groups enforcing, through coercion, norms of conduct that guarantee their supremacy. In large cities, especially those with higher levels of stratification, there is a higher likelihood that police forces are large and, as a result, have the financial resources to own, maintain, and upgrade an AV. However, it has also been found that this trend is also occurring in cities that have a population between 50,000 and 100,000 and in places where overall rates of people in low-income is being reduced over time. Lawson Jr. (2018) suggests that one explanation for this phenomenon is that police associate poverty with danger. Indeed, Terrill and Reisig (2003) build on this by contending that officers associated problem [high poverty] areas with an increased threat to officers. Considering that areas with higher rates of poverty tend to see higher crime rates, Hsieh and Pugh (1993) argue that officers tend to feel unsafe, perhaps leading to one explanation as to why they are more likely to use an AV in this instance. As police bias leads them to use lethal

force as a means of social control over the poor (Chevigny 1990, 1995), the use of AVs and other militarized tools only allows police to do so with more force and ease.

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The presence of AVs in Canadian police at the local level has expanded drastically since the early 2000s, rendering their presence on Canadian streets almost normalized. However, some communities have pushed back against the idea of police acquiring these vehicles. In one instance, it was reported that Fredericton police were contemplating the purchase of a $350,000 AV for the population of 56,000 (Gill 2016), leading community members to become hostile and confused as to why a small population requires an AV. Several other purchases have also been met with hostility and backlash by the public, arguing that they make police more violent and hostile. It appears as if the community does not understand why police forces require an armoured vehicle and has even come to associate their presence with racism and discrimination, further endangering the legitimacy of police. This is especially true considering that it was found that some forces are using their AVs for community events, like the Santa Claus parade (Hristova 2023, CBC News Manitoba 2017), leading to more calls for police to halt the purchase of these vehicles and to stop spending exorbitant amounts of money on toys to parade around town. While some small communities like those in Halifax (who redirected the money for an AV towards anti-Black racism initiatives) are better able to control the narrative on police funds and where they are being directed, citizens in large cities, where there is a more diverse socioeconomic population, have less control over police purchases. While this chapter provided several responses to why police are arming up, the question still remains as to why police are choosing Level IV ballistic armoured vehicles to respond to calls involving mobile homes, mental health calls, and to parade around the city that relies on more than sheer hubris.

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The fifth and final substantive chapter will expand on Kraska's material indicator of militarization with special focus being placed on the acquisition and use of assault weapons by police. Like the third and fourth chapters, the chapter will open with definitions of assault weapons to help contextualize them within the chapter. Special attention will be paid to solidifying a definition of what an assault weapon is in the Canadian context given the contentions surrounding the literature and broader social conversation on these weapons. To follow, the use of force frameworks that govern how police are expected to use these weapons will be presented, focusing on the National Use of Force Framework in Canada. As in the third and fourth chapters, an overview of militarization will be presented with special emphasis on contextualizing assault weapons and their role in the ever-growing militarization of police. In the third section, an historical overview of assault weapons in Canadian policing will be presented to place these weapons in a broader sociohistoric context and to continue and broaden the conversation on militarization in Canadian policing. To begin, an overview of the origins of these weapons in the military will be presented. This section will consider the complex history of guns in Canadian policing, focusing on the evolution of gun use and the types of guns police have come to favour over time to better understand the evolution towards, and normalization of, assault weapons in Canadian policing. To follow, a brief overview of two particular assault weapons will be provided: The Colt C8 and the Heckler & Koch MP5. These weapons are the preferred assault weapons of Canadian police and a better understanding of their specs and the language surrounding them will assist in contextualizing them within the broader policing culture. As with the fourth chapter, there will be a presentation of the rhetoric used by police and the media to justify the procurement and use of these weapons by police, with special emphasis

being placed on “being as well armed as the criminal” and a reliance on questionable crime and danger rhetoric in an attempt to shape and re-shape the narrative.

In the third section, an empirical overview of the use of assault weapons by Canadian police will be presented. This section will focus on how these weapons are being procured by police by focusing on their costs and the avenues through which (and the simplicity with which) they are being procured by police. To follow, the use of these weapons by police at the local level will be presented, emphasizing how police are disproportionately utilizing these weapons as a means of intimidation. It will also be revealed that police are utilizing these weapons more frequently in situations that involve minorities and people with mental health issues. To follow, an overview of potential drivers of the rise of assault weapons will be provided. This section will focus on the role of crime and risk factors as potential driving forces for the acquisition and use of these weapons at the city level, taking both a sociological and rhetoric-driven approach. In the final part of the chapter, a regression analysis will analyze whether traditional explanations of crime or sociological and theoretical explanations are driving police to acquire and utilize assault weapons at the local level. It is the overall goal of this final substantive chapter to comprehend what is driving police to acquire militarized materials and to contextualize these weapons in the broader sociopolitical context to better comprehend the consequences of police militarization.

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Chapter 5: Bring Out the Big Guns: Canadian Police and Their Weapons of Mass Intimidation

"The ultimate expression of state violence is the use of lethal force, and the most common tool used to inflict this is the firearm" (Richard Evans and Clare Farmer 2021).

1. Introduction

The notion that police carry guns is embedded in the tradition of policing around the world. The "armed tradition" of policing began in Canada when police adopted the armed and mounted quasi-military police forces adopted across several of the British colonies (Evans and Farmer 2021) at the turn of the 20th century. Since the late 1800s, police have been carrying guns in one form or another. In the Canadian context, there are a multitude of explanations as to why and how the gun became commonplace in policing efforts. Some explanations suggest that police carrying a gun was a means of self-defence against the rise in gun ownership by private citizens (see: RCMP 2020). Other explanations contend that it was the professionalization of police in Canada, inspired by Peel's police in Great Britain, that enthused and later normalized gun use in policing (see: Gooding 2013). Some explanations even suggest that it was the shooting deaths of officers that led to the arming up of police (see: Weaver 1995). While all these explanations provide some insight into the historical widespread adoption and use of guns by Canadian police, it is still unclear how and why the armed tradition has evolved over from police carrying pistols and service revolvers to carrying military-grade assault weapons and how these shifts contribute to the ongoing militarization of Canadian police.

The routine arming of police (Evans and Farmer 2021) eventually led police to adopt and normalize the use of high-powered, lethal weapons. This shift, argues Sheptycki and Edwards (2009), has restructured police into a more complex entity, leading to what they call the "death of generalist policing" in favour of an increased emphasis on specialization and expertise. This

increased specialization has altered how police, as a core element of formal social control, interact with the communities they serve. Indeed, the rise of specialized weapons has encouraged the use of management and suppression tactics, especially in communities where [perceived] gun-related offending is concerned (ibid). This disproportionately involves marginalized communities due to their association with violent crime. Hall-Blanco and Coyne find that police tend to interact more violently with minority groups and are more likely to carry bullet-proof vests and automatic weapons when dealing with situations in predominately Black neighbourhoods (2016). Terrill and Reisig (2003) also found that police are more likely to use force against these groups since they perceive the spaces in which they live to be problematic, increasing the threat to the officer. The normalization of lethal violence has grown as police move away from traditional service weapons toward military weapons like submachine guns and assault rifles (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021). Considering the rate at which police interact with marginalized communities in their routine policing efforts, it is imperative to understand the consequences of the normalization of assault weapons in Canadian policing at the local level.

Definitions of assault weapons[29] have changed over time. Some definitions have long suggested that an assault rifle is a fully automatic gun used by the military (Brown 2012). Other definitions contend that an assault weapon is a semiautomatic firearm with a large magazine of ammunition that is designed and configured for rapid fire (Public Safety Canada 2018) and descends from military firearms that have been chambered for ammunition of reduced size or propellant charge (Encyclopedia Britannica 2022). In the family of these assault-style weapons, a

[29] The term assault rifle is not a legally defined term in Canadian firearms legislation, instead relying on definitions used in the United States (US) by the United States Department of Justice (US DOJ) for illustrative purposes (Public Safety Canada 2018). In the Canadian context, these weapons fall into the Criminal Code's restricted category and are more commonly referred to as "assault style."

semi-automatic weapon[30] is defined as "any repeating rifle which utilizes a portion of the energy of a firing cartridge to extract the fired cartridge case and chamber the next round, requiring a separate pull of the trigger to fire each cartridge" (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2024). According to the Canadian Criminal Code, "semi-automatic, in respect of a firearm, means that the firearm is equipped with a mechanism that, following the discharge of a cartridge, automatically operates to complete any part of the reloading cycle necessary to prepare for the discharge of the next cartridge[31]" (Criminal Code of Canada 2024). In Canada, there is a fixed limit on the number of cartridges a semi-automatic weapon can hold, with ten for semi-automatic handguns, and five for other semi-automatic firearms (ibid). These rifles have more ammunition capacity and accuracy than pistols, making them ideal for long-range targets (Douglas 2020), removing the user from close danger. While the definitions of what constitutes an assault weapon can be diverse, what is clear is that these weapons can possess lethal and precise power, and the ability to instantly kill, giving Canadian police more power at the tip of their fingers than at any other point in our history with seemingly less and less oversight.

Scholarship has debated the function of assault rifles in the policing sphere. Some scholars have asked if the adoption of assault rifles is a mere function of the militarization of policing, or rather if it is a justified response to the weaponized criminal environment (Phillips 2016). Since patrol officers tend to be the first to respond to active shooter incidents and terrorist events, there appears to be a movement towards patrol rifles as a secondary firearm for street-level patrol and response (Phillips 2016), expanding the use of these tools outside of tactical units. Madsen argues that the function of these weapons is to respond to these types of threats,

[30] Weapon, in this context, refers to a pistol, rifle, submachine gun, and/or shotgun.

[31] In contrast, a fully automatic weapon is a self-loading firearm with continuous fired rounds when the trigger is actuated and will continue to fire as long as the trigger is kept depressed, and ammunition is fed into the chamber.

especially when they are aimed at officers themselves (2020). The potential for danger alone, argues Phillips (2016), serves to justify the procurement of these guns, regardless of the idea that the gravity of these situations can at times be fabricated and inflated. Notwithstanding the function of these weapons, Madsen argues, their mere presence has resulted in the addition of significant firepower to police arsenals (2020) and has raised questions and concerns regarding police militarization. As these guns become more prolific in routine policing, an exploration of their function in the increasing militarization of policing is required. In the Canadian context, such an enquiry does not exist at the local level. Considering that research has found that police are more likely to use force on minority groups (see: Carmichael and Kent 2015, Terrill and Reisig 2003) as an anticipatory strategy, the rise and normalization of assault weapons in routine policing as a weapon against "potential" danger, and their use, needs to be better understood.

1.1 Use of Force Frameworks

As the adoption of lethal weapons grew in Canadian policing, frameworks were created to guide police on their appropriate use. The National Use of Force Framework, for example, was created by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) and requires officers to undertake a proactive approach and continual assessment of the situation to determine the most reasonable response [of force] given the circumstances of the situation (CACP 2000). The framework's principles emphasize that police officers are primarily responsible for the preservation of life, public safety, officer safety, and adherence to the principles of the law (ibid). In essence, the model requires police officers to take a primarily proactive approach while continually assessing the situation to determine the most reasonable response, taking into consideration a myriad of factors while prioritizing lower to no levels of force.

Police are also expected to adhere to the principles of minimum force which suggest that the force used must be the minimum necessary to achieve legitimate objectives and must also be proportionate and reasonable given the circumstances (Palmer 2017). In policing terms, this doctrine combines the ideals of "policing by consent" with the "standard of minimum force" (ibid:386). In 2014, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) revised its use of force procedure to ascribe to a minimum force model, emphasizing the use of lethal force only in last resort crisis situations where the officer needs to prioritize the preservation of life (Iacobucci 2014). In Ontario, The Police Services Act[32] rules that "a member of a police force shall not draw a handgun, point a firearm at a person or discharge a firearm unless he or she believes, on reasonable grounds, that to do so is necessary to protect against loss of life or serious bodily harm" (Police Services Act, Ontario 1990). This ensures that there is a weapon, clear intent, and the ability of an individual to clearly deliver harm to police and the public before an officer uses any level of force. While a common theme amongst these use of force frameworks is a focus on de-escalation tactics, there appears to be minimum guidance on how this should be achieved (Dubé 2016, McNeilly 2017). What has resulted is police seemingly not adhering to these doctrines, especially considering how they are more likely to shoot and kill civilians compared to police who do not own assault weapons (Delehanty 2020, Perez et al. 2015). It also calls into question what police believe to be reasonable grounds to point and shoot their guns. This will be explored throughout this chapter.

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In the US, research has found that the militarization of policing leads to more civilians being killed by police (Delehanty et al. 2017). This increases drastically when police have assault rifles (Delehanty 2020) and move away from traditional service weapons (Flores-Macías and

[32] Ontario Regulation 283/08: Equipment and Use of Force, Section 3. https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900926

Zarkin 2021). In the Canadian context, there is limited scholarship examining if the acquisition and use of these rifles by police has led to more civilian deaths over time and if their presence has increased police-led violence, aggression, dominance, and threat of punishment (Insler et al. 2019) as it has in the US. There is also a paucity of research examining the underlying factors driving patrol police to carry assault rifles. This is concerning considering that the ultimate expression of state violence is the use of lethal force, and the most common tool used to inflict this is the firearm (Evans and Farmer 2021). As the gun assumes enormous symbolic power and acts as a visible reminder to the public that police have both the ability and authority to kill someone (ibid), it is essential to understand why Canadian police are acquiring these weapons at an alarming rate. To comprehend why Canadian police are acquiring assault weapons at the local level, this chapter will begin with a definition of militarization taking a material approach by focusing on assault weapons. It will then look at assault weapons in the Canadian context, beginning with the history of the armed tradition and moving towards a detailed overview of the specific types of weapons Canadian police are using, the justification rhetoric surrounding their acquisition, and empirical examples of purchasing and (mis)use at the local level. To follow, a regression analysis will consider if traditional explanations of high crime rates or sociological explanations considering the presence of at-risk groups is driving police to acquire assault weapons and militarize. It is the goal of this chapter to comprehend what is driving police to acquire and use assault weapons in certain situations and how this contributes to their overall militarization.

2. The Militarization of Canadian Police: Assault Weapons

"The blurring between police and military technologies, practices, and threat perception leads state agencies to view cities as sites for testing militarized weaponry, technology, and tactics" (Veronica Kitchen and Kim Rygiel 2014).

In the first and third chapters, a definition of militarization was discussed in detail. In this specific chapter, Kraska's framework will once again be utilized to understand police militarization through the material lens, with special focused being placed on martial weaponry. For a complete and detailed definition and exploration of the concept of militarization, and how to identify it in policing, reference can be made to Chapter 1 section 2.1 and 2.2. For an operational and organizational approach to militarization, Chapter 3, section 2 and 2.1 can be referenced. For a material approach to militarization, Chapter 4, section 2.1 can be referenced as it also relates to arms as they are discussed in this chapter. In the following section, militarization as it directly relates to assault rifles will be discussed in detail.

2.1 Militarization as Material Procurement: Martial Weaponry

"Levels of violence will increase as the types of law enforcement moves away from traditional service weapons towards military weapons, such as submachine guns and assault rifles" (Gustavo Flores-Macías and Jessica Zarkin 2021:523)

Previous research has defined three specific factors that establish the existence of militarization: the blurring of lines between the military and police, the use of surplus military equipment, vehicles, and weapons by law enforcement, and the use of increasingly advanced technologies by said law enforcement (Kraska 2007, Balko 2016). Building on the idea that the use of equipment and advanced technologies denotes militarization, Kraska's material approach contends that items such as martial weaponry (like (semi-)automatic weapons) denote

militarization, especially in places not inherently military (2007). As part of this material approach, police can acquire weapons through a process of transfers and can even cross-train the use of these special weapons with their tactical units (ibid:501) and the military. Nolan (2020) builds on this idea by suggesting that the acquisition of arms through overt weapons transfers from the military to police is an identifier of militarization. This form of material militarization, argues Bell (1982), can go beyond the use of weapons (such as guns) to the symbolic appearance of a ready-to-engage, professional officer. Due to this militarization, Canadian police are appearing increasingly like post-apocalyptic military mercenaries than protectors of the peace due to their acquisition of military toys (Spratt 2014), continuously blurring the line between police and soldier and calling into question the potential dangers of militarized police forces.

According to Phillips (2016), patrol rifles (a military-style weapon that is said to be smaller, lighter, more accurate, and easier to handle than a shotgun) themselves have been cited as an example of increasing militarization. The adoption of these kinds of assault weapons by local services is a key ingredient in police militarization and has led many local departments to look and start acting more like the armed forces (Saylors and Colgan 2019). Patrol rifles, as military-style assault weapons, are replacing shotguns as a secondary (arguably primary) firearm for street-level patrol officers (Phillips 2016). As a result, police have turned to the use of these militarized weapons outside of their intended function in specialized units. Kitchen and Rygiel (2014) suggest that this change in use and scope further blurs the line between the police and military through technology, practice, and threat perception, and leads state agencies to view the city as a testing site for militarized weapons, technology and tactics. The consequences of these changes and the role of militarization in this context have remained largely unexplored.

While it has been demonstrated that the acquisition and use of assault weapons by police denotes militarization, the consequences of this militarization are rather vast. According to Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021), levels of violence are said to increase as police move away from traditional service weapons (such as Glocks) towards military weapons like submachine guns and assault rifles. In addition to an increase in police-led violence, it is said that aggression, dominance, and threat of punishment that is implicit in militarized police forces (Insler et al. 2019) also increases; this is exacerbated when police use assault weapons for street-level police work. A further consequence of this form of militarization is that it erodes public willingness to obey and cooperate with police. Indeed, according to a study conducted by Phillips (2017), the use of military tools, such as patrol rifles that contribute to a militarized appearance, is considered unacceptable by much of the public. This sentiment creates difficulties in police retaining their legitimacy, rendering their relationship with the public eroded – the consequences of which, when paired with an increase in police-led violence, are vast for the local-level Canadian police and their continued acquisition of rifles.

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As police departments, who once referred to tactical units to wield military-style rifles for active shooter situations, move towards equipping their "rank and file" with assault-type rifles (Klemko 2024), it is imperative that the consequences of this acquisition and use of assault-style, military rifles in the Canadian context be explored to better understand what is driving police to acquire military-style weapons as part of their everyday policing efforts. To better understand what is driving police militarization through assault rifle acquisition and use, the following section will explore the history of the assault rifle (AR) in the Canadian context, investigating their roots in the military, their function creep into Canadian policing, and their normalization at

the city level. Additional focus will be placed on how local Canadian police forces come to acquire ARs by exploring their acquisition trends and use to further the idea that these tools have shifted from being specialized to normalized. It is the goal of this section to build on previous chapters and shed light on the material aspects of militarization through assault weapons and their consequences for Canadian police, while also exploring and acknowledging how the presence of these weapons contributes to the militarization of police in Canada.

3. Assault Weapons in Canadian Policing: Armed and too dangerous?

> *"Firearm companies often noted the use of their semi-automatic handguns by the military, thus blurring the line between weapons appropriate for police and soldiers" (Blake Brown and Rudy Bartlett 2023:253).*

The proliferation of assault weapon use by Canadian police has grown exponentially in the last three decades with no clear explanation as to why. One approach suggests that there is a sentiment that police require carbines, or "up-to-date firearms technologies" to respond to high-risk situations like school shootings, gang violence, or the threat of terrorism on Canadian streets (Davies 2010), making the argument that police are more commonly encountering situations where they are dealing with armed suspects. Other explanations suggest that long range carbines are the correct response to the safety issues posed by [civilian] shotguns (May 2016) and allow police to keep their distance when confronting violent offenders. Some forces have even gone so far as to suggest that they need these weapons solely because they act as a visible deterrent (Fitzpatrick 2016) to criminal behaviours. While the narrative of police requiring up-to-date, state-of-the-art technologies attempts to quell suspicions about the proliferation and ownership of assault weapons by the police while also working to reiterate the idea that these guns fight

violent crime and keep the public safe, there is still no clear explanation as to why police are choosing to arm up with increasingly lethal weapons and what is driving the choice to do so.

To explore the concept of why police are arming up with increasingly lethal weapons, the following sections will begin with an overview of the armed tradition in Canadian policing by looking at the history of guns in the Canadian context, citing its colonial roots and its evolution towards the normalization of assault weapons in routine policing. An overview of the rise of assault weapons in Canadian policing will follow, focusing briefly on the preferred assault weapons of Canadian police. To better comprehend why police are acquiring these weapons, justification narratives will be analyzed. From an empirical perspective, a detailed overview of the acquisition of assault weapons and how they are being used by local Canadian police forces will follow. It is the goal of this section to understand what is driving police to normalize the use of assault weapons during patrol calls and to comprehend when and why police are utilizing these weapons to better comprehend their role in the militarization of Canadian police.

3.1 The Armed Tradition: A history of arms in Canadian policing

The history of firearms in the Canadian police has a rich history in the post-Confederation era. Canada, along with other British colonies, followed the armed and mounted quasi-military tradition that was adopted across many sectors of the British colonies (Evans and Farmer 2021). Between 1868 and 1935, the trend of adopting firearms took off with various federal and provincial police forces in Canada. Arguably, this "armed tradition" (ibid) expanded when the Dominion Police began carrying a British-made .476 Enfield MK II service revolver in 1868 (Van Leersum 2014). Shortly after, The North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) started carrying service revolvers in 1873 when they adopted the Colt New Service .45 Colt service

revolver which later became their standard issue sidearm that was carried until 1920 when they disbanded (ibid). The NWMP later moved to adopt Winchester Model 1876 carbines in 1885 (Van Leersum 2014, Gooding 2013). During this period, they also adopted several shoulder arms like the Model 1876 Winchester (which they carried from 1878 to 1914) and others like the Enfield Mark II (which they carried from 1882 to 1905) (Royal Canadian Mounted Police 2014). The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was also an early adopter of carrying arms in the early to mid-20th century, carrying a Colt New Service from 1905 to 1954, and later a Smith & Wesson Model 10 from 1952 to 1973 (ibid). It can be argued that these early adopters of firearms ushered in the normalization of police carrying weapons as part of their patrol duties. It was not until the mid-20th century, however, that the trend extended to local police forces.

There is no set agreed upon explanation as to why police, as a whole, began to carry firearms. On a large scale, one argument contends that the professionalization of police in the later 19th century, based on the British tradition, ushered in a desire and demand for more firepower amongst their forces (Gooding 2013). Alongside this professionalization, the new rights of private property owners in Canada to acquire and use firearms as a means of protection, and the permission of civilians to carry arms in 1892 (RCMP 2023), gave rise to the popularity and presence of firearms in policing outside of bodies like the military and federal police. During this same era, the Criminal Code was established in 1893. According to Beahen (2008), this new code changed how policing bodies could use force against criminals, like escaping prisoners. A major shift in the use and perception of firearms occurred partly due to these new regulations that eventually led to a more mechanized, scientific, and information driven approach to service training that was adopted by policing (ibid) in the 20th century, which extended to their firearms.

A more mechanized, scientific, and information driven approach to policing and, by extension, their firearms, is one likely explanation as to their rising popularity in the second half of the 20th century. One change, according to Beahen (ibid), was the new widespread availability of weapons, especially guns, to most or all officers in particular situations. However, the widespread use and adoption of guns by Canadian police did not occur until the mid to late 20th century. It was not until the 1970s that forces outside of large municipal and federal forces began carrying firearms, with the Halifax Regional Police seeing the adoption of revolvers in the 1970s, for example (ibid). By the mid-1990s, however, most, if not all, police forces in Canada carried a firearm. It was also during this period that police began trading in their service revolvers for semi-automatic handguns citing a desire for more ammunition capacity (ibid) and firepower. The most popular models that are still in use today are the Glock 17 9x19 Parabellum semi-automatic pistol, 9mm, the Glock 22 .40 Smith & Wesson semi-automatic pistol (both made in Austria), and the SIG Sauer P226 9x19mm Parabellum semi-automatic pistol (made in Germany) (ibid). A movement towards more firepower that started in the 1990s would come to usher in an era of normalization of the use of guns and later semi-automatic weapons by police which would eventually extend itself to the introduction of submachine guns and semi-automatic rifles.

One of the earliest adopters of the assault rifle was the Toronto Police Service (TPS) who purchased and began carrying C8 carbine rifles in 2000 (Lancaster and Fowler 2016). In the early 2000s, other police forces began following suit, with Calgary Police purchasing a total of 120 Colt C8A2 rifles for their regular patrol officers and tactical unit in 2008 (CBC News Calgary 2008). In 2016, the TPS purchased an additional 50 C8 carbine rifles for their patrol officers (Lancaster and Fowler 2016). During this same period, a total of 68 police forces received 2,012 surplus assault rifles from the Canadian military through a formal government

surplus disposal program that ran until 2016 (Lou 2020). In 2018, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) also purchased C8 rifles (Pablo 2018) for their patrol officers. While it is evident that several police forces are acquiring these assault weapons with relative ease, it is still unclear as to why this mass shift towards, and eventual normalization of, lethal weapons in the hands of patrol officers, meant to maintain social order, has occurred.

Some scholars argue that the mass shift towards high powered, lethal assault weapons occurred due to a desire to "keep up with the Joneses" or, rather, a desire to have lethal weapons out of sheer competition to have the "same equipment as everyone else" (Walby in May 2016). Other arguments contend that these high-powered guns were adopted due to a desire for increased firepower, speed, and precision that would help police combat threats from a "safe distance" without compromising the safety of the officer while carrying gear that matches the threat on the streets (see: May 2016, Taekema 2018). What began as a specialized tool for tactical units eventually worked its way down to normalized use by patrol officers. The reason behind this is still largely unknown - it is the goal of this next section to explore how and why assault rifles and lethal weapons became normalized in Canadian policing by briefly exploring the characteristics of the preferred assault weapons of local Canadian police.

3.2 The Preferred Assault Weapons of Canadian Police: The Colt C8 and H&K MP5

Local Canadian police have been consistently using assault rifles, submachine guns, and carbines for over three decades. In that span, local police have been partial to certain makes and models. According to Towns (2022), Canadian police tactical units are traditionally equipped

with selective fire[33] (SEF) MP5 submachine guns, semi-automatic shotguns, and even C8 and M16 assault rifles. Outside of tactical units, these weapons are also being carried and used by local Canadian police forces. The most popular model used by patrol officers is the Colt Canada (Diemaco) C8 and C8A2 carbine rifles which are currently in use by the VPD (Kronbauer 2018), Halifax Regional Police (HRP) (CBC News Nova Scotia 2014), and York Regional Police Emergency Task Force (ETF) (CTV News Toronto 2016) to name a few. Colloquially dubbed the AR-15 (Lou 2020), the C8 carbine is considered a state-of-the-art SEF weapon with precise and quick long- and close-range shooting capabilities. Purchased by 98% of law enforcement customers (Lancaster and Fowler 2016), the patrol carbine is said to be built to NATO D14 standards of manufacturing and testing (Brown 2017) and is modelled after the manufacturer's C8 Carbines used by the Canadian Forces (CF) while also being a cousin of the M16 used by the United States (US) Military (CBC News Windsor 2014). Designed to use NATO standard 5.56x45mm ammunition, the "soldier's weapon" boasts an ergonomic design, is comfortable to handle (Colt Canada 2005, Sof 2023), and is equipped with a 368mm (14.5in) A1 profile barrel which features a 1 in 178mm (7in) rifling twist said to provide stability for the shooter (Sof 2023). Both the C8 and C8A2 feature a semi-automatic rate of fire of 45-65 rounds per minute (rpm), a sustained rate of fire of 12 to 15 rpm and a 2.5 to 3.9kg of trigger pull pressure with a 30-round magazine capacity (Colt Canada 2005), making the C8 and its variants lethal.

[33] Selective fire/select fire (SEF), is the capability of the weapon to be adjusted for use in either semi-automatic, automatic, or burst modes.

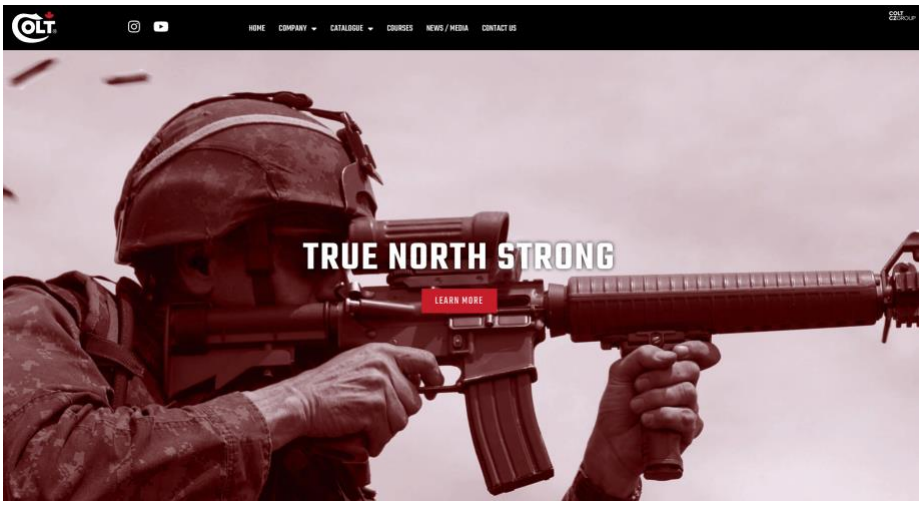

Figure 9: The landing page of the Colt Canada website showing a soldier holding their most popular law enforcement rifle, citing "True North Strong" (Colt Canada 2024).

The second most popular model used by local Canadian police forces is the Heckler & Koch (H&K) MP5 and its variants MP5A2 and MP5A3 (Thompson 2014). The lightweight submachine gun, developed in the 1960s by German manufacturer H&K, is considered the most widely used submachine gun in the world, adopted by several nations, militaries, police forces, intelligence agencies, security organizations, and paramilitaries (Tilstra 2012). The MP5 is a 9mm x 19 calibre submachine gun that fires from a closed bolt with roller delayed blowback (Heckler & Koch 2024) and is considered to be a reliable, precise, and controllable weapon. Recoil operated, the MP5 has multiple modes of fire: single fire, 2-round burst, 3-round burst, and sustained fire while also hosting a 30-45N trigger pull and a mag capacity of 15/30 cartridges (ibid). Weighing just 170g when loaded, the H&K MP5 has a firing range of 200m (656 ft) (ibid), making it and its variants popular with a number of police forces for long distance shooting. Cited as a "legendary weapon" in the Canadian context (Ottawa Citizen 2015), it is currently in use by the VPD (Vancouver Police Department 2017), Windsor Police, Parliamentary Police (who have a modified single-shot version), and RCMP guards who patrol near Centre Block (Pugliese and MacLeod 2015) to name a few. The original function of these

weapons and their variants is use in situations with active shooters and barricade subjects as part of a larger de-escalation strategy (Lancaster and Fowler 2016), meaning that the AR is meant to be used in the most grievous and dangerous situations. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, these weapons are being used by these police departments for non-endangering and non-serious situations, calling into question why these forces require such powerful weapons.

Figure 10: An image of an MP5 submachine gun from the Heckler & Koch website touting it as "the world's most popular submachine gun" (Heckler & Koch 2024a).

3.2a Justification Rhetoric: Attempting to Shape and Re-shape the Narrative

"The emphasis on danger to provide a rationale for a "warrior mentality" among police can propagate aggressive, enforcement-centric policing practices" (Michael Sierra-Arévalo 2021).

To justify the purchase and use of assault weapons, Canadian police and the media have curated a narrative that these weapons are necessary for police work due to an increase in violent crime and a [desperate] need for weapons with speed and precision. As part of their justification rhetoric, police tend to invoke memories of dead officers who have been killed by gun violence while also employing the notion of workplace safety (Brown and Bartlett 2023). Building on this argument, there is also the claim that the job of policing is becoming increasingly dangerous and that [assault] weapons, with their increased accuracy and power, are ideal for high-risk situations that require a superior firearm for accuracy (Gordon 2016). The sentiment that there is an

increase in violent crime and gun violence has been at the forefront of the narrative on police militarization. Starting in the 1990s, the Ontario conservative government, with its tough on crime legislation and law and order approach to politics, played a role in manufacturing concern about high crime rates (ibid) This narrative created a fear of gun violence and crime that led to the mass arming up of police, all while neglecting the role that guns were playing in the mass casualties of civilian-on-civilian violence, highlighting a need to decrease, not increase, gun use.

There also exists an anti-militarization rhetoric used by police and the media in an attempt to alter the narrative surrounding the use of assault weapons by police. An article in pro-police magazine "Blue Line" (self-proclaimed "Canada's Law Enforcement Magazine") argues that assault rifles are not an indicator of militarization but rather a way of increasing shot accuracy and reducing the over-penetration capability of traditional [revolver] cartridges while quickly neutralizing deadly threats from a safe distance (beyond 100 meters) (Brown 2017). The same article continues by suggesting that carbines are not military-style assault rifles due to their lack of fully automatic capability (ignoring SEF), although it is admitted that these weapons are built to the same high standard as military firearms by the same manufacturers to ensure reliability (ibid). Another claim is that the majority of surplus equipment available to police tends to end up in museums and not in the hands of police (Boutilier 2014). Indeed, the claim is that only a small proportion of this surplus equipment ends up in the hands of police and, as a result, police are not acquiring the necessary tools needed to be overtly militarized. While this argument is in its essence correct, it neglects the fact that police are curating these weapons through other means such as private purchasing. As a result, this attempt at anti-militarization rhetoric is flawed and sets a dangerous tone for the justification of weapons that are being (mis)used by police and blurs the line between these weapons as specialized vs normalized tools.

3.3 Assault Weapons at the Local Level: Specialization or Normalization?

Assault weapons in policing tend to be associated with specialized units that have countless hours of training and utilize these weapons in situations involving terrorist threats and extreme violence. In the last two decades, the proliferation of assault weapons in local Canadian police forces has raised the question as to whether these weapons have remained a specialized tool of these units or if they have moved into the realm of routine policing efforts. One argument as to why local police have acquired assault rifles is that officers on the street must have gear that matches the threat (Chudwin 2013). Downplaying this apparent threat, some police forces have gone so far as to claim that they are acquiring assault rifles because other police forces have moved forward with them (May 2016). In the same vein, other forces have publicly admitted that they require these weapons [assault rifles] because they act as a visible deterrent (Fitzpatrick 2016) to criminals. The VPD has even produced a video showing police brandishing assault rifles to dramatic music (Wong 2022) (which they later pulled due to backlash). The idea that their service weapon is not enough to respond to these calls is not referenced in their attempts at justifying their use of these weapons. The question remains as to why police are acquiring and using assault weapons, with their attempted justifications fueling even more [public] concern.

Research in the US has found that one of the major concerns surrounding the increase of assault rifles in the hands of local police is that militarized law enforcement agencies tend to be associated with more civilians being killed by police (Delehanty et al. 2017). When assault rifles, and other militarized equipment, are in the hands of local police, the likelihood that they will interact with and, in turn, kill civilians increases drastically than police who do not have this type of equipment (Delehanty 2020). This is concerning considering that local police tend to frequently interact with marginalized communities as part of their patrol duties. To justify the shift of assault rifles from the hands of tactical units to patrol officers, a statement by then Public

Safety Minister Bill Blair in Lou's article claims that the militarization of law enforcement is but a direct consequence of the militarization of society (Lou 2020), pointing to the pistolization of society (Sheptycki and Edwards 2009) as the main problem. The question remains, then, as Phillips (2016) asks: is the normalization of assault rifles a function of police militarization or a justified response to the external environment in which criminals and weapons have become more common? The following section will analyze the presence of assault weapons in the local policing domain, emphasizing their acquisition patterns, costs, and use to understand if these weapons are a sincere response to a high-crime, external environment or are just another function of police militarization being used against people with mental health issues and marginalized communities in the pursuit of justifying the purchase of these unnecessary toys.

3.3a Assault weapons in the public sphere: acquisition trends, cost, and use at the city level

Local Canadian police started acquiring assault weapons in the early 2000s through either The Department of National Defence's (DND) gratuitous transfer program or direct purchasing. Between 2010 and 2014, roughly $8.2 million dollars in surplus equipment was given away free through the DNDs gratuitous transfer program (Boutilier 2014). From this surplus, 2,012 rifles were given away to 68 police forces at an estimated value of $3 million (Lou 2020). Claims surrounding the donations suggest that there was no other interest in the rifles at the time and they were donated to police to better serve the interests of Canadians (ibid). Outside of donations, police forces purchase their assault weapons directly from the manufacturer. Each Colt Canada C8 carbine, for example, is said to cost between $2,000 to $3,000 new from the manufacturer (Taekema 2018, Lancaster and Flower 2016). As such, the average cost to outfit a force with new C8 carbines can approach $100,000, with the required training substantially

pushing these numbers into the $350,000 plus range (CBC News Calgary 2008, Taekema 2018). Given the considerable cost of purchasing these weapons, and training officers to effectively and safely use them, concern is raised as to why police are dedicating such large portions of their budgets to acquiring and using assault rifles, especially in the hands of non-specialized (and undertrained) officers. This will be explored in the section below.

Purchasing History

Among the first local police force to purchase assault rifles was the TPS who purchased assault rifles starting in 2000 (Lancaster and Flower 2016). The next force to purchase several Colt C8 rifles was the Calgary Police Service (CPS) in 2008 when they purchased 120 Colt Canada C8A2 rifles for both their regular force and tactical unit (CBC News Calgary 2008). The total cost of the purchasing program, plus training, topped $350,000 (ibid). The patrol rifle, claims Wittman (2018), is to be carried by certified officers who are trained and requalified twice a year and deployed only when appropriate. Following suit in 2013, the Windsor Police Service (WPS) purchased 15 new C8 rifles to replace the 12-gauge shotguns previously used by officers (CBC News Windsor 2014) and to accompany the H&K MP5s they already own. Each C8 cost the WiPS roughly $2,000, under the premise that they [C8s] are more accurate and pose less of a threat to bystanders when police are forced to use them (Boutilier 2014). The WiPS claims that these new weapons allow police to make a statement just by showing up with the Windsor Police Emergency Services Unit leader Constable Tony Smith claiming, “We are a use of force...us showing up is a use of force” (Wilhelm 2014). While a niche of police owned ARs before 2014, the underlying rhetoric was that police needed to match the weapons of the criminals – an argument that would continue to underly police AR acquisition for the next decade.

The narrative surrounding police purchasing ARs en-masse changed in 2014 due to the shooting deaths of three Mounties in Moncton, New Brunswick. Police forces received harsh criticism regarding their firearms, with the claim being that they did not have the "necessary" weapons to compete with convicted killer Justin Bourque's M350 semi-automatic rifle since responding officers only had their handguns and three shotguns (Gillis 2020). If officers had of been equipped with carbines, it would have levelled the playing field (ibid). That same year, the HRP purchased new C8s (CBC News Nova Scotia 2014), owning a total of 49 as of 2016 for a final cost of $101,000, under the justification that policing is becoming more dangerous (Gordon 2016) while also emphasizing that the weapon is not a machine gun (CBC News Nova Scotia 2014). In 2016, the TPS purchased an additional 50 battle-proven C8s at a cost of between $2,000 and $3,000 each to be carried in patrol cars in all 17 divisions of the city starting in May 2016 (Lancaster and Fowler 2016). During this same period, the TPS also purchased 50 AR-15s from the weapons manufacturer (Lou 2020). The narrative surrounding the acquisition of these weapons is that they will be paired with less lethal sock guns (also known as beanbag guns) (Gillis 2016), attempting to reassure critics that lethal power is not their only option. In 2018, the VPD purchased C8s for their force (Pablo 2018). Hamilton Police (cited as the only major force in Ontario that did not equip its officers with carbines at the time) also approved the purchase of 26 C8 carbines in 2018 with a muzzle velocity of 868m/s for a total cost of $95,562.23 (Taekema 2018), adding to the narrative of safety and defensiveness common to police.

Figure 11: A Regina Police Service Armourer Constable points out some of the features on a disabled demonstration AR-15 carbine rifle at the Regina police headquarters which closely represents the C8 (Fleece 2016).

Other forces that have acquired and used assault weapons include the Durham Regional Police Service who acquired Colt C8A2s for their force. The Regina Police Service also purchased C8s citing it as "another tool to help us do our job" (Fitzpatrick 2016). The Saint John Police and Fredericton Police have also acquired Colt Canada C8s (Gordon 2016), and The Woodstock Police also purchased six Colt Canada C8 patrol carbines to be used during general patrol duties by eight of their regular-duty officers (Saylors and Colgan 2019). One commonality amongst these forces is a narrative that proclaims that an increase in gun violence requires them to be proactive and prepared with these weapons during high-risk calls (ibid) while at the same time providing little to no evidence as to what these high-risk calls look like. In an article by Taekema (2018), Chief Eric Grit cited the need for guns in response to an increase in incidents with active shooters in Canada without giving any evidence as to when and where these were occurring. Citing the need to use the same rifles as the Canadian military as the only way to combat the heinous crimes that plague Canadian streets raises the question as to whether these threats are real or fabricated by police to continually justify their use of lethal force.

Use at the City Level

> *"It's a visible deterrent; people know that it's a different weapons system that we're carrying" (Brian Fitzpatrick 2016).*

To better comprehend if police are accurately representing the crime that justifies the purchase and use of assault rifles, a brief investigation into how police are using assault rifles at the city level will reveal how and when they are being used. The two main ways in which police use their rifles are as deterrents in public spaces and public events, and against civilians during patrol calls. In 2015, for example, Halifax Police carried their C8A2 carbines at the Remembrance Day Parade where the public witnessed police officers in their tactical uniforms carrying these weapons through the crowds there to honour Canada's fallen soldiers (Gordon 2016). Around that same period, the VPS began deploying officers with ARs during major public events (Pablo 2018).

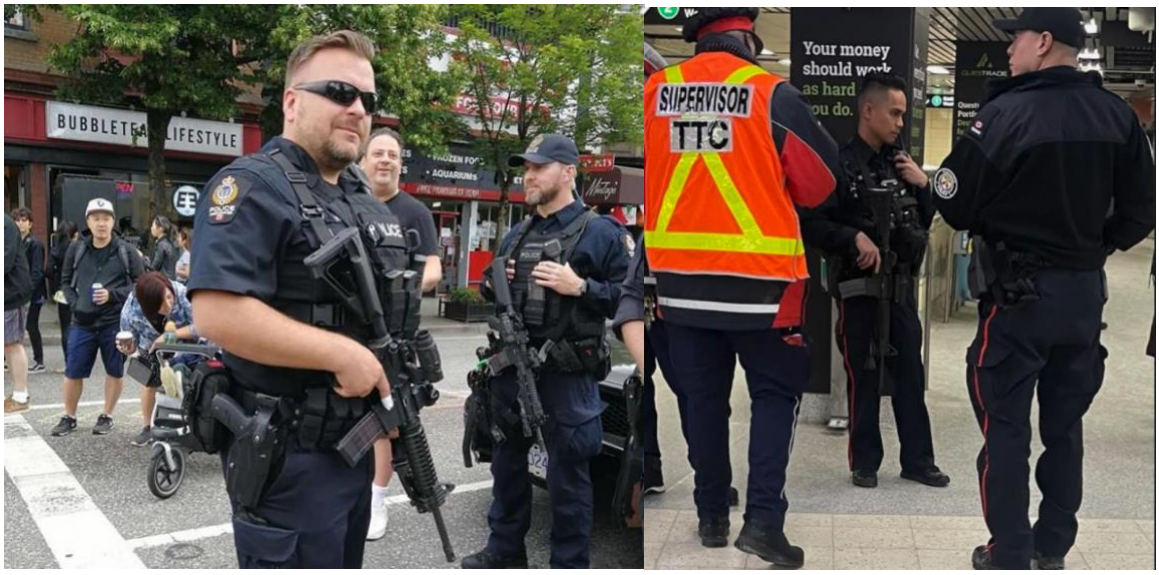

Figure 12: (left): Vancouver PD ERT members carrying Colt C8 carbine rifles at Italian Days on the Drive (Smith 2018).
Figure 13: (right): A Toronto Police Service officer holding a C8 carbine in the Toronto subway station (The Maple 2023).

The claim, by the VPD, is that the ARs are meant to deter people from committing possible terrorist attacks, citing evidence that the sheer presence of these ARs is enough to deter a terrorist attack. Photos circulated showing VPD carrying their ARs during the 2018 Italian Day celebration in Vancouver (ibid). In the same vein, a TPS officer was photographed holding an AR in the metro (subway). Reports claim that the officer was not present due to an increased security serge (Noakes 2023) but rather as a response to a perceived increase in violent attacks on the Toronto Transit Commission over the past year, making their presence pre-emptive and falsifying claim that the C8 is for extremely dangerous events only.

Other incidents have involved direct civilian confrontation that has turned deadly. In 2014, the Halifax Police Department pursued a man who suffers from psychosis with their C8A2 semi-automatic weapons while he attempted to flee in a canoe (Gordon 2016). There were reports that the man was possibly in possession of a sword (CBC News Nova Scotia 2014, Gordon 2016). The approach to aim a lethal weapon at a man with severe mental health issues was deemed appropriate by police given that police had the "right tools" in the field to deal with the potentially dangerous situation although the weapon was unconfirmed.

Figure 14: Halifax police, carrying C8 semi-automatic rifles, boarded a boat on the Northwest Arm to try and catch a suspect fleeing by canoe (Gordon 2014).

In addition to using assault rifles to confront individuals with severe mental health issues, police have also been historically known to use these weapons on minority groups with fatal consequences. In 2020, for example, police fatally shot 26-year-old Indigenous woman Chantel Moore on her balcony in Edmundston, New Brunswick while performing a wellness check (Ibrahim 2020). After receiving a call from Moore's boyfriend over concerning texts Moore sent him, the responding officer claims that after he woke Moore and identified himself as an officer, she approached him with a knife and did not drop it despite multiple requests from him (ibid). The officer claims that he had no other option but to shoot Moore (four times). His actions were later found to be deemed reasonable in relation to the potential lethal threat posed by the woman (ibid). The responding officer was not wearing a body camera.

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What happened with Moore is not uncommon in the Canadian context. In instances when the individual being confronted by police is either Black or Indigenous, research has found that they are more likely to be killed, with Indigenous people being 10 times more likely to be killed by a police officer than a white person in Canada (Flanagan 2020). What's more, between 2000 and 2022, as the acquisition of ARs proliferated amongst police forces in Canada, fatal encounters with police rose from an average of 22.7% per year in 2011 to 37.8% per year in 2022, a 66.5% increase (Crosby et al. 2023). Understanding and explaining this growth, continue Crosby, McClelland, and Sharpe (ibid), is undoubtedly complicated and requires further study, but one factor that should be considered is the change in police firearms. While explaining this growth in fatal police encounters is indeed a complicated and arduous task, it is imperative to not only understand why police are turning to lethal violence on patrol but to also understand what underlying factors are driving these decisions and what the consequences are for the

communities that are interacting with these officers. It is the goal of the following section to consider if characteristics like poverty, race, and ethnicity are driving police to use excessive lethal force, or if there truly is more crime on the streets that justifies the use of these weapons.

4. Potential Drivers of Assault Rifle Procurement by Canadian Police

"By adopting military technology and tactics, police are treating our cities and communities like theatres of war and treating civilians as the enemy" (Tandeep Sidhu 2023)

In the third and fourth chapters, the idea that external forces are driving the acquisition and use of tactical units (Chapter Three) and armoured vehicles (Chapter Four) by Canadian police was discussed (see: Chapter 3, section 4, and Chapter 4, section 4). A lengthy discussion was had on how the presence of risk groups, specifically racial and ethnic diversity (including Indigenous populations) (see: Chapter 3, section 4.1), and a large population living in poverty (see: Chapter 3, section 4.2) has potentially contributed to the militarization of Canadian police. These sections suggest that the presence of these groups and their characteristics contribute to an increase in police violence. It was also suggested that their presence increases the likelihood of police acquiring military type weapons either out of pre-empting the violence associated with these groups or as a means of protecting themselves and the community from these perceived threats (see: Chapter 3, section 4). The idea that crime rates and violence lead to police acquiring military tools, as a traditional explanation for police militarization, was also explored (see: Chapter 3, section 4.3). It was suggested that a large ethnically and racially diverse population, a large Indigenous population, a large population living in poverty, and the presence of crime and violence may be potential driving forces behind increased militarization in Canadian policing and may explain an increase in the acquisition and use of assault rifles.

To test if a large racially and ethnically diverse population, the presence of a large population in poverty, and the presence of crime are related to an increased presence and use of assault rifles by Canadian police at the local level, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: *The presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

Hypothesis 2: *The presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

Hypothesis 3: *Increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities.*

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The drive towards militarization, according to Goldsworthy, can be attributed to an unsubstantiated panic over the fear of crime for which more powerful policing capabilities are perceived to be an essential response (2019). In some of the scant research that has been conducted on police militarization in the Canadian context, the idea that there is an unsubstantiated panic over these groups driving the choice by local Canadian police forces to acquire and purchase assault rifles remains unexplored. It is also unclear as to what is driving police to use these tools during certain calls, and what characteristics of these calls make them more likely to fire their ARs. While some scholars have suggested that the presence of minorities, Indigenous populations, and a large population living in poverty is associated with crime and violence where these groups are labelled as risks which, in turn, makes police more likely to use force (see: Hall and Coyne 2016, Beck 1995, Hirschfield 2005), others have suggested that the size of these populations and their potentiality for power that displaces the hegemonic powers is the main driver behind police violence (see: Kurtz and Upton 2017, Vold 2002, Carmichael 2005, Garland 1990, Chambliss and Seidman 1980). Traditional arguments contend that it is an actual increase in violence and crime that is driving police to require these

tools, like an AR, for protection (see: Sorensen et al. 1993, Lawson Jr. 2018). While these explanations attempt to create a better understanding as to what is driving local police to acquire and use assault rifles, it is still largely unclear as to what is driving the increase in their use.

5. Data, Measures, and Methodology

In the third chapter, an extensive and robust explanation of the dataset, method of analysis, measures, and independent variables was presented (see: Chapter 3 sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3a, b, c, d). In the fifth chapter, the same parameters will hold constant for the dataset, method of analysis, and independent and control measures. The parameters used to measure the dependent variable, specifically referring to Kraska's framework, will experience a shift from organizational/operational indicators to material indicators, providing a more suitable explanation for the presence of assault rifles at the city level.

5.1 Dependent Variable: Material Indicators of Militarization

For this chapter, the dependent variable will be the presence of assault weapons at the local level. Modelled on Peter Kraska's framework of militarization indicators, the material indicator refers to tangible items used by police to denote militarization, such as automatic weapons and technology (Kraska 2007). Data for this variable was collected from a variety of sources for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. When available, preference was made for data on AV ownership being collected from official police websites. Secondary sources included official newspaper articles, social media posts, and government reports. This data was used to confirm the presence of ARs and their dates of acquisition as either on or before the dates above. To operationalize the variable, all information was collected as "yes" or "no" to indicate (non-)

presence. This was then transformed into a dichotomy of 0 (no) and 1 (yes) respectively for analytical purposes. While Kraska originally presents his framework on a continuum, there information required to adhere to this original method was unavailable publicly and required access to information outside of the scope and timeframe of this project. Additionally, utilizing a dichotomy removes any researcher bias and error that may arise from the use of a continuum, making it a realistic city-by-city presentation and overview of AR ownership.

5.2 Additional Considerations

The initial decision to exclude police forces that utilize RCMP services either through contracting or detachments is detailed in Chapter 3, section 5.3d. Considering the presence of assault weapons, the same decision will be utilized in this chapter to omit any cases that include cities that utilize RCMP detachments. Similarly to tactical units and armoured vehicles, it can be assumed that cities that utilize RCMP detachments for their policing needs have access to the RCMPs assault weapon fleet, rendering the decision to purchase and use these weapons outside of the scope of city-level decision making. In addition, RCMP detachment use also fails to capture the rich city level sociodemographics that inspire police to spend exorbitant amounts on ARs for immediate and frequent use, such as the presence of minorities and economic disparity. As such, the data utilized for modelling will not include cities that are RCMP detachments since this does not provide evidence of decision-making at the city level to purchase and use these vehicles and fails to capture the necessary crime and demographic data needed for rich analysis.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Descriptives

Table five provides a descriptive summary of the expected relationships between the explanatory variables and dependent variable assault weapons. It shows the means, standard deviations, ranges, and expected relationship for these variables for each of the three pooled, time-series panels. It is expected that there will be positive relationships between the independent measures and the dependent variable given the traditional and sociological literature regarding drivers of police militarization. These statistics demonstrate that, on average, more police forces are purchasing assault weapons over time with the average number of police forces who own one growing 27% over the course of a decade. In addition, it is revealed that the size of the police force is growing over time, denoting population growth. While some of the smaller cities in the dataset have small police forces, with the minimum number of officers at 40, the largest force has 5,776 officers, denoting variation in police force size and underlying decision-making processes for tactical unit ownership and use.

Variable	Predicted Sign	Mean 2011	Mean 2016	Mean 2021	St. Dev. (Overall)	Min (Overall)	Max (Overall)
Data 1: City-Level Descriptives (n=147)							
Assault Weapons		.38	.65	.65	.50	0	1
Total Number of Sworn Police Officers	+	660.06	665.81	669.96	1032.90	40	5,776
% Visible Minority	+	14.69	18.02	22.73	15.65	.87	68.25
% Indigenous	+	2.96	3.81	3.88	3.42	.42	18.94
% Poverty (LIM)	+	14.61	13.92	10.62	4.06	5.07	25.79
Homicide rate per 100,000	+	1.39	1.55	2.34	1.80	0	8.33
Firearm Violence rate per 100,000	+	3.40	4.62	8.19	4.88	0	26.5

Table 5: Predictive Signs and Descriptive Statistics for Assault Weapons

The table also reveals variation in the visible minority population, with this population experiencing substantial growth over the course of a decade - demonstrating that their growth has coincided with population changes over time. These results show a substantial development that

coincides with ethnic threat and risk theories in police militarization through assault weapon acquisition and use in the city. The Indigenous population remains relatively stable and does not experience much change. Economic stratification does experience a decline over time, potentially signifying that individuals are being lifted out of poverty and experiencing upward economic mobility. Finally, homicide rates remained relatively stable over time, experiencing marginal growth between 2011 and 2021. Some places, with smaller populations, experienced no homicides in a given year. Firearm violence, however, experienced substantial growth over time, with some cities experiencing on average 26 homicides a year. As a result, it is unlikely that homicide will produce any variation in the data but an increase in firearm violence may reinforce traditional explanations of crime as driving forces for police militarization.

6.2 Regression Results

In the sixth table results from the regression analysis predicting militarization through the ownership of assault weapons in Canadian cities is presented. In the first model, traditional explanations of increasing crime levels were considered against the size of the police force. In this limited model, the most significant indicator of the presence of assault rifles at the city level is the size of the police force, which indicates that having a larger population increases the likelihood of a city owning a tactical unit. One explanation for these results is that large populations tend to have large police forces, which results in significant budgets and resources that can afford local police the physical and financial capacity to buy ARs. This also indicates that, as the size of the police force increases, so too does the likelihood that they will acquire ARs. Overall, these initial, albeit limited, results suggest that traditional explanations of crime do not hold significance and the traditional rhetoric that suggests that police are arming up with assault rifles due to an increase in violence is not representative of why they are acquiring ARs.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control Variables			
Total Police	1.25***	1.16*	1.15*
	(0.001)	(0.056)	(0.082)
Crime Measures			
Homicide Rate	1.22	1.21	1.22
	(0.149)	(0.190)	(0.190)
Firearm Violence Rate	1.02	0.99	0.98
	(0.655)	(0.873)	(0.716)
Threat / Risk Measures			
Low-Income Percent[a]	–	1.06	1.08
		(0.423)	(0.311)
Indigenous Percent	–	1.09	1.10
		(0.340)	(0.269)
Visible Minority Percent	–	1.10***	1.16***
		(0.000)	(0.006)
Visible Minority Squared	–	–	1.00
			(0.219)
Constant	0.9731	0.9863	0.9901
Observations	147	147	147

[a] Low Income is measured using the Low Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) as measured by Statistics Canada
Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Table 6: Fixed Effects, Pooled Time-Series Panel Regression Predicting City-Level Assault Weapon Ownership by Local Police

The second model introduces risk variables in the forms of the presence of poverty, Indigenous populations, and visible minority populations to account for sociological explanations (see: Beck 1992, 1995, 2006, Carmichael and Kent 2015, Garland 1990) of police militarization and potentially explain why local Canadian police are arming up. These variables build on the rhetoric surrounding the idea that individuals within these groups are contributing to

violent crime which, in turn, requires the police to acquire more lethal weapons. The results of the second model show that, when accounting for risk variables, the size of the police force is no longer the strongest indicator of local police acquiring ARs. We also see that the presence of poverty and Indigenous populations does not hold any significance in this model and does not account for any significant increase in the likelihood of police weaponization. Significantly, the most powerful indicator of police acquiring ARs is the presence of visible minority populations. As with the first model, traditional explanations of crime do not hold significance, seeing its power and significance reduced. This finding holds consistent with the literature that suggests that police are arming up due to an increase in the presence of visible minorities at the city level (see: Blumer 1958, Blalock 1967, Hirschfield 2005, Chrismas 2013, Carmichael and Kent 2015, Liska et al. 1981, Meeks 2006) which gives way to the idea that police are utilizing weapons like ARs as a direct response to the "threat" that these groups may pose.

The third and final model presents a linearized visible minority variable. As this variable seeks to better explain the broader political process, when using a non-linear variable, its explanatory power declined as the population grew. What resulted was the size of the visible minority population becoming less impactful and significant. Research has shown that, as the visible minority population grows, police tend to become more punitive likely due to their political power to push back against punitive police policies. To overcome this discrepancy, the variable was squared to produce the variable "visible minority squared." With the addition of this transformed variable, the presence of visible minority populations maintains its significance as the strongest indicator of local police owning an AR. In addition, the presentation of this transformed variable marginally increases the significance of poverty and Indigenous populations as an explanation for AR acquisition, however, they still do not provide a significant

explanation. As with the first and second models, traditional explanations of crime do not provide any significance in our understanding of why police are acquiring ARs, rendering the argument that police are arming up due to an increase in violence invalid. Similar to the second model, the size of the police force still holds some significance, although it appears to lose significance as the presence of risk variables increases. Overall, the results of these three models indicate that larger cities with more ethnic diversity are driving police to acquire and use assault rifles at the local level. These findings hold consistent with the literature (see: Hirschfield 2015, Garland 1990, Chevigny 1990, 1995) that suggests that police militarization is driven by the presence of risk groups, such as the poor and ethnic minorities. The findings are also consistent with the literature that contends that police are responding to the [perceived] risk and dangers of these large minority populations with militarization (Ericson and Haggerty 1997) with ARs. Police, it appears, are utilizing intimidation and force through ARs to control minority populations at the city level, blaming them for violent crime that continually justifies their acquisition and use of these guns at the city level. This phenomenon becomes more apparent as these populations become larger and more threatening with their potential political and economic mobility, leading police to utilize more resources in their pursuit of neutralizing these "risks."

7. Discussion

When developing our understanding of why police are acquiring ARs at the city level, traditional narratives insist that an increase in violence and gun ownership at the local level is driving militarization. When considering if this explanation holds true in elucidating this phenomenon, it was found that the most significant indicator of police acquiring ARs at the city level is indeed the size of the police force, showing a highly significant 25% increase in the

likelihood of police owning an AR as the size of the force increases. Given that the size of the population dictates the size of the police force, and increased economic resources that afford police more weapons, it makes sense that forces with more resources are more likely to acquire advanced technologies. Given these results, hypothesis 3: increased (violent) crime rates are related to the presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities, is rejected.

While the size of the police force acts as a strong indicator of the presence of ARs amongst local police forces when considering it against indicators of crime, when introducing risk variables, the relationship between force size and AR ownership loses significance. Indeed, the presence of ethnic minority groups is related to a 10% and 16% increase, respectively, in police acquiring an AR at the city level and is highly statistically significant. This theoretically derived approach to militarization is found to be the strongest indicator of police owning an AR at the city level, rendering hypothesis 1: the presence of a large visible minority and Indigenous population in the city corresponds to the presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities, is partially accepted as Indigenous populations do not hold significance. It was additionally found that the presence of poverty does not hold significance in the acquisition of ARs at the city level despite its strong association with ethnic minority groups, rendering hypothesis 2: the presence of a large low-income population in the city corresponds to the increased presence of assault rifles and police militarization in Canadian cities, rejected.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, an exploration of the role of assault weapons in the militarization of Canadian police was undertaken. An overview of the armed tradition of police revealed that the gun has evolved in the last century from police favouring pistols and small armaments to

advancing and even normalizing assault weapons outside of the specialized units that are trained to respond to high-risk calls in which these ARs are intended. An overview of the acquisition and use of these assault weapons in Canadian policing revealed that police are using these weapons outside of their intended scope. Police rhetoric contends that assault rifles are to be used in the most dire and high-risk situations but given that police are utilizing them to deal with mental health related calls and encounters with minorities and unarmed suspects, it is clear that the assault weapon serves as a tool of intimidation for police to use against an unsuspecting public.

Building on the idea that police are using assault weapons outside of their intended function, a regression analysis was performed to comprehend the underlying factors that are not only driving police militarization, but also the acquisition and use of assault rifles at the local level. The models utilized considered the ownership of assault rifles against traditional measures of crime and also risk variables, looking specifically at the presence of poverty, minorities, and Indigenous populations. The analysis found that police are most likely to own and use assault weapons in places that have high concentrations of ethnic minorities and that traditional explanations of crime do not explain the increased proliferation of ARs. These results demonstrate that the narrative that police have carefully curated surrounding the acquisition of these weapons, which reiterates that there are high levels of gun violence and violent crime on Canadian streets, is simply, as Phillips (2016) claims, a myth of policing. This myth, as a cornerstone of the justification tactics of police, is exceptionally dangerous as it works to justify lethal violence between police and an ever-growing ethnically diverse population in Canada.

The idea that police are focusing their attention and gun violence on at risk communities is not a new phenomenon in Canadian policing. Indeed, as early as the turn of the 20th century, the Northwest Mounted Police focused their efforts on preventing the entry of new immigrants

into the country (Parnaby and Kealey 2003). What these findings reveal is that, with the changing landscape in Canada, and the increasingly liberal social conventions that have been adopted, police have not adapted in over 150 years and still see the other as the enemy. In the modern landscape, to combat these risks, which are shrouded as "criminals with guns," police have turned to being "as well armed as the criminal" by normalizing lethal firepower. While gun violence has gone down in the last decade, levels of immigration and poverty have increased substantially. These changes have powered the myth of crime that has played a substantial role in justifying the distribution of military weapons to street-level police officers (Cramer 2013). This has taken attention away from the fact that police are using racist rhetoric to subjugate these at-risk populations by associating them with crime. Ironically, this increase in military equipment has shown to not reduce crime or do much to protect officers (Hutchinson 2020), making the efforts to arm up a shameful display of hubris. As has been revealed through an analysis of the presence of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault rifles at the city level, the drive towards more militarized policing is tied to an unsubstantiated panic over fear of crime and terrorism and not through increasing crime levels. These social issues, according to police, are remedied only by powerful policing capabilities and weapons – revealing that the weaponization of Canadian police continues to be driven by the fabrication of racist and unsubstantiated fear and risk on the backs of those in the most disparate and disadvantageous positions in society, rendering this police behaviour shameful and unbecoming of a nation that prides itself on social liberalism.

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The next and final chapter will provide a conclusion to this dissertation. It will open by providing a detailed overview of chapters one to five by emphasizing their content, empirical aspects, analysis, results, and findings in the grand scheme of identifying the underlying drivers

of militarization in Canadian policing and better understanding its consequences. To follow, the research questions will be reiterated and answered and the questions presented in the substantive chapters will be emphasized. The chapter will then consider how the procurement of these militarized units and tools has created a sense of urban warfare between police and citizens and how the relationship between the police and the people they serve has been drastically altered as a result. It will be argued that what has risen is the creation of what is argued to be a standing army instead of a non-militarized police who is meant to serve and protect their communities. In consideration of the consequences of this broad militarization in the Canadian context, its impact on the legitimacy of police, especially at the local, community level, will be considered. By focusing on how the relationship between police and the public has been altered due to the proliferation of militarized weapons in everyday policing efforts, it will be revealed that the deterioration of the relationship between police and their communities has severely impacted their ability to adequately do their jobs while also breeding mistrust. To close the chapter, and the dissertation, suggestions will be made for the future of policing in Canada. This will consider police reform, the de-funding of the police, changing how police respond to mental health crises, and potential policy implications and suggestions for trailing a path forward. It is the overall goal of this final chapter to not only conclude and reiterate the important points made throughout this dissertation but to also understand the vast implications and consequences of militarization.

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Chapter 6: Conclusion

"The display of armoured vehicles, green-uniformed tactical units, and military-type assault weapons reinforces the perception of increase militarisation amongst Canada's police forces" (Chris Madsen 2020).

1. Identifying Militarization and its Drivers in Canadian Policing

The overall goal of this dissertation was to understand the extent to which local Canadian police have become militarized and what is driving this militarization while also identifying the historical development of this process. To approach this complex task, two primary questions drove this research: to what extent are Canadian police militarized and what is driving this militarization. To answer these questions, several approaches were employed, including considering definitions of militarization from a global perspective, understanding the complex and rich history of policing and militarization in Canada, and taking a detailed look at specific indicators of militarization at the local level. To analyze and identify militarization, Peter Kraska's framework of militarization was utilized as a guide with specific emphasis placed on operational/organizational and material indicators in the form of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons. The following section will provide a breakdown of each chapter in this dissertation to provide a comprehensive overview of the analyses of militarization.

Before continuing with the dissertation overview, it is imperative to reiterate why the issue of police militarization is important in the Canadian context. Scholarship relating to social control argues about what mechanisms are used to maintain social order in large socially and demographically diverse societies. Social control can either be maintained through shared norms, shared values, and exchange mechanisms or through overt state coercion. In liberal democratic societies, order is not supposed to be maintained through overt state coercion as this is the mechanism of control traditionally used by oppressive authoritarian regimes. The militarization

of police in many ways signals a threat to a liberal democracy for this reason. As Canadian police take on the role of being agents of social control and exercising overt coercion over the people they are meant to protect, the liberal democratic values that make Canada a fair and free country are put at risk. Police militarization is inherently dangerous since it changes the function of police as agents of coercion instead of guardians of the community and its values. If police continue to acquire these militaristic tools without any oversight, the liberal, democratic values that Canadians rely on will continue to be threatened and may eventually cease to exist.

To successfully identify militarization in Canadian policing, a detailed overview of militarization was presented in the first chapter. The chapter began by introducing the concept of police militarization as problematic given that research has tied it to being associated with cultures of fear and risk and more violent policing. To define the concept, various definitions were examined with a narrowed view on the role of martial values and the use of force and weaponry (Kraska 1994) as pertinent to identifying militarization. The process of identifying militarization in other parts of the world was then presented which began with an extensive overview of militarization in the United States (US) as the most salient example of police how and why police can militarize. Outside of North America, an overview of Latin American countries was provided, with special emphasis placed on the Middle and South American countries of Mexico, El Salvador, and Colombia given their unique geopolitical climates. It was revealed that police militarization ranges from "basic" militarized police to paramilitary police towards a constabularized military (see: Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021, Figure 1, Chapter 1). The direct use of the military as police, in this context, was found to be related to the intensification of cartel and gang violence. Lastly, attention was paid to Australia given its sociodemographic and political similarities to Canada. It was found that mass weaponization is

linked to overt police militarization which is increasing police violence towards marginalized groups. The goal of this was section to better understand the multitude of manifestations of militarization to help further our ability to identify it in the Canadian context.

The goal of the second chapter was to provide an historical overview of Canadian police to capture the history of police militarization. It was found that contemporary Canadian policing has roots in British, French, and American traditions. In the 19th century, Canadian police were especially influenced by Sir Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police through his introduction of the uniform and the establishment of a profession of police work. This professionalization ushered in an era of community policing that would influence Canadian policework for the next century and a half. Coupled with rapid urban growth, technological changes, and the advancements of the early 19th century, professionalization led to the advent of local police forces in Canada, the earliest being the Toronto Metropolitan Police in 1835.

Towards the 20th century, there was an increase in the normalization of Canadian police using weapons. Efforts were especially focused on policing Indigenous peoples and the influx of new immigrants. During this period, the decentralization from federal branches ultimately led to the expansion of local police forces. As a result of police being more involved in their communities, community policing became the norm, with citizens holding police accountable for their actions for the first time in history. However, several events in Canada and the US changed police focus from a community-based model towards one of intense securitization and weaponization. During this period, police expenditures on military technologies increased exponentially. Their use also expanded disproportionately towards marginalized communities as a means of fighting [manufactured] high levels of crime. The idea that these groups pose a risk, both political and economic to the interests of elites, was presented. In addition, the idea that

militarization is being driven by either the community violence hypothesis" or the "conflict hypothesis was outlined. As the Canadian landscape became more diverse over time, it was found that these issues intensified – highlighting the importance of understanding if the expansion of these populations is driving this militarization.

The exploration of the history of Canadian police revealed a long history of tensions between police and racial groups in Canada. Scholarship suggests that these tensions have been at the forefront of police violence (see: Carmichael and Kent 2015, Kurtz and Upton 2017) and that increases in crime have been falsely referenced in the expansion of police militarization. In the three substantive chapters of this dissertation, the idea that there are underlying characteristics contributing to an increase in police militarization was evaluated. To identify militarization, the presence of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons were presented as tangible indicators of militarization. To understand what is driving police to acquire these tools, their presence was considered against traditional measures of crime and sociological indicators of risk, including the presence of poverty, ethnic minorities, and Indigenous populations. Results and details of each chapter is presented below.

The third chapter focused on the rise of tactical units in local Canadian policing units. It suggested that tactical units have expanded into routine police work, such as warrant work, traffic enforcement, and responding to mental health calls, constituting a sort of function creep that inherently changes the function of police. An in-depth review was then presented on militarization, focusing on Kraska's (2007) operational/organizational approach. An overview of tactical units in Canada was provided, beginning with their complex history and inception in the 1960s to better understand the increase in their presence and use that started in the 1980s. It was found that rhetoric surrounding an increase in the dangers of crime to routine police work

justified the expansion of these teams. As a result of patrol police being ill-equipped to face the dangers on Canadian streets, the deployment of these units helped supplement police work. An overview of how these units are being used in Canada in the 21st century was also provided. This found that these units are used primarily for mental health crises and no-knock raids, treating the landscape as a war zone (Sidhu 2023). It was found that this phenomenon is intensified when ethnic minorities, the poor, and the mentally ill are involved in these events and calls.

To further comprehend the expansion of tactical units into routine policing, an analysis was performed that considered the role of crime and risk measures on the rise of police militarization. Regression results showed the size of the police force as the most significant indicator of tactical unit ownership when considering crime rates. When considering risk factors, however, the strongest indicator of police owning a tactical unit at the city level is the size of the minority population. Indeed, as the size of this population increases, so too does the likelihood that police will adopt and use a tactical unit as part of their local policing efforts. This reinforces the idea that traditional explanations of increases in crime do not hold and that the rise of tactical unit ownership and use is being driven by fear, risk, and social control.

The fourth chapter focused on the rise and proliferation of armoured vehicles in local Canadian policing. As with tactical units, it was found that police cite an increase in violent crime and threats on Canadian streets as justification for their purchases. The chapter provided an overview of militarization from Kraska's (ibid) material perspective. To follow, an historical outline of armoured vehicles in Canadian policing was undertaken, beginning with their history in the Canadian military and First World War to their entrance into policing in the 1970s. It was found that the shift towards light-armoured vehicles by the military in the 1970s expanded their use from the military to policing, ultimately normalizing their use by local police.

To justify the donation or purchase of these vehicles, it was found that police tend to focus on risk and danger rhetoric, calling these vehicles "rescue" vehicles to overplay their role in fighting crime. It was found that vehicles are being used outside of their intended scope to respond to mental health calls and calls involving disadvantaged groups. To comprehend the underlying mechanisms driving police to acquire these vehicles, a regression analysis revealed the size of the police force as the most significant indicator of armoured vehicle ownership when accounting for crime. However, when measuring the presence of risk, the presence of poverty was found to be the strongest indicator of armoured vehicle ownership at the city level. What results is traditional crime rhetoric using crime rates as justification for the acquisition and use of these vehicles to be another myth of policing. Instead, as with tactical units, it appears as if police are acquiring militarized tools in their pursuit of social control and coercion on the backs of marginalized individuals living in poverty, criminalizing their already dire economic situation.

The fifth and final substantive chapter explored the proliferation and use of assault weapons in Canadian policing. The chapter opened with definitions of assault weapons to provide a more complete understanding of their characteristics. Referred to as "military-style" weapons by police, the expansion of these weapons into routine police work was again justified as a response to a weaponized criminal environment. A material (Kraska ibid) overview of militarization considered the transfer of arms as an indicator, function, and "main ingredient" of militarization. These weapons were then situated in the Canadian context, starting with a brief history of guns in policing. It was found that assault weapons expanded into policing at the turn of the 21st century due in large part to a desire by police to evolve towards more lightweight, long-range, and lethal firepower. The preferred weapons of police, the Colt C8 carbine, and the

Heckler & Koch MP5 were also given a brief descriptive overview to better understand the weapons that police are using more often in their routine policing efforts at the local level.

As with the other substantive chapters, an overview of the rhetoric used by police to justify the purchase of these weapons was provided. In a similar vein, it was found that police continuously shape and re-shape the narrative surrounding these weapons, relying on the idea that there is an increasing threat and danger on Canadian streets while shying away from militarization. An overview of how these weapons are being used by local police found that police are upgrading to assault weapons since Glocks are "not enough to perform their duties." It was also found that police tend to use assault weapons disproportionately when dealing with mental health calls, calls that involve minorities, Indigenous peoples, and in public displays at locations with diverse populations. To analyze what is driving police to acquire assault weapons, a regression analysis found that the strongest indicator of police acquiring an assault weapon is the size of the police force when considering increasing crime rates. When considering risk, however, the strongest indicator of police acquiring and using their assault weapons in routine policing is the size of the ethnic minority population. Indeed, it seems that police are, once again, acquiring weapons of mass destruction to keep minority populations in check. The findings from these three chapters indicate that the conflict hypothesis, as presented in the second chapter, is underlying police militarization and expansion at the local level in Canada.

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At the start of this dissertation, two research questions were presented. The first question asked: "to what extent are Canadian police departments militarizing relative to other militarized countries?" The road to militarization in Canada has arguably been more conservative compared to other developed and developing nations. While one can argue that the Canadian police are

inherently militarized due to their acquisition of military weapons and units, and due to the militaristic nature of policing as an institution, their arrival to the point of outright militarization did not come to fruition until the late 20th century or arguably even the turn of the 21st century. However, since the decentralization of police led to the expansion of local police forces, it can be argued that the growth of militarization in local Canadian police forces since has been quite rapid. This may be due in part to rapid urban growth and rapidly changing sociodemographics. In places like the US, for example, militarization is woven into the fabric of police and their use of lethal weaponry is built into their inherent function, especially given the political climate. In Canada, however, it can be argued that militarization is not part of the fabric of police or their inherent function as police historically worked diligently to separate themselves from the military structure; this is what makes it so shocking. The expansion of tactical units, the normalization of armoured vehicles, and the reliance on assault weapons in routine policing are what brought Canadian police into the realm of militarization and has ultimately sustained it.

To understand what is underlying this rise in militarization, the second question asked: "what are the conditions driving police militarization in Canada?" As was demonstrated in the three substantive chapters in this dissertation, the main underlying driver of police militarization at the local level in Canada is increased ethnic diversity and growing economic stratification. As immigration levels continue to grow the population, and the Canadian mosaic becomes further diversified, it is expected that police will turn to increasingly violent tactics to continue their subjugation of these groups. What's more, considering that police budgets will also increase, this will allow for the procurement of more weapons. While data showed that poverty levels have been decreasing, wealth polarization continues to grow in Canada, with the gap between rich and poor widening. In their pursuit of social control, police will continue to frame these groups as

risks and criminals to justify the continued purchase and use of these weapons. Since these groups act as easy targets for police, given their lack of access to resources or even adequate legal representation to combat police violence, they will likely continue to act as a scapegoat for police violence. Indeed, manufactured crime statistics and perceived dangers will continue to aid in the fabrication of the risk narrative that justifies militarization all while putting our liberal, democratic system at risk and changing the inherent function of police.

2. Urban Warfare: Canada's New Standing Army

"A Canadian Police officer – the new domestic army" (Michael Spratt 2014).

What separates police from the military is arguably their treatment of the "enemy." The military treats the enemy like a combatant whom they are meant to eliminate. Police are expected to recognize the need for help and inherent humanity in the people they serve, bringing them to justice under the law or assisting them in a time of dire need. This difference is what separates the police and the military – but this line has been continuously blurred, with the police treating the people they serve like the enemy combatant, creating a sort of domestic army. One way that police continually justify this behaviour is by claiming that Canadian streets are becoming increasingly dangerous, flooded with enemies and terrorism that only the most expensive and high-tech tools can eliminate. However, throughout this dissertation, empirical evidence has shown that violent crime rates are not increasing in the way that police are claiming and that crime rates were decreasing during some of the periods that saw police expenditures on militarized items drastically increase. What was sincerely on the rise during this period was immigration, the diversification of Canadian society, and an increase in wealth disparity – all targets used by the police to justify their continued militarization. This perpetuation of policing

myths, where crime prevention, crime-fighting, and danger morally justify this shift towards militarization (den Heyer 2013, Phillips 2016) is perpetuated by the socially engineered problems related to risk that police rely on, like the criminalization of poverty and race. What results is a dangerous backdrop for police to continue targeting the most disparate members of society at the expense of maintaining their warrior cop mentalities and elite interests.

Police claim that the acquisition and use of tactical units, armoured vehicles, and assault weapons will greatly reduce crime rates and keep communities safe. However, it has been found that this rhetoric is not supported by the data and has dangerous implications in a free society. Tim Lynch of libertarian thinktank the Cato Institute suggests that it is through the acquisition of military hardware that the police create paramilitary units (and purchase military weapons) to justify the use and acquisition of such weapons in an attempt to make everything "seem fine" (Johnson 2011). However, Lynch continues, as time passes, and the equipment is not used for specialized purposes, it begins to find its way into routine policing (ibid). This function creep has normalized militarized weapons as part of routine policing, as Lynch predicted, and woven police militarization into the function of policing. A growing body of empirical evidence points out that police militarization has little effect on crime rates and may generate negative collateral consequences (see: Gunderson et al., 2019, Insler et al. 2019, Lawson Jr. 2019, Masera 2019, Mummolo 2018). In a study by Mummolo, it was found that the formation and deployment of tactical units did nothing to reduce crime or enhance officer safety (2018), questioning what purpose these tools serve. Bigger trucks, more guns, and more equipment make us feel safer, but they do not make us safer (Spratt 2014), making Canadian police more dangerous than ever.

Aside from militarization not reducing crime rates, it has been found to be most detrimental to minority communities (Gama 2016). Gama contends that police militarization has

the dual impact of increasing state control of coloured bodies while simultaneously increasing protections for whites (ibid). An increase in diversity also creates more opportunities for police to interact with bodies of colour in their routine policing efforts. Sidhu (2023) builds on this by suggesting that the use of tactical units, for example, disproportionately affects racialized people, those living with mental illnesses, and those in economically marginalized communities. What is ironic about police militarization in the Canadian context is that it goes against the sociopolitical reputation of Canada as being a fair, welcoming, and democratic nation where all individuals have a right to freedoms, equality, and a superior quality of life. As was presented in the risk literature at the start of this dissertation, it appears as if police, at the expense of the poor, the mentally ill, and people of colour, are upholding the belief systems of the hegemonic elites whose interests they serve. By preventing individuals from these disadvantaged groups from achieving upward mobility, participating in the democratic process (who tend to vote disproportionately liberal), and becoming active members of society, they can ensure that elites retain their positions and that members of these groups do not displace them. The creation of Canada's new standing army is not meant to protect the constituency it serves, despite the narrative that police and politicians continue to fabricate. In an ironic twist of fate, the militarization of Canadian police has made policing more dangerous and serves to endanger police, begging the question: who exactly does police militarization benefit?

3. Public Perception and the Legitimacy of Canadian Police

The rise and normalization of militarization in the Canadian context have a myriad of consequences. Militarization has been found to make police more prone to using lethal power and violence in places where it is not inherently required. What results is an erosion in the

perception of police by the public which interferes with the police's ability to do their job (Blaskovits et al. 2022). A survey from Statistics Canada found that distrust for and lack of confidence in police tends to be higher among minority groups, with Southeast Asian (63%), Blacks (52%) and Japanese (47%) people in Canada having less confidence than non-minority members who feel that police are doing their jobs well (67%) (2023). Research has found that this may be due to an increase in military technologies that specifically reinforce the perception of police militarization by the public (Madsen 2020). This has put police under fire for their use of these technologies (Quan 2014). A survey conducted in Windsor, Ontario, for example, found that 70% of respondents did not believe that police require military-grade equipment to do their jobs (CBC News Windsor 2014). In news articles on armoured vehicle acquisition, members of the public repeatedly asked why police require these vehicles, with some even feeling as if police are "ready to go to war with the public" (Issawi 2020). This becomes especially apparent when public concern is raised over the fact that police are being disproportionately used to respond to mental health crises (Sauvé in Smith and Ryan 2020) armed with these technologies and tools. While some of the public see these tools as a "waste of money" and "toys for boys" (Postmedia News 2014), what is apparent is that public trust in police, especially by the minority groups that they target, is decreasing as their arsenal of lethal and expensive tools is increasing.

4. The Future of Canadian Police: Recommendations for a Path Forward

One of the most contentious issues surrounding contemporary policing is the notion of defunding the police. This movement stems from the idea that police are over-funded and that the public is not getting "all the police they pay for" (Leuprecht 2014). A complex phrase, definitions range from redistributing a portion of police funds towards social services or projects

that focus on community well-being all the way to the abolishment of the institution altogether (Holtby 2020). The exorbitant growth of police budgets has garnered attention. Leuprecht claims that police are pricing themselves out of business, with police justifying their exorbitant budgets by stoking public fears about safety (2014) even though an increase in budgets has a spurious correlation with response times, the number of officers, and crime rates. In his opinion, police can save on costs by sharing their tactical units, dispatch, and forensics teams, creating provincial standards and processes for hiring, and making the job more streamlined with the use of technology such as lapel cameras (ibid). The debate surrounding police services should focus on what kind of policing Canadians are receiving rather than how much and should prioritize a return to preventative rather than reactive policing to counter its paramilitary culture - all while drastically reducing the amount of tax-payer dollars local police forces have access to.

One approach to defunding police in Canada could consider a Universal Basic Income (UBI) approach as seen in the Denver Basic Income Project. The project, launched in 2022, worked with 820 adults experiencing homelessness by offering them a fixed, basic income over a 12-month period to test the outcomes on housing, financial well-being, physical and psychological health, and public service interactions. Initial results of the project suggest that, during the first year, those in the program reported using their funds to meet their dire and basic needs such as transportation, hygiene, groceries, and clothes while others used the funds to pay bills, rent, debt, healthcare, and car repairs (Arenas 2024). It was found that even smaller amounts of money were associated with significant improvements in housing outcomes while also decreasing the number of nights individuals spent unsheltered or interacting with the justice system. The results of this experiment, Canadian municipalities could follow suit and restructure their budgets to redistribute funds traditionally offered to police (used to purchase armoured

vehicles and assault weapons) to a local UBI pilot project. A program like the Denver project could work in Canadian cities to reduce the interactions of police with people living in poverty, ethnic minorities, and those with mental health issues by equipping them with the right tools to economically sustain themselves. While a project like this would not leave the police without a functional budget, it would do well as a starting point to prevent police from interacting with populations in poverty, which this dissertation has shown they are more likely to use force on. Instead, police could focus their efforts on positive community engagement and responding to true violent crime in lieu of pointing their tactical units, guns, and tanks at the disadvantaged.

Another possible approach to defunding the police would focus on new ways to deal with mental health calls given that police tend to be first on the scene during these calls and disproportionately resort to lethal violence. Few police forces in Canada have attempted to approach this issue. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in British Columbia, for example, have started offering crisis intervention and de-escalation courses as part of its mandatory training where officers learn techniques to help reduce risk to the public and themselves. The training is said to help police assess risk and the ability to identify and respond to subjects in a severe mental health crisis to help them [RCMP] decide on how to deal with the situation from several perspectives (Public Safety Canada 2020). In Nanaimo, a Decal Project has been enacted that is meant to improve relations between police and neurodivergent and autistic individuals. Individuals display a sticker on their car to let the police know that they are neurodiverse/autistic in hopes that the police will interact with them in a way that is reassuring and productive (Nanaimo Bulletin News Staff 2024). While these interventions are a step in the right direction, through a defunding platform, funds could be diverted towards the creation of an internal group of civilians and mental health professionals who work with police and are

dispatched with them on these calls. Given that police are prone to using lethal violence on mentally ill individuals, and changes to mandatory training and the addition of stickers, while an attempt at positive change, is arguably not enough. Employing individuals who specialize in this area would take this burden off police, resulting in a better understanding of the needs of mentally ill individuals while also moving away from lethal violence against the unknown.

4.1 Policy Implications

To charge a path forward that repairs community relations, reduces militarization, moves away from police as mental health responders, and restores trust in police, there is a great deal of work that needs to be done. In a 2021 report chaired by The Honourable John McKay on Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada, a recommendation was made for changing the cultural and structural aspects of policing. It was suggested that police forces address systemic racism by partnering with community members, service providers, and academics to ensure changes to policy and procedures that are evidence-based (Public Safety 2021). As part of the continuing effort to rebuild legitimacy and trust in police, Lockwood et al. (2018) also recommend the creation of national guidelines for the use of military weapons and equipment with specific rules and extensive training commensurate with the rank and assignment of the officer (ibid). They also recommend outreach to local communities, the media, and schools to show the public that military equipment can be effective (and safe) when used appropriately (in proper situations by highly trained individuals), especially since police are in contact with non-White communities who feel a strong sense of distrust due to the presence of these weapons (ibid). Attempting to repair community relations is only one step forward in police regaining the trust of those they serve and is, arguably, one of the most important steps forward in rebuilding their legitimacy.

Alongside rebuilding trust and legitimacy, police need to focus on the de-militarization of their forces. One way to approach this is to make changes to use of force protocols. Wortley et al. (2021) make several recommendations on use of force changes for Canadian police but focus mostly on the idea that police require high-quality training on de-escalation tactics as a primary step. They also recommend that police adopt less-than-lethal use of force options, where firearms should be used only as a last resort, especially when civilians they encounter are not in possession of a firearm (ibid). These changes would be made in conjunction with the hiring of more ethnic and gender-diverse individuals on police forces and continued racial sensitivity and cultural competency training (ibid). In Ontario, the Ontario Government's Comprehensive Police Services Act, which received Royal Assent in 2019, created a right to report police misconduct by both the public and fellow officers (Van Ginkel 2024) without repercussion. In an ideal scenario, having police directly face their misconduct would create better, more capable officers who would show more competency in sensitive situations. However, while these policy recommendations, and all recommendations made in this chapter, attempt to move Canadian police forward, until de-militarization occurs, and police are forced to face their bias towards the poor, people of colour, and the mentally ill, Canadian police will continue to be a standing army who see those who are different than them as the enemy.

5. Conclusion

The overarching goal of this dissertation was to fill a gap in the research examining and understanding the extent to which police in Canada are militarized by considering what is driving this militarization. The analysis conducted repeatedly demonstrated that an increase in ethnic diversity and wealth disparity, not increasing crime rates, is essentially driving police in

Canadian cities, small and large, to adopt armoured vehicles, tactical units, and assault weapons. The dangers of these ideologies are vast. Since policing practices are already likely to target already marginalized populations and use more intense patrols and raids (Gama 2016, Peak 2015), the expansion of militarization into routine policing increases the likelihood that citizens will be shot by police (Delehanty et al. 2017). Police in military gear, and with military tools, kill more civilians than less- or non-militarized officers (Delehanty 2020). The manufactured war on crime that radiates through most modern police services has given rise to a dangerous "us" vs. "them" mentality where every citizen they encounter becomes a potential enemy or symbolic assailant (Wortley 2007). This works to increase tensions with an already tense minority community (ibid). Considering that police are 10 times more likely to kill a Black or Indigenous person than a White person in Canada (Flanagan 2020), the militarization of police increases the likelihood that police will shoot and kill un-armed or mentally ill members of these communities, simply because they "have the tools" to do so. When police go beyond their intended scope and function, they tread into the realm of police militarization (Delehanty et al. 2017). This exposes the public to more aggressive policing and a stronger likelihood of the use of force (ibid), making it more likely that potentially lethal force will be used.

The consequences of police militarization, while mostly felt by the marginalized communities that are already over-policed, arguably extend to all Canadians. As police militarization has lowered and changed the standards of what it means to be a criminal, terrorist, or gang member in Canada, any individual is at risk of falling into these definitions and facing lethal violence at the hands of police. While the data repeatedly demonstrated that crime rates overall were falling, police continued to rely on a generalist, fabricated narrative of increased violence, crime, and terrorism, even manufacturing criminal statistics as part of their justification

strategy. This rhetoric mirrors that of places like Latin America and the US where the police rhetoric inflates violence to justify the use of military strategy in policing. While Canada has long prided itself on being a liberal, democratic nation, this rhetoric treads into the territory of authoritarianism as seen in other militarized nations, threatening the very fabric of Canadian social democratic rights and freedoms. This creates a dangerous precedent where the weaponization of ethnicity and poverty contributes to this narrative of fear, creating a culture of fearmongering and xenophobia towards these groups that is fracturing Canadian culture at its core. In their attempt to protect police and (some of) the community from these manufactured fears, Canadian police are now more lethal than ever. It is not the tools that have made police unsafe, but how and when they choose to use them. Canadian police are overtly militarized, and this is endangering the very political fabric of the country while inviting right-wing extremism into the narrative. The toys that police parade around the streets are only protecting those who pay for them from an uprising by those they fear. It appears as if nobody is truly safe from the plague of police militarization in Canada – only the elites whose interests they serve.

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