

Taking the Reins: An Exploratory Study of Police Leadership Succession and Succession Planning in Canada

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the
School of Criminology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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Fall 2022

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Abstract

Police leaders occupy a critical position in the criminal justice system, in the field of policing, and in the community. Persons in this position must have community, organizational, personal, and political skills, while also demonstrating substantial law enforcement and management experience (Birzer, et al., 2012). Some have suggested that the role of a police leader in the twenty-first century has never been more important or as formidable, given the evolving complexity of the police role in society (Taylor et al., 2022). While there is comprehensive knowledge about many aspects of policing, there is a dearth of information on the police executive and the challenges of police leadership, leadership development, and leader selection. One area that has received scant attention is leadership succession – the replacement of one leader by another – and succession planning. The present study aimed to fill that gap. Taking a qualitative methodological approach, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen (n=16) current and former Canadian police leaders to explore their perceptions, philosophies, and experiences with leadership succession and succession planning. Interviews revealed five key areas, including the current challenges of implementing succession planning; the role of leadership development in succession planning; necessary leadership competencies; incorporating diversity into succession planning; and the role of police boards and commissions in succession planning. Based on this limited sample of interviews, it appears that succession planning in Canadian policing is occurring in a fragmented, uncoordinated manner, driven largely by existing police leaders, and based on little empirical evidence.

Keywords: Policing; Succession; Succession Planning; Leadership; Competency; Police Board

Dedication

For Brian Filbert. An uncle that raised me like his own son.

I just wanted to let you know that I had a great day. I love you.

Acknowledgements

There is an incredible amount of people that played a part in the completion of this incredibly long (far, far, far too long) journey. Number one on that list and standing far above all others is Katherine, the love of my life, adventure partner, and drinking buddy. You've put up with me and this damn dissertation for 7 long years. Dealing with my frequent procrastination, occasional anxiety, panic attacks, and bouts of frustration while helping me through the guilt and shame that hung over my head. You have no idea how thankful I am to have you in my life and grateful for how much you helped me on this journey. I'll never be able to repay you, but I will do everything in my power to try.

To my mother and my aunts. Just knowing that you're there for me – even if “there” is now England – has been so invaluable. Please don't read this dissertation, though, as it will put you to sleep. I love and miss you all!

To Debbie and Ernie, thank you for your support and encouragement throughout this endeavour, and for not giving me too much crap for taking so long to finish it. Debbie, I sincerely appreciate the interest you show in my work. I love you both.

To Lisa for pulling me back when I was on the ledge. That thirty-minute phone call was the turning point in this whole thing. I can't thank you enough for that.

To Dr. Karen Francis for all the tools that you have provided me to get this thing done. Thank you also for your encouragement and support. I would never have finished if not for the work you have done with me.

Finally, to my supervisor, mentor, and friend, Dr. Curt Griffiths. I know that this took far longer than you hoped it would, but I thank you for sticking with me till the bitter end. The work that I have been able to do with you over the last 8 years has been so incredibly valuable and I look forward to so many more policing adventures. Onward, into the fog!

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

The Critical Role of Police Leaders

Police leaders occupy a critical position in the criminal justice system, in the field of policing, and in the community. Persons in this position must have community, organizational, personal, and political skills, while also demonstrating substantial law enforcement and management experience (Birzer, et al., 2012). Police executives must maintain order and enforce the law, model, and preserve ethics and values, establish a strong culture and organizational ethos, address community issues, develop relationships with key stakeholders, develop an organization that can provide professional and quality law enforcement services, while providing leadership to members that perform a complex and challenging job (Griffiths, 2016). Some have suggested that the role of a police leader in the twenty-first century has never been more important or as formidable, given the evolving complexity of the police role in society (Taylor et al., 2022).

This evolution is taking place within an operational context that includes increasing accountability and requirements for transparency; public scrutiny; the adoption of technology in policing (e.g., body-worn cameras, drones, and sophisticated analytical software); the increasing visibility of police; the changing boundaries of policing; continued downloading of responsibilities; concurrent crises of homelessness, addiction, and mental illness; new fiscal realities associated with the economics of policing narrative; an increasingly diverse workforce; a growing focus on employee health and wellness; and the nebulous issue of police legitimacy – particularly in Indigenous, racialized and marginalized communities (Griffiths, 2020). It is also occurring amid increasing social and political pressure to reform policing (Brown, 2021).

A contemporary police leader must navigate this new reality, while also ensuring that their police service operates as effectively and efficiently as possible. Including implementing private sector practices such as strategic planning, environmental scanning, and the use of evidence-based decision making, as well as working to ensure

that the police service becomes a learning organization and seeks constant improvement and growth (Griffiths, 2016).

Given the integral role of police leadership, it is both surprising and concerning that it remains an under-studied aspect of Canadian policing and the reform of police practice (Sopow, 2019; Abela, 2012). While there is comprehensive knowledge about many aspects of policing, there is a dearth of information on the police executive and the challenges of police leadership, leadership development, and leader selection (Abela, 2012; Ourtram et al., 2014; Sopow, 2019; Huey et al., 2019; Brown, 2021); One area that has received scant attention is leadership succession – the replacement of one leader by another – and succession planning (Michelson, 2006; Schafer, 2010; Cuthbertson, 2018; Rodrigue, 2020). Little is known about how police services plan for executive succession, the challenges and opportunities that exist, and the impact that succession has on police organizations and their personnel. Such a gap is perplexing, as in 2007 the (now dissolved) Police Sector Council said that police chiefs recognize that, “developing leadership and succession planning is the greatest issue facing their organizations today and will continue to be at least their second most important issue in the future” (p. 173, as cited in Abela, 2012, p. 3).

Succession planning remains as critical now as it did then, as policing and police leadership experience a demographic shift from baby boomers and Gen Xers to millennials (Murray, 2019). Such a shift will invariably involve turnover at the executive level, creating a void in leadership that will need to be filled (Abela, 2012). With police services undergoing inevitable executive change, it provides a unique opportunity to explore the issue of succession and the challenges that it poses to police services.

Police Leadership Turnover and the Need for Succession Planning

It is important to note that the tenure of Canadian police leaders is not as tentative as their American counterparts, where a relatively short period of service in the position has become typical for many chiefs (Burack, et al., 1997). The short tenure of American police executives is not a recent development. In 1992, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) reported that, in a five-year period between 1987 and 1992, police chiefs in 41 of the 50 largest cities in the United States either resigned or were dismissed (Fraser et al., 1996). Peak and Glensor (1996, as cited in Laintz, 2015)

reported that the tenure of municipal chiefs during this time decreased from 5.5 years to four years.

The high rate of turnover in American police leadership has increased in recent years with the average tenure of police chiefs falling to 2.5 years (Hall, 2015). This is unlikely to change considering the challenges to legitimacy facing police services following high-profile officer-involved shootings and deaths in custody, most notably the death of George Floyd in May 2020 during an encounter with police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Police leaders in Canada appear to experience more job stability than those in the US, though since 2000, there have been a few high-profile cases of chiefs under pressure, most notably the resignation of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) commissioner (Murray, 2019). While dismissals of this sort do occur, they have generally been for cause. Murray (2019) believes that the current generation of police leaders face less pressure of highly publicized dismissal or resignation and seem to be better prepared (for whatever reasons) to weather storms of criticism than previous generations. This is not to say that these events do not occur, however, as evidenced by the recent abrupt resignation of the Chief of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS), amid public and political outcry over the OPS's response to the January/February 2022 occupation of the city's Parliament Hill and parts of its downtown core by "Freedom Convoy" protestors (CBC.ca, 2022). While the chief's resignation garnered national attention because of the intense public and political scrutiny of the Ottawa protests, it also stood out because a sudden departure of this nature is relatively rare in Canadian policing.

Though seeming to have better job security than their US counterparts, there is no established average tenure for Canadian police executives (approximate or otherwise), so it is difficult to definitively assess the job stability (or lack thereof) of police chiefs in Canada. It is also difficult to determine whether the OPS Chief's resignation is an isolated event or a possible harbinger of things to come as the public and political scrutiny on police services intensifies. As Indigenous and other racialized communities continue to speak out about their negative experiences with police, and as high-profile incidents involving police are increasingly magnified in the media, the pressure on Canadian police leaders may begin to mount.

Though a rarity, the experience of the Ottawa Chief highlights the potential for sudden leadership change to occur and illustrates the need for police services to have a plan in place for when it does. This is not to say that police services must engage in succession planning specifically because they may experience a sudden change in leadership. There are other aspects of the current context that point to the need for succession planning. For example, Murray (2019) has observed that the current generation of police leaders come from the “tail end” of the baby boom generation and entered policing in the 1980s (p. 214). As this group has been in policing for over thirty years, it is reasonable to expect that most of them are currently or quickly approaching retirement age, creating openings for a new generation of police leaders, and necessitating a level of urgency in the areas of leadership development and succession planning.

Currently, it is unknown to what degree succession planning is being implemented in Canadian police services or if the tenure of the organizations’ executives is leading to succession planning. Succession planning is the realization that an individual will not be in the organization forever and should be a priority for all responsible and capable leaders (Michelson, 2006). Axelrod (2002, as cited in Laintz, 2015) defines succession planning as, “an ongoing systematic process that boards, with the help of their chief executives, can use to create an environment for chief executives to succeed from the very beginning of their term until the cycle is repeated with their successors” (p. 2). In broad terms, it is a process through which public and private organizations plan for the transfer of ownership and/or top management (Ip & Jacobs, 2006). Ip and Jacobs (2006) caution that succession planning should not be confused with replacement planning. On the one hand, replacement planning is often referred to as “a means of risk/crisis management aimed at reducing the likelihood of catastrophe from the unplanned loss of key personnel” (Rothwell, 2001, p. 7). On the other hand, succession planning necessitates a longer term and more extensive approach to the training and replacement of key individuals (Wolfe, 1996; Rothwell, 2010). It is the strategic planning instrument that concentrates on the issues created when a leader leaves an organization, and it provides a bridge of knowledge created by that person’s departure (Laintz, 2015).

A Worthy Topic of Study

There are several recent examples that point to the importance of studying how police organizations plan for leadership succession and the dynamics involved in leadership development and selection. A prime example is the two-year process for naming a permanent replacement for the Chief of the Toronto Police Service following his retirement in July 2020. The Calgary Police service recently faced controversy based on a decision to rehire a deputy chief on contract one day after his retirement, effectively providing him with two pensions (Calgary Herald, 2022). Though not necessarily related to succession planning, this event does raise questions about executive hiring policies and practices. Additionally, in 2017 the then Chief of the Saanich Police Department retired only to be immediately rehired by the police board on a two-year contract. As part of the reasoning for this, the Mayor of Saanich implied that the board did not feel the department had a capable successor in place (Check News, 2017). Moreover, the suspected political interference in the firing of the Deputy Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, and subsequent attempt to appoint a friend of the Premier as Commissioner further highlights the need to explore the dynamics of leadership selection and succession.

The researcher's home province of British Columbia exemplifies the diverse approaches to leadership selection and succession that taken by various police services. For example, the Metro Vancouver Transit Police offers a lesson in extreme leadership turnover, going through nine chief constables since its inception in 2005. On the other end of the spectrum is the Delta Police Department, where the previous chief held the position for twenty-two years before retiring. That two agencies within the same geographic area – the Lower Mainland of BC – could have such diverse leadership experiences would suggest that this is a worthy area of study.

Furthermore, working on various research projects for several police services in Canada, has provided me with the opportunity to observe the impact of leadership succession on an organization. I have worked with police agencies that recently experienced leadership succession and was able to gain insight into how the organizational dynamics are affected by a change in leadership. I have also witnessed what occurs in an organization that experiences multiple leadership changes within a short time span, and how a lack of succession planning can contribute to organizational

instability, undermine culture, and stunt growth. While recently taking part in a review of a municipal police service, a key theme that emerged was the impact that a change in leadership can have on morale and, more specifically, the mental health and well-being of both sworn and civilian personnel. Given the significant impact that leadership succession can have on an organization, it is important to understand how police services are planning for it.

The reality is, leadership turnover in policing is an inevitability and is something that police services should likely be preparing for. However, there is a gap in the existing literature on succession planning in policing (Michelson, 2006). Much of the succession planning literature is limited to public and private agencies and the military (Jarrell & Pewitt, 2007; Cuthbertson, 2018). Though research on effective leadership in policing has been underexplored relative to other fields, the inclusion of succession planning in policing has been introduced by executive level training or agency mandate (Schafer, 2010). Yet, little is known about how police leaders view succession planning and how they have gone about implementing it within their organizations. There is a similar dearth of knowledge on the role of police boards and commissions in leadership succession planning. This is a considerable gap given that boards are ultimately responsible for hiring the chief and setting a police service's strategic priorities (LaLonde & Kean, 2003).

Research Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to fill the gap in knowledge about leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian policing. Given the paucity of research on this topic, this study is exploratory in nature and seeks to gain insight into police leaders' perceptions of and experiences with succession planning, as well as identifying what police leaders are doing to manage succession within their organizations. Thus, the aim of the research was to provide a snapshot into "what is" with respect to leadership succession and succession planning in Canada, and to serve as a jumping-off point for future research on this critically important topic.

Additional goals of this study included examining the role of leadership development programs and advanced education in succession planning; identifying what police leaders view as necessary leadership competencies; exploring the role of diversity in succession planning and leadership development; and investigating the involvement

of police boards and commissions in succession planning. The objective is for the findings of this study to contribute to and improve the overall body of knowledge on police leadership and leadership succession in Canadian policing.

This research was focused on the perceptions of municipal police leaders and did not include the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The RCMP is a federal police service that is also contracted to do provincial policing for all provinces and territories except for Ontario, Quebec, and part of Newfoundland (Griffiths, 2020). It also has contracts to police municipalities across Canada. The RCMP's governance and headquarters is in Ottawa, its members are trained in Regina, Saskatchewan, and leadership selection and staffing are completed regionally (Abela, 2012). A unique feature of RCMP leadership is that its Officers in Charge (OIC) (i.e., detachment commanders) frequently move around the country as part of the national staffing model. This frequent movement of leaders is not as common in municipal policing. As such, a decision was made to exclude the RCMP from this study, because its structure and mandate differs widely from most independent municipal police services in Canada.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were centred on two primary areas of interest. First, it is unclear to what degree Canadian police services have developed standardized succession planning policies and processes, making it difficult to assess police services' preparedness for leadership change. Second, Canadian policing is facing significant challenges that are testing the ability of police leaders to effectively guide their organizations and support their employees, while overseeing the implementation of necessary reforms. As such, the heightened pressure and scrutiny have the potential to make the position of police leaders less stable, increasing the potential for leadership change. Therefore, it is important to understand the degree to which police services, and police governance boards, are prepared for leadership change. To explore this topic, the present study sought to answer the following overarching research questions:

- RQ1: What insight can police leaders' respective leadership journeys provide about leadership development and succession planning in Canadian policing?

- RQ2: To what degree are police services implementing formal succession planning policies and processes, and what are the challenges and opportunities facing them?
- RQ3: What are the key challenges and opportunities facing police leaders following a succession event?
- RQ4: What role do police boards play in leadership succession?

Research Sample and Method

This study utilized a qualitative research framework, employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. Hesse-Biber (2016) states that:

“The in-depth interview is important to qualitative research because it uses individuals as the point of departure for the research process and assumes that individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social world that is ascertainable and able to be understood through verbal communication” (p. 105).

Qualitative interviews can be used to gather exploratory and descriptive data, making them an ideal data-gathering tool for this research. Semi-structured interviews were utilized because they enable the researcher to guide the conversation and ask specific research questions, while also allowing participants some latitude and freedom to talk about what is of interest to them (Hesse-Biber, 2016). A semi-structured approach allows for more natural conversations, granting participants the freedom to identify areas of discussion that the researcher may not have previously considered (Hesse-Biber, 2016). In this case, police leaders are far more well-versed in the issues surrounding leadership succession, and thus, a semi-structured approach offered them some freedom to touch on issues that they viewed as being worthy of discussion and important to the study.

Following ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board (REB), interviews were conducted with sixteen current and former police leaders from across the country. The original plan was to conduct in-person interviews; however, as this study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, fifteen of the sixteen interviews were performed using Zoom or Microsoft Teams, while one interview was

performed via telephone¹. Recent research on the use of videoconferencing software for research interviews had identified several potential benefits of this approach, including easing rapport-building, and enabling more expansive recruiting (Jenner & Myers, 2019; Archibald et al., 2019; Oliffe et al., 2021). Both benefits were identified in the present study also. Lastly, data gathered from interviews were analyzed, resulting in the identification of key themes that are discussed in the results section of this dissertation.

Summary

As policing faces new and complex challenges, the significance of police leadership has arguably never been greater. Thus, it is important to understand what police are doing to prepare the next generation of police leaders. Although police scholars and practitioners have acknowledged that leadership development and succession planning are key considerations in policing, little is known about what police services are doing to plan for leadership succession. This exploratory study sought to fill that gap by exploring a sample of Canadian police leaders' perceptions, philosophies, and experiences with succession planning and leadership development.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on police leadership and succession planning in the public and private sectors. This is followed by a review of the literature on succession planning in policing, police leadership development, competency frameworks in policing, and the role of police boards and commissions in succession planning. Chapter 3 outlines the sample and method used in this exploratory study. The findings and discussion section are divided into two chapters. Chapter 4 presents a discussion of the findings of this research relating to the implementation of succession planning and leadership development and includes detailed quotes from the in-depth interviews with participants. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings on leadership competencies, incorporating diversity into succession planning, and the role of police boards in succession planning. Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the implications of the research, the identification of future research directions, limitations of the study, and the conclusion.

¹ This interview was originally meant to be conducted with Zoom; however, the participant had technological issues, and instead the interview was shifted to telephone.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Although policing is a unique profession with characteristics that distinguish it from other public and private sector entities, as with organizations in other sectors, police services experience leadership turnover. Leadership exit can occur in a variety of contexts and take number of forms. The exit process can be initiated by retirement, termination, merger, sale, acquisition, internal transition, death, disability, unexpected resignation, investigation, or indictment (Austin & Salkowitz, 2009; Kesner & Sebor, 1994). Subsequently, the impact of leader succession on organizational performance has been a topic of interest in discussions of strategic leadership (Canella & Rowe, 1995; Giambatista, 2004). The impetus for this interest is the notion that leaders can have a significant impact on the performance of their organizations. It has been argued that leader's matter (Chatterjee, et al, 1999; Boal & Hooijbert, 2000).

Other observers are more skeptical of the influence of leaders, arguing that their impact is overrated (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985, as cited in Rowe et al., 2005), substituted for (Kerr & Jermier, 1978, as cited in Rowe et al., 2005), and is primarily a construction of the popular press (Chen & Meindl, 1991, as cited in Rowe et al., 2005). These opposing points of view have produced research in the field of leadership succession that essentially argues that if leader succession negatively or positively affects performance, then leaders do matter; conversely, if leader succession does not affect performance, then leaders do not matter (Giambatista et al., 2005).

This study is focused on succession planning for police leadership and the following discussion is centred on two overarching themes: leadership, and succession planning. The first component of the literature review will provide a brief review of the literature on leadership in policing. The focus will then shift to the literature on succession planning, including a definitions of succession planning and a general overview of the succession planning literature. This is followed by a discussion of private and public sector succession planning research. Next is an examination of the current practices of police leadership succession planning. After this is an overview of the literature on police leadership development and competency frameworks in police services. The review concludes with a brief discussion of the role of police governance in succession planning.

Leadership in Policing

According to Sopow (2019), the existing literature on leadership has produced over 2,000 definitions spanning over 35,000 peer reviewed articles and other credible publications such as books, websites, and professional journals. Amongst this literature are a plethora of related theories of leadership and leadership models “ranging from simplistic to complex available from private sector consultants, public and private sector organizations, as well as a continuous flow of elaborate and sophisticated models developed in academia” (Sopow, 2009, p. 5). Both Sopow (2019) and Abela (2012) have provided useful overviews of the varying schools of thought that have informed various models of leadership over time.

As the primary focus of this study is on succession planning in executive leadership, for the purposes of this review, leadership will be focused on senior leadership roles – specifically police chiefs or commissioners. Pearson-Goff and Herrington (2013) explained that senior leadership is “all about providing vision and a sense of mission” and involves “critical thinking, strategic planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and emphasizes delegation and collaboration within (and outside of) the organization” (p. 18-19). According to Bass and Avolio (1993, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019) most senior leaders in any organization serve as influential role models, and good, effective leadership at the top of a police service is crucial. Others contend that police leadership is integral to the well-being and perceived safety of the communities they serve (Brown, 2021).

Chiefs have a significant impact on the culture of the organization and can determine whether a police service will adopt best practices, be evidence-based, and be a learning organization (White & Robinson, 2014; Griffiths, 2020). They are also often the point persons for creating positive relationships with communities and ensuring that there are open lines of communication between their agencies and citizens (Griffiths, 2020). Consequently, most studies of police leadership focus on how influential leaders are (Brown, 2021). Yet, owing to its uniqueness as a profession (Gibson & Villiers, 2007; Haberfield, 2006; Sopow, 2009; Sopow, 2019), existing models of leadership and management cannot be easily applied to policing (Sopow, 2019). Further, despite the importance of police leaders to the overall functioning and well-being of organizations and communities, police leadership remains ill-defined (Haberfield, 2006; Golding &

Savage, 2008; Schafer, 2009; Neyroud, 2019) and lacking in theoretical applicability (Dobby et al., 2004).

Though there is a lack of an agreed-upon definition of police leadership in the literature, one thing that police scholars and practitioners do seem to agree on is that the demands and expectations of police leaders have grown in complexity (Cockcroft, 2014; Loftus; 2010; White & Robinson, 2014; Sopow, 2019; Taylor et al., 2022) due largely to the rapidly evolving external environment (Sopow, 2019). In this changing operational context, police leaders are being asked to navigate their organizations through new challenges and sweeping social changes, while implementing much needed reforms (Dobby et al., 2004; Brown, 2021; Taylor et al., 2022). As such, “Senior police leaders must be well-versed in maneuvering a change platform and working with diverse groups to manage and influence their change agenda both internal and external to the service” (White & Robinson, 2014, as cited in Giles, 2020, p. 19). Therefore, the challenge for police services is to ensure that their leadership philosophy, processes, and daily practices are aligned with meeting the demands of policing in the 21st century (Sopow, 2019). A key issue, however, is that little is known about what these current processes and practices look like in Canadian policing.

As Brown (2021) observed, most international research on police leadership has largely focused on leadership characterization and style – including transactional, transformational, and more recently, ethical leadership (Berringer, 2005; Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2013; Cockcroft, 2014; Neyroud, 2019; Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019; Sopow, 2019). It has also examined the effects of leadership (or how specific conditions and culture(s) of the police inform leadership practices (Haake et al., 2015; Cockcroft, 2019; Davis, 2019). Much less is known about how police leaders are identified (Brown, 2021; Abela, 2012) and the policing and processes that exist for leadership development, promotion, and succession management, despite it being identified as a critical issue in Vollmer’s work in the 1930s (Decker, 2018, as cited in Brown, 2021). This is a critical gap in the literature, particularly if Taylor et al.’s (2022) concerns about the availability of quality leadership are to be believed. They contend that the stream of available leadership talent in Canadian policing is extremely narrow, which would suggest that Canadian police services are doing a poor job of identifying, developing, and promoting leaders that are prepared to take on the challenges of 21st century policing now and beyond.

Michelson (2006) has noted that contemporary police leadership is at a crossroads, with a growing number of police leaders vacating their positions, in some cases leaving their organizations in crisis. As such, it is important to assess whether the next generation is ready to lead and whether police services have the necessary processes in place to be successful (Michelson, 2006). The current research is designed to examine one component of this process by investigating leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian police services.

Succession Planning

Succession planning has been defined as the process of identifying employees who have the right talents, abilities, and skills to advance in an organization, while meeting the challenges facing the organization (Hicks, 2000, as cited in Laintz, 2015). Garman and Glawe (2004) viewed succession planning as, “a structured process involving the identification and preparation of a potential successor to assume a new role” (p. 120). Bratton (2008) stated that succession planning is the process of reviewing an agency for leadership talent, identifying possible successors, and then providing those individuals with the training, mentoring and support required for preparing them for key organizational roles when vacancies emerge. Furthermore, according to Soares et al. (2021, as cited in Obianuju et al., 2021) succession planning is “a deliberate and systematic process of ensuring the storage of valuable corporate knowledge needed for business continuity by identifying and grooming future leaders who can replace current leaders when they die, retire, or leave the organization” (p. 70).

This process generally begins by evaluating the skill sets of all senior members of management followed by identifying middle managers that could be potentially replace senior managers in the future (Bano et al., 2021). Potential replacements then undergo training to develop and improve the skills required to enter leadership positions when needed (Bano et al. 2021). Thus, as Obianuju et al. (2021) contend, succession planning should be viewed as a continuous process rather than as a one-time event. This process needs to be regularly updated and re-evaluated, as changes occur in both the internal and external environments.

Cuthbertson (2018) described the current state of the succession planning literature as a mix of scholarly empirical research and technical articles produced by

practitioners in the spheres of business, education, medical, military, and government. Garman and Glawe (2004) found a dearth of peer reviewed research on succession planning, specifically in establishing a business case for its implementation. Barnett and Davis (2009) criticized succession planning models, arguing that most are “replacement-oriented processes towards replicating and replacing current leadership” (as cited in Abela, 2012, p. 32), with little research to assess the effectiveness of this approach. Schepker et al., (2018) added that despite the substantive organizational consequences, there is little theory that explains executive succession planning processes. Further, Abela (2012) noted that while many organizations have the strategic goal to plan for the succession of their leaders within their strategic or business planning documents, there are few organizations that provide the process or guidelines that are used to achieve desired results. The reasons for this may be unclear, though it may be attributable to lack of accessible policy documents, or it may be due to a general lack of a succession planning process. More recently, a systematic review of the succession planning literature over the last decade by Obianuju et al. (2021) found that academic interest in this area ebbed and flowed.

While much of the above research comes from North America, little is being done to study succession planning in Canada specifically. Further, most of the extant succession planning literature is focused on the private sector, with succession planning in the public sector being considerably under-researched (Obianuju et al. 2021), making it a worthy area for exploration and future scholarship. Likely contributing to the dearth of public sector research is the fact that the introduction of succession planning to the criminal justice system, is relatively new (Cuthbertson, 2018). This is particularly true within policing, where there is very little scholarship on leadership succession and succession planning.

Despite these gaps in research, there is an identified need for succession planning in police services (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1999; Murphy, 2006; Oppal, 1994; Police Sector Council, 2007, Abela, 2012). According to Barnett and Davis (2008) succession planning serves the dual function of providing, “the process and structure for identifying and understanding the leadership talent in an organization, and...they emphasize and facilitate ongoing learning and development for the organizations most talented leaders” (p. 722). Bratton (2008) added that succession planning is a valuable retention tool, in that “employees that have a clear idea of what

their career path, leadership potential, training and personnel development investments are more likely to stay with that agency” (p. 5). Studying the succession of CEOs in the corporate sphere, Schepker et al. (2018) found that instituting formalized succession processes increases the chances of overcoming both informational challenges and sociopolitical dynamics in corporations.

Research suggests that a well-executed and formalized succession planning process is expected to benefit organizations in a variety of ways (Obianuju et al., 2021). This includes acting as a motivational tool for employees who see opportunities for advancement, and thus, leading to increased empowerment and job satisfaction (El Badawy et al., 2016, as cited in Obianuju et al., 2021). That is, promoting from within is good for employee morale and improve organizational culture (Ibarra, 2005, as cited in Ransom, 2010). Additionally, a clear succession plan also encourages and facilitates mentorship from senior managers to younger employees as an approach to transferring knowledge and expertise, thus contributing to organizational continuity (Weisblat, 2018). A formalized succession plan also allows organizations to measure the value that their employees provide, making for an easier internal promotional process (Best, 2016). Lastly, a formal succession plan allows organizations to be better prepared for the need replace the current baby boomer generation of leaders that have begun to and continue to retire (Martin & O’Shea, 2021).

Yet, given its critical importance to the long-term sustainability of an organization, succession planning appears to be absent in many organizations (Obianuju et al., 2021). For example, studies of succession planning in family businesses have found that most of these businesses did not have formal or written succession plans (Seaman et al., 2013; Jain, 2014; Albrubaishi, 2017), leading to a lack of continuity across generations. A lack of succession planning has also been found in educational institutions (Klein & Salk, 2013; Huynh et al., 2017; Peter-Hawkins et al., 2018), the healthcare sector (Titzer et al., 2013; Cole & Harbour, 2015; Richins, 2018; Vito, 2018), and the legal sector (Griggs, 2016; Gallagher, 2017). For example, a national survey of local US health departments found only 39.5% of these departments had a formal succession plan (Darnell & Campbell, 2016), while a survey of US law firms found that only 31% had formal succession plans (Griggs, 2016).

Research in all three areas (education, healthcare, and law) may be useful to the study of succession planning in policing. In the case of educational institutions, a barrier to the implementation of succession planning is the fact that they are governed by boards of trustees that are often resistant to change (Klein & Salk, 2013; Goldman, 2020). Such a finding may help to inform an examination of succession planning in Canadian policing, given the fact that most municipal police services are governed by independent boards and commissions. Further, in healthcare it has been stated that with the millennial generation set to replace the baby boomer generation as the largest proportion of the workforce, healthcare institutions must ensure that succession planning processes are transparent and collaborative, as these are characteristics on which millennials place high value (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017; Payne et al., 2018; Chang & Besel, 2020). The situation facing healthcare is similar to policing where millennials are also making up an increasingly larger percentage of the workforce. Finally, there is an identified need for implementing succession planning in law firms since many of the senior partners are baby boomers who have already retired or are likely to retire in the next few years (Griggs, 2016; Gallagher, 2017), which is akin to the current state of senior police leaders.

Private Sector Succession Planning

As previously noted, much of the succession planning literature is focused on the private sector, which is due, in large part, to the fact that private sector companies are more likely than public sector entities to have formal succession planning processes. Within Canada, the Police Sector Council (2007) found that 60% of private sector companies have a formal process for identifying leadership potential compared to approximately 33% of public sector organizations (as cited in Abela, 2012). Cuthbertson (2018) adds that the private sector has historically been stronger at cultivating new talent from within to replace retiring personnel.

For example, the automaker BMW implemented an organizational sustainability model that has continuous development, long-term staff retention, valuing people, and internal succession planning as core practices (Avery & Bergsteiner, as cited in Cuthbertson, 2018). Both PepsiCo and Caterpillar have been identified as having developed and implemented effective succession planning processes (Fulmer et al., as cited in Abela, 2012). Additionally, Schepker et al. (2018) cite McDonald's appointment

of a new CEO less than twenty-four hours after the death of their current CEO as a strong example of an organization that was prepared to handle a sudden departure due to good succession planning.

However, the private sector has not mastered succession planning. For example, a study of 4500 leaders from over 900 organizations found that close to one-third of internally sourced leaders fail (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006, as cited in Abela, 2012), while Charan (2005) observed that 34% of internally hired CEOs were forced to resign. Such findings suggest that there are flaws within the succession planning processes being utilized within organizations.

To understand the impact of leader succession, and to explore the need for succession planning, the private sector succession research has sought to identify the contexts in which succession takes place. Gothard and Austin (2013) identify five types of succession. The first is *relay succession*, which involves identifying a member of senior management in an organization as heir apparent well in advance of the actual transition. This provides a period of overlap for the outgoing executive to transfer knowledge and power to the successor (Vancil, 1987, as cited in Gothard & Austin, 2013). The next is *non-relay inside succession*, which occurs when the successor is promoted from within, but through a competitive process involving several key internal candidates (Friedman & Olk, 1995, as cited in Gothard & Austin, 2013). An *outside succession* takes place when the successor is hired externally (Zhang 2006). Further, a *coup d'etat* is when stakeholders other than the incumbent organize to make swift succession decisions (Friedman & Olk, 1995, as cited in Gothard & Austin, 2013). Lastly is *boomerang* succession in which a leader from a previous era is brought back to lead again. In policing, a prominent example of boomerang succession is William Bratton who served as the commissioner of the New York Police Department (NYPD) in the mid-90s, moved on to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and then returned to be the commissioner of the NYPD from 2013-2016.

While studies have attempted to compare these succession models, there continues to be a debate about whether internal or external hires are more successful (Gandossy & Verma, 2006; Garman & Glawe, 2004; Kesler & Sebora, 1994). External succession has been found to produce stronger results than internal non-relay succession when overall instability in the sector is high (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004).

One of the reasons that companies are interested in hiring an outsider is that insider candidates are not as attractive to corporate boards as outsiders (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). However, Khurana (2002) suggests that hiring a candidate based on the excitement level that they generate, or their level of “charisma” is risky, with the hiring of a charismatic outsider as CEO often ends in failure.

Gandossy & Verna (2006) found that internally groomed CEOs received higher returns from shareholders than outsider CEOs. Internal successors are less likely to suffer from adverse selection problems (Zhang, 2008) and are associated with positive long-term firm performance (Schepker et al., 2015; Shen & Canella, 2002). Shen and Canella (2002) stated that this is less likely with external succession because it is a disruption to the firm, and thus, tends to be followed by turnover of other top management team members. This can deprive the incoming (outside CEO) of vital managerial talent during the transition period when the new CEO is developing his knowledge of the company, which can further magnify the negative effects of external CEO succession on organizational performance (Shen & Canella, 2002).

Bower (2007, as cited in Gothard & Austin, 2013) makes an argument for hiring an “internal outsider,” or an individual that has a deep understanding of the company’s history and its key stakeholders yet is not overly attached to the status quo and possesses the skills and desire to lead the organization through a change process (as cited in Gothard & Austin, 2013). This may be difficult in policing, given its hierarchical structure and the fact that the likely internal successor is a deputy chief who may share much of the same philosophy and management style of the out-going leader. It may be easier for larger police services that have multiple deputies to find an “internal outsider” – that is, a deputy that has a different philosophy or background than the person he or she is replacing.

Zhang and Rajagopalan (2004) found that relay succession improved performance when compared to outside succession or internal non-relay succession – particularly when pre-succession organizational performance was low and when post succession instability in the industry or sector was high. However, other researchers are more skeptical of relay succession due to the resulting loss of flexibility, the risks associated with losing the candidate, the potential to select the wrong successor or creating an internal power struggle (Gothard & Austin, 2013). Furthermore, Shen and

Canella (2003) reported that stakeholders react poorly to the departure of an internally groomed candidate, but positively to the successful promotion of an internal candidate via relay succession. Others have suggested that if relay succession is to be used, the organization needs to allow time for selecting, training, assessing, grooming, and creating a transition timetable (Santora, 2004). Zhang and Rajagopalan (2004) found that grooming may produce the best results in the private sector; however, Gothard & Austin (2013) stated that the non-profit literature finds that too much overlap in the transition can diminish an incoming executive's authority.

Following up on their previous research, Zhang and Rajagopalan (2010) examined the preference of corporate organizations to hire leaders (CEOs) from outside the organization versus candidates that were internally trained and developed through succession planning. They held that hiring an external candidate to become a CEO was unsustainable because while it results in a short-term increase in performance for the organizations, the performance will decrease over time and weaken in the long term (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). In the first three years of tenure, strategic changes under the leadership of an outside CEO and strategic changes under an insider CEO provide the same level of performance in terms of return on investment or assets. However, after three years, significant strategic changes under the leadership of an outside CEO are more disruptive and detrimental to organizational performance than changes made by the inside CEO (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010).

Therefore, while many organizations hire outsiders for their ability to introduce new strategies and ideas to the organization, evidence suggests that the performance benefits are stronger long-term for firms that hire internal successors (Zhang and Rajagopalan, 2010; Schepker et al., 2017). As a former "Fortune 50" CEO mentioned to Schepker et al. (2018), "Companies that go outside [the organization for a successor] validate the fact that they do not have a robust succession planning process" (p. 528). They conclude that hiring an internal successor is one way to assess the effectiveness of succession planning.

An implication of these findings is that it is evident that new leaders, whether internally or externally hired, are likely to make changes early in their tenure. There is an attempt to make a statement that their tenure is distinct or different from the tenure of their predecessor(s). However, it may take a considerable period for the performance

impact of the changes initiated by newly appointed CEOs to be fully seen (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). The relative differences between inside and outside CEOs regarding the strategic changes that they implement and the subsequent impact on performance of those changes – are not immediately evident (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010).

Research has also revealed that outside CEOs face a greater risk to their career than inside CEOs (Charan, 2005). Zhang (2008) found that, under the same performance conditions, outside CEOs are more likely to be dismissed with a short tenure than inside CEOs. This can create a vicious-circle type situation in the organization's CEO succession process (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). Zhang (2008) found that if a predecessor CEO was dismissed, the successor CEO is almost two times more likely to be dismissed, as compared with a CEO whose predecessor voluntarily abdicated the position. This is since the dismissal of a predecessor CEO can lead to the bypassing of a normal succession process and forces the firm to select another new CEO in an unplanned manner (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010).

There is pressure to fill the leadership vacuum with a new candidate in a short time; however, there is little time to prepare an internal candidate or undertake an exhaustive search for external candidates (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). Additionally, the dismissing of a predecessor – in the private sector – typically occurs under pressure from shareholders (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). Consequently, the resulting succession process is driven by the desire to quickly restore investor confidence rather than by a careful consideration of the CEO skillset and abilities that the organization ultimately needs (Wieresma, 1992). From a policing perspective this internal/external consideration is something that those in a position to hire a new executive may need to consider.

Schepkner et al. (2018) observed that a gap in much of the private sector literature on succession is that most studies of CEO succession examine the immediate causes or consequences of succession and fail to consider the actual process of succession. As a result, little is known about how corporate boards manage the succession planning process and the literature does not offer guidance for best practices (Finkelstein et al., as cited in Schepkner et al., 2018).

What is known suggests that succession planning does provide considerable short and long-term benefits to businesses. For example, a meta-analysis of recent succession planning studies found that succession planning positively impacts business survival and organizational outcomes, provided the successor has been mentored trained and subject to a formal leadership development process (Obianuju et al., 2021). This finding suggests that leadership development and training are key components of any formalized succession planning process. Moreover, the same meta-analysis found that businesses with formal succession plans outperformed those without formal succession plans and succession planning had a positive effect on a company's adaptability and dynamic capability, providing a competitive advantage over rivals (Obianuju et al., 2021).

Schepker et al. (2018) found that formal succession planning processes – defined as “systematic formalized processes designed to collect and analyze relevant information and promote comprehensive and systematic succession planning outcomes” (p. 525) – improve the decision-making of corporate boards by “increasing the likelihood that organizations consider multiple successor candidates, the likelihood of an internal successor and that such successors will be prepared to succeed quicker, and the firm's willingness to use external help” (p. 544). Additionally, it has been shown that succession planning can have a significant positive impact on CEO turnover (von Drathen, 2014; Carter et al., 2019) and improve executive satisfaction with the leadership transition process (Perrenoud & Sullivan, 2017).

Several recent studies of succession planning conducted primarily in the private sector found that succession planning can also have a positive impact on employees. For example, Farashah (2015, as cited in Obianuju et al., 2021) reports that a clearly defined succession planning process had a positive impact on employee satisfaction, while succession planning was also found to have a positive correlation with employee job satisfaction and engagement (El Badawy et al., 2016; Ali & Mehreen, 2019). Further, Ali and Mehreen (2019, as cited in Obianuju et al., 2021) stated that succession planning can improve employees' attitudes and feelings of job security, while also reducing turnover intentions. They also found that succession planning had a positive impact on employee performance.

Public Sector Succession Planning

Compared to the private sector, succession planning in the public sector has been “grossly under-researched” (Obianuju et al., 2021, p. 80). Lynn (2001) evaluated succession planning in the public sector, finding that, “There is uniform recognition that the subject of succession management in the public sector has received scant attention” over the last forty years (121). Laintz (2015) notes that since Lynn’s review there has been an increase in additional succession planning research in public sector organizations that have identified a variety of practices and approaches. Among this research is Blunt’s (2003, as cited in Laintz, 2015) contention that growing the future generation of public service leaders “may be the single most critical responsibility of senior public service leaders today” (p. 4). However, despite the import attached to succession planning within the public sector, there is little literature on which to draw from on succession planning in one of the most significant public sector branches – the police.

Moreover, while the military and private sector have adopted successor programs to ensure the health of the organization and to assist the leaving employee, public administrators have not learned this lesson (Michelson, 2006). Henry (as cited in Michelson, 2006) argues that “Succession planning and leadership development are more than simply lining up recruits for vacancies and most public sector managers haven’t caught up to this yet” (p. 1). Further, Laintz (2015) notes that, in the past, the process for replacing workers in the public sector relied on the next generation of willing workers to move into the positions of leadership; however, this approach within government organizations has been impacted by timing and demographics – namely, hiring freezes that have occurred at various points in time. While there is an acknowledgement of the need for succession planning, a study by the International Public Sector Management Association for Human Resources found that just 37% of public sector organizations have some form of succession planning process in place (Johnson & Brown, 2004, as cited in Laintz, 2015).

Trahant (2006) pointed out that most of the current research on succession planning in the public sector shows that there is a lack of organizational planning. Furthermore, the public sector succession literature primarily focuses on the political changeovers of presidents, governors, or mayors and not on the transition of executives

that are at the agency level among career administrators, for example, in policing (Dudek, 2006). Although there has been some research on succession in the fields of education and nursing that may prove useful for exploring succession in policing.

Reilly (2008) stated that public sector succession plans generally cover all managerial levels, with an emphasis on promoting from within to retain top talent. Similar to policing, in the field of nursing there is a focus on frontline managers because these are nurses who directly influence quality of care (Sherman & Pross, 2010; Shermon et al., 2009, as cited in Griffith, 2012). With that said, succession planning for nursing executives remains a high priority (Griffith, 2012). In the nursing literature, Reid and Gilmour (2009) contended that an effective succession plan should, at minimum, include managerial development at all levels; ongoing commitment for the succession programme; positive communication; type of leadership talent to be dictated by organizational strategy; and programme management that incorporates recruiting, selection, retention and development of candidates.

Young (2005) studied what public agencies are doing to attract “the right kind of leadership” and found that there is a need for a process that would allow for a full assessment of potential supervisors and managers’ knowledge, skills, and abilities for development purposes. One approach is the use of leadership development programs. For example, Macphee (2008) examined a formal leadership development program for nurses in British Columbia and found that there was value in such a program; however, she also indicated that further research was needed on this and other such programs with respect to long-term outcomes, as well as indemnifying factors that significantly influence successful leadership outcomes.

Hargreaves (2005) studied public school administrators (i.e., principals) through the lens of continuity and discontinuity. He found that most cases of principal succession were a “paradoxical mix of unplanned discontinuity and continuity: discontinuity with the achievements of a leader’s immediate predecessor, and continuity with (or regression to) the mediocre state of affairs preceding that predecessor” (Hargreaves, 2005: 167). Additionally, while planned discontinuity was effective in initially improving school performance, the changes were not stable over time (Hargreaves, 2005). While this succession strategy can yield rapid results, Hargreaves argued that new leadership needs time to consolidate the new culture and overcome challenges that disruption

invariably creates. This notion of time remains a key theme in the succession literature – namely the need to give any new leader some time to implement their vision and stabilize the culture, regardless of if the leadership change brings initial success or drawbacks.

Hargreaves also found that school systems are preoccupied with what Wenger (1998) defined as “inbound knowledge”, which is the leadership knowledge that is needed to make a mark on a particular organization and turn it around (Hargreaves, 2005). The problem with an overreliance on inbound knowledge is that while it can stimulate considerable change, the change that is created is unsustainable once the leader moves on. That is, the leader does not leave behind a framework to maintain and perpetuate continued successes – known as “outbound knowledge”, which is what is needed to preserve past successes, keep improvement going, and leave a legacy (Hargreaves, 2005). It may be useful to identify what kind of leadership or organizational knowledge that police services rely on and if it is analogous to the findings of Hargreaves in public education.

Barriers to Public Sector Succession

Johnson and Brown (2004, as cited in Laintz, 2015) listed several barriers to public sector succession planning including, “preoccupation with short-term activities; insufficient staffing; lack of funding; lack of executive support; restrictive merit system rules on hiring; insufficient marketing effort; lack of confidence in planning techniques; and resistance to change” (p. 386).

The barriers that have the potential to affect public sector succession planning include public accountability and transparency in government agencies (Laintz, 2015). Cinca, et al. (2003) explored this issue and found that public sector managers have less maneuverability relative to the private sector, while a greater degree of control and management transparency is also required from public versus private organizations. This would appear to apply to police services, given that the police are subject to more internal and external accountability than any other branch of the justice system (Griffiths, 2020), and that the expectation of transparency of police services has heightened in the aftermath of high-profile use of force and misconduct incidents.

The organizational change literature acknowledges that, when implementing change, public and private organizations will experience challenges in succession planning and management processes (Laintz, 2015). Change can be successful when organizations concentrate on innovative solutions and develop an understanding of the issues they are currently facing (Mancheno-Smoak, Anthasaw, & Enders, 2004, as cited in Laintz, 2015). To address change with succession planning, existing leaders need to identify all barriers – immediate and potential – that can be associated with implementation of the succession process (Laintz, 2015).

Succession Planning in Policing

In addressing the need for police agencies to implement succession planning, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (1999) stated, “The profession is obligated to ensure the continuing presence of an abundant pool of candidates who possess the personal attributes, academic preparation and formal training to meet the needs of a 21st century leadership” (p. i, as cited in Ransom, 2010, p. 6). Like the private sector, succession planning for the senior level position in a police agency is critical to the organization’s short and long-term health (Savage, 1992). However, although police services have a plan in place for hiring and training new officers, most departments do not necessarily have an exit strategy for supervisors and managers who are leaving (Michelson, 2006).

Rodrigue (2020) states that a glaring weakness in police agencies’ planning capacity is the ability to successfully plan for the succession of younger personnel to replace senior personnel. Few police executives have developed formalized succession plans, with some merely leaving the responsibility for developing future supervisors and managers to the organization’s human resources (HR) section (Michelson, 2006). As succession planning in a police organization is a human resource function, it tends to get overlooked – that is, it is not assigned, budgeted, planned, scheduled, or evaluated (Michelson, 2006).

Consequently, agencies tend to wait for an exceptional candidate to emerge from within the organization or come into the organization before it recognizes a possible future successor (McManus Jr., 2017). Others contend that police agencies may view succession planning negatively because they lack a clear understanding of what the

process involves (Schafer, 2010; Zhao et al., 2008). Whatever the case, the current approach to succession planning in policing is not conducive to the development of a sustainable pool of future police leaders (Outram et al., 2014).

In their nationwide study of police leadership in Canada, the Police Sector Council (2007, as cited in Abela, 2012) reported that approximately 85% of the police chiefs interviewed indicated that they do succession planning; however, only 20% have a formal process in place for doing so. Further, over 60% of the chiefs believe that their succession planning systems are not working, and just 30% disclosed that their organizations have processes in place to identify leadership potential, mainly at the first commissioned rank and above (Police Sector Council, 2007, as cited in Abela, 2012). Similarly, interviews of 110 international senior police leaders revealed that none of the leaders were satisfied with succession management in their organizations and that, for the most part, “succession management in policing is undefined and informally implemented, if at all” (Outram et al., 2014, p. 102). Cuthbertson (2018) found similar results in his case study of law enforcement leaders in North Carolina, with participants stating that their organizations lack a systematic process of succession planning. As Abela (2012) remarked regarding the state of succession planning in Canadian policing, “many police services have not developed an overall plan for preparing the next generation of police leaders” (p. 35).

One of the main flaws of current succession planning practices in policing is that most are based on the presumption that past performance of an officer is predictive of future performance (Abela, 2012). However, Bernthal & Wellins (2006) contend that “new leaders need to be assessed relative to new job requirements” (p. 33). As such, the challenge for police services is to devise strategies on how to best develop their own replacements, using the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that have been identified as desired traits for a prospective supervisor, manager, and chief constable (Michelson, 2006). One aspect of this strategy should be the use of performance appraisals or evaluations, which, when done properly, are regarded as one of the best tools for succession planning (Michelson, 2006). Cordner et al., (1982, as cited in Coutts & Schneider, 2004) stated that performance appraisals should be an important component of the police organization’s succession planning program.

However, research suggests that performance appraisal systems are not necessarily adhering to best practices standards. For example, in Canada promotions are based on performance assessment and behavioral interviews, which emphasize past behaviour being indicative of future performance, a practice that Silzer and Church (2009) referred to as the “performance-potential paradox” (p.388). It is difficult to predict whether a high-performing police officer, upon being promoted, will be able to effectively coach and mentor the officers under their command if they have only largely been assessed on their crime fighting and community problem-solving abilities.

In a study of municipal police departments in Canada, Coutts and Schneider (2004) found that the factors that are related to the success of appraisal systems are not given sufficient importance in police performance appraisals. Most officers surveyed did not believe that appraisals substantially assisted them in clarifying their performance. Additionally, two-thirds of police officers reported that the appraisal system had a negligible impact on their job performance (Coutts & Schneider, 2004), suggesting that the performance appraisal process is serving little purpose other than ticking a proverbial box.

In most instances, leadership is a learned process (Northouse, 2013) and the behavioural qualities that make a good leader must be cultivated and nurtured (Cuthbertson, 2018). To this end, Schafer (2010) contended that succession planning should begin at the police academy during the formative process. Succession planning in policing, like in other public and private sector organizations, involves identifying early high potential leaders followed by a course of training, mentoring, and action that “should be shaped to correspond with the emerging leadership needs of the future” (Fulmer et al., 2009, p. 17). It makes little sense to prepare future leaders for issues that are based on the past, “rather, the emerging...environment now demands a new set of leadership skills, which require traditional leadership competencies, to be realigned to the future” (O’Brien & Robertson, 2009, p. 372, as cited in Abela, 2012, p. 36). However, current leadership selection processes in policing are likely not currently built in such a way as to facilitate this. Brown (2021) argues that,

“A police chief’s qualifications frequently used by hiring officials and Human Resource (HR) professionals in this present day have been handed down decade after decade. They are heavy if not solely based on tenure and ascending through law enforcement agencies’ ranks (qualifications), which

given the subjective promoting of police...rarely correlates with being capable or a highly skilled expert” (p. 100).

As part of their work on sustainable leadership in policing, the International Action Learning Group (IALG) – a group of international police leaders – examined succession management approaches from the military, police, as well as the private and public sectors (Outram et al. 2014), identifying several key themes and factors for success, including:

- The identification of a talent pool and the development of talent being based on a clearly defined leadership competency framework
- The fairness and objectivity of the processes used for appointing people are important
- The talent pool should be subject to ongoing evaluation and performance, behaviour, and potential; people will move in and out of the pool based on these measures
- The system must be visibly owned and drive by the organizations’ leaders from the CEO on down, with the support of HR
- Processes must be documented, communicated and well-understood
- The system itself must be subject to regular performance evaluation and review and adapted if necessary
- The simpler the model, and more effective the implementation of the model, the better the dividend (p. 102)

Though not necessarily providing a specific blueprint for succession planning, the findings could be used as a road map for the development of formal succession planning systems and processes, which they view as critical to succession management. In the view of the IALG, “the effectiveness of any succession management model depends largely on the integrity of the system; having its basis in clearly understood process and underpinning principles” (Outram et al., 2014, p. 102). Without this, the system will not engender the confidence of those operating within it.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has several processes and practices related to supervisor, manager, and leadership development, including the Supervisor and Manager Development Programs, the Full Potential Program, and the Leadership Talent Pipeline (Sopow, 2019) leading Abela (2012) to suggest that they have the best understanding for a process for succession planning within Canadian

police services. Sopow (2019) notes that each of these programs and processes are “well researched, comprehensive, and is linked to the RCMP’s core values” (p. 59). The RCMP is also working on a Talent Management Strategy aimed at integrating all employee development under one umbrella. The functions that would come within that rubric would include succession management; recruiting; identifying, developing, and deploying talent; rewarding and retaining top talent; performance management; and workplace planning (Sopow, 2019). However, Sopow (2019) cautioned that, while well-intentioned, these programs are subject to an uneven level of coordination of the many teams involved and appear to lack synergy.

There are significant gaps in both the literature and in practice regarding leadership succession planning in policing. There is evidence that suggests that leaders who employ succession planning practices for an executive’s replacement allow organizations to have easier transitions, spend less money on orientation, stay focused on strategy implementation and perform better financially (Yarbrough, 2006). Despite the apparent advantages of implementing succession planning, leadership often overlooks succession planning for the position of police executives (Laintz, 2015). Due to the potential for police leaders to have short tenures, governing bodies – including police boards and local governments – should anticipate and prepare for potential turnover in their executives. Yet, understanding the degree to which police services are doing this (or how prepared they are) is challenging given that there is limited research on the question of why some police executives do or do not plan and implement succession processes.

Beyond the RCMP, a scan of Canadian Police Services for different succession planning models resulted in little information, and thus, it is unclear to what degree any of the factors identified by the IALG are present in Canadian police services. Given the findings of the Police Sector Council (2007) and based on the existing literature, this result is unsurprising. Consequently, there is a knowledge deficit relating to the type of succession planning strategies being implemented, and how current Canadian police leaders view succession. Since knowledge of succession planning in Canadian policing is lacking, it provides opportunities for research such as the context for this study. While the primary focus of this research is on succession planning for police leaders, it is evident that succession planning is inextricably linked to leadership development (e.g.,

training, education, mentorship, etc.). As such, the focus will now shift to a brief overview of leadership development in policing.

Leadership Development

It is generally agreed upon in the succession planning literature, that succession planning and leadership development are strongly connected. Any formalized system of succession requires, as a key component, structures in place for the identification and development (grooming, preparation) of potential future leaders. Development, in this context, has been characterized as the provision of some combination of skill-building, training, education, mentorship (Garman & Glawe, 2004; Bratton, 2008; Soares, et al., 2021; Bano et al., 2021). For example, Savage (1992) has stated that a key requirement for executive succession is that police agencies must develop their personnel to their fullest potential “to provide the organization with an endless pool of qualified replacement candidates” (p. 19). He adds that a systemic form of succession planning is one that identified employees who possess the necessary developmental experience required to fill key positions (Savage, 1992). Subsequently, in policing, the topic of leadership development is expansive, with a growing field of scholarship such that it could itself be the focus of a graduate-level thesis. In the present context, leadership development as a specific area of study is beyond the scope of this project; however, the relationship between leadership development and succession planning necessitates a brief overview of the literature on leadership development in policing.

Leadership development has been defined as “any activity or approach which enhances the quality of leadership of an individual or within an organization” (Clapham, 2017, p. 68). Huey et al. (2019) reported that developing police officers’ leadership abilities is seen as being crucial to effectiveness of performance and improvements to police agencies’ service delivery. For example, research on police units found that intelligent leaders with strong interpersonal and emotional skills were equipped to help employees feel more satisfied about their jobs as to their personal development and progression (Yang et al., 2012, as cited in Huey et al., 2019).

Though leadership development has traditionally encompassed training, more recently development programs have become more integrated with 360-degree feedback, experiential learning, and coaching (Clapham, 2017). Further, Schafer’s

(2009) study on leadership development among police officers reported that leadership potential could be developed not solely via education and continuous training through the ranks but also through practical work experience and mentorship. Bass and Bass (2008) state that “meta-analysis of available evaluative studies have provided evidence that leadership and management training; education and development are usually effective” (p. 1122). Further, Anderson et al., (2006) note that while only a small number of officers are expected to emerge as effective leaders, it is beneficial to provide leadership training from the beginning of their careers, so they develop an understanding of the long-term goals of the department. Schafer (2009) found that officers’ viewed education, training and on-the-job experience as all playing a role in leadership development. In their view, leadership education would focus on leadership theory; training could be used to identify styles of leadership, and on-the-job experience guided by mentors could enhance formal and informal leadership skills (Schafer, 2009).

Though leadership development as an organizational practice has taken a more innovative and integrated approach, in policing, leadership development has often been synonymous with training (Huey et al., 2019). As Huey et al. (2019) mention, training is often viewed within policing as a panacea for any issues departments are facing, even though it may not produce desired outcomes (Buerger et al., 1998, as cited in Huey et al., 2019). However, as the internal and external environments in which police services operate are rapidly changing and growing increasingly complex, there is budding recognition that leadership development needs to comprise educational/continuous learning opportunities, internal and external experience, and mentorship.

Regarding the need for education Huey et al (2019) noted that, beyond needing to manage operations while being accountable to the public, senior police officers “must work knowledgeably with a variety of internal and external experts to develop, implement and evaluate new anti-crime strategies and policing technologies” (p. 2). Such a reality requires that in-coming police leaders be equipped with a more sophisticated educational background and a more comprehensive level of training than previous generations of police executives. The increasing movement for police services to be evidence-based and research-driven in their approaches necessitates that police leaders know how to implement evidence-based practices, can interpret research and data, and know how to recognize the differences between strong and weak (or flawed) research (Huey et al., 2019).

The growing role of education in leadership development is evidenced by the fact that Canadian police leaders, as a group, appear to be increasingly more educated. For example, in comparing the profile of Canadian police leaders (chiefs and deputy chiefs) in 2000/01 with the profile of contemporary police leaders, Murray (2019) found that the current generation of police leaders is likely both better educated and trained than their contemporaries of the early 2000's. Specifically, Murray (2019) observed that over half (53%) of the 68 contemporary leaders profiled had an undergraduate degree and just less than half (46%) had either a masters, law, or doctoral degree in a variety of disciplines. She also found that in addition to advanced education, contemporary police leaders are more likely to have undergone internal police operational and professional development training. However, the IALG assert that formal teaching and education should be viewed to supplement and enhance experiential (on-the-job) learning, and not as a direct replacement (Outram, et al., 2014). Instead, they advocate for a "70-20-10 principle for leadership development", comprised of "70% on the job, 20% coaching/mentoring, and 10% in the classroom" (Outram et al., 2014 p. 103).

In addition to training and education, mentorship has been cited as an important component of leadership development. Mentoring can take place both formally and informally within the organization and generally involves a more experienced, influential member of an organization (such as a supervisor) supporting the development of a more junior member in that or another organization (Clapham, 2017). Though there is limited research on mentoring in the police sector, Clapham (2017) found that mentoring is widely perceived as beneficial in leadership development in general and in other public sector organizations. Purcell and Hutchison (2007) have reported that there may be a close relationship between leadership development and supervisory support. Further, Oldham and Cummings (1996) believe that "supervisory support is an important part of leadership development, which includes career guidance, timely feedback on performance, and work assignments that challenge employees and help their personal growth" (as cited in Huey et al., 2019, p. 11).

Subsequently, in their review of succession management in policing, the IALG concluded that the "development of leaders must include ongoing coaching, mentoring and feedback in the field" (Outram et al., 2014, p. 103). Similarly, Rodrigue (2020) has advocated for police agencies to implement a strong mentoring program to improve succession planning. In Abela's (2012) study of early identification of police leaders in

Alberta, he found that mentorship played an important part in the leadership journey of many of his participants (municipal members of the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police). However, the type of mentorship described by Abela's participants was largely informal, leading him to conclude that the meaning of mentorship and the role it plays in police leadership selection and preparedness requires further examination (Abela, 2012).

Despite the importance of leadership development in policing, there is little research available in Canada and other jurisdictions on police leadership education and training (Huey et al., 2019). Research on leadership development in both the UK (Clapham, 2017) and the United States (Schafer, 2019) indicates that leadership education and training programs are geared more towards senior leadership (e.g., current, or future chief executives) rather than front-line personnel and middle managers/front-line supervisors (e.g., sergeants).

In the UK, there are two senior-management level national leadership programs offered by the College of Policing (COP): the Foundation for Senior Leaders Program (FSL) aimed at police officers and police-staff equivalent at Chief Inspector level, and the Senior Leadership Programme (SLP) aimed at Superintendents and police-staff equivalent (Clapham, 2017). There are also two master's programs, one professional doctorate program, and an intensive leadership program for senior police officers (Huey et al., 2019). In the United States, Schafer (2019) notes that there are three widely regarded national providers of leadership and executive development for aspiring police executives: the FBI National Academy, the Southern Police Institute, and Northwestern University's Centre for Public Safety. Conversely, training programs for supervisors are offered in several states, but completion is not mandated (Schafer, 2019).

Huey et al. (2019) conducted an environmental scan of education and training opportunities for Canadian police leaders, identifying four available programs in Canada. These programs include: the Canadian Police College (CPC) Executive Development in Policing (EDP) Program; the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) Executive Global Studies Program; the Canadian Police Association (CPA) Executive Leadership Program, delivered by the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa; and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) Police Leadership Program (PLP), delivered by the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. Canadian

police leaders have access to ten programs outside of Canada including programs in Australia, the UK, and the United States. This scan, accompanied by interviews with a sample of Canadian police leaders, led Huey et al. (2019) to conclude that there are limited professional or academic degree-based opportunities in Canada for Canadian police leaders, beyond traditional university and college degree programs.

The extant literature on police leadership development programs presents an incomplete picture. One criticism is that development programs focus on competencies over competence (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2007, as cited in Schafer, 2019). Schafer (2019) believes that these programs prioritize teaching students about leadership styles, “rather than considering whether that style is ‘right’ or optimal” (p. 247). He also questions whether these programs do enough to expose students to empirical evidence about the efficacy and outcomes of the leadership theories they are exposed to. In Huey et al.’s (2019) study, participants felt that some leadership development programs focused heavily on developing business skills, failing to teach actual leadership skills and skills for managing people. Lastly, it is difficult to develop evidence-based leadership development programs for policing due to a lack of available data. According to Schafer (2019), “There is little systematic evidence that completion of any particular leadership development experience achieves its intended outcomes” (p. 247).

Leadership Competencies

The plurality of demands now placed upon senior officers at the command of Canadian police organizations require an expanding set of leadership skills and attributes that meet the needs of complex, and often contradictory, policing pressures and responsibilities (Davis & Bailey, 2018, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). These include, leading under the increased scrutiny brought about by policing’s “new visibility” (Goldsmith, 2010) in the twenty-first century; responding to increasing demands brought about through continued downloading of responsibilities from other sectors, including responding to persons with mental illness (Huey et al., 2020); managing structural change; leading evidence-based agency reform (Huey et al., 2018); developing and repairing relationships with racialized populations and communities of diversity in the wake of a growing social and racial justice movement; managing the fallout from public and political calls to defund the police that came in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd; implementing structural reform to confront persistent

accusations and instances of sexual harassment that continue to plague police services (Griffiths, 2020); and addressing the growing mental health crisis within policing (Kitt & Gagnon, 2021; Griffiths, et al, 2021).

These are issues that are not only being navigated by the current generation of police leaders but are also likely to be experienced by future generations as well. Abela (2012) explains that “to ensure that police services of all sizes have people prepared to take on the leadership of these important roles and specific priorities, several agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations have taken it upon themselves to create new police leadership competency frameworks” (p. 38).

As a primary goal of succession planning is to identify the future leaders(s) who will be entering this complex and challenging context, it is important to provide a brief overview of police leadership competency frameworks, as they have come to occupy a significant place in police promotional processes (Abela, 2012). A competency is an “observable and measurable knowledge, skill ability or personal characteristic defined in terms of behaviours required by employees to achieve the required performance output/outcome” (Sopow, 2019, p. 61). Further, according to Clapham (2017), “A competency framework is a set of duties or tasks that comprise a job or role within an organization, with the standards that should be achieved in those duties or tasks” (p. 76).

Competency-based assessment involves collecting evidence and making judgements on whether a person has achieved competence. The framework establishes the standards, and the objective of the assessment is to confirm that the person can perform to that standard in the position (Clapham, 2017). Consequently, competency frameworks have become popular in selection processes because they facilitate personnel evaluation against a clear set of criteria and behaviour (Clapham 2017). Reflecting this, the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) states that “Senior police leaders, policy makers, police commissions, and others recognize the need for a robust competency-based management framework and corresponding police leadership competency model that support well-informed human resource and performance policies, practices, and procedures” (Botschner et al., 2020, p. 14). As such, most police agencies have adopted structured, competency-based approaches to recruiting, professional and leadership development, succession, and other human resource processes (Taylor et al., 2022).

Several international policing organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Cepol – European Police College, as well as organizations in the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have developed competency frameworks. For example, the FBI uses a competency-based program centered on the following eight competencies in their development, plans, and promotions: Leadership, Interpersonal Abilities, Liaison, Organizing and Planning, Problem Solving and Judgement, Written and Oral Communication, Flexibility and Adaptability, and Initiative (Abela, 2012). This is important to the Canadian context as the FBI has a global strategy and law enforcement personnel from agencies located throughout the world, including Canada, attend its National Academy to receive leadership development.

In the UK, the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) has established a competency framework that sets out and defines the individual competencies and qualities required by police officers and staff in each rank and role (Clapham, 2017). The leadership qualities contained in the PPF were inspired by the former Integrated Competency Framework (ICF), which was supplemented by the Police Leadership Qualities Framework (PLQF), introduced in 2006 (Gibson & Villiers, 2006, as cited in Clapham, 2017). The ICF and PLQF utilize a set of twelve core leadership competencies, with the goal of the PLQF being to help develop current and aspiring police leaders by setting out “for the first time in a single place what it is that the Police Service believes about leadership in terms of its constituent elements of styles, values, ethics, standards, and competencies” (Martyn & Scurr, 2007, p. 31, as cited in Clapham, p. 78).

Abela (2012) referred to the The New South Wales Police (NSW Police) are viewed as a leader in research on competency-based human resource management system. Subsequently, the New South Wales Police have a complete competency dictionary, competency models, and resource guides, with established competencies for all ranks within the organization (Police Sector Council, 2007). They believe that “linking competency acquisition to a career and performance development plan is essential” (Centrex, 2006, as cited in Abela, 2012, p. 41).

The RCMP have 155 competency profiles broken down by business lines and level of work, with the competencies selected from the approximately 60 competencies

found in the RCMP Competency dictionary (Sopow, 2019). Competencies for each RCMP employee are separated into two overarching categories – functional and organizational. According to Sopow (2019), functional competencies are easier to observe, measure, and learn and include the ability to prepare and present testimony in court, the ability to develop and manage human resources and the ability to conduct investigations. Conversely, organizational competencies are more difficult to learn and observe, but are seen as critical to long-term success.

Examples of organizational competencies include commitment to learning and development, thinking skills, client-centred service, and people skills such as communication, persuasiveness, courage of convictions, teamwork, networking, and relationship building, plus self-care and composure (Sopow, 2019). Employees must meet the requirement of the competencies on a scale of 1 to 6 as deemed necessary for a position (Sopow, 2019). Further, a competency profile is associated with various RCMP talent identification, training, and development programs, including managerial selection and development for Senior Executives (Sopow, 2019).

The RCMP Political Strategic Executive (Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner) currently includes nine organizational and four functional competencies, each with a set of actions describing both effective and ineffective behaviours (Sopow, 2019). Sopow (2019) notes that the organizational competencies include:

1. Change leadership;
2. Strategic thinking;
3. Decisiveness;
4. Results oriented;
5. Stewardship;
6. Persuasiveness;
7. Courage of convictions;
8. Team leadership; and,
9. Networking and relationship building (p. 62)

Each of these competencies is then further broken down into additional criteria. For example, the definition of “change leadership” for assistant and deputy commissioners has four criteria, including “leads by example/walks the talk; ensures ongoing

communication strategies are in place; leads a genuine enthusiasm for change; and removes barriers to collaborations” (Sopow, 2019, p. 62).

To date, the closest attempt to create a national leadership framework in Canada is the work done by the Police Sector Council (PSC) in identifying competencies for police leaders. In 2012 the then Police Sector Council established a list of competencies that police officers must have to be successful at their jobs, including competencies for police leaders. The Competency-Based Management Framework (CBMF) developed by the Police Sector Council included a Policing Leadership Model (PLM) that consisted of fourteen leadership competency domains, divided into three categories (performance, partnering, accountability) with associated definitions and associated proficiency levels for all levels and ranks (Botschner et al., 2020). In 2018, CPKN hosted a workshop with police sector representatives to determine how the CBM was being used and applied. Consultations from that workshop revealed that the CBM has broad support in Canadian policing with many agencies using the CBM; however, that work is largely being done in siloed or isolated manner (Botschner et al., 2020).

In 2020, the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN), Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), and the Canadian Police College (CPC) updated the Police Sector Council’s Competency Based Management Framework and created an updated Competency Profile for Police Executive Leadership (Botschner et al., 2020). The revised leadership competency profile includes twelve competencies, each with a defined proficiency level and associated behaviours. The twelve competencies include:

1. Community engagement and public relations;
2. Judgement and decision-making;
3. Upholding ethical accountability;
4. Financial oversight and planning;
5. Fostering relationships;
6. Talent management and development;
7. Information communications technology, accountability, and capacity;
8. Effective communication;
9. Organizational and environmental awareness;
10. Accountability and trust;
11. Community safety and well-being;

12. Strategic thinking and flexibility (CPKN, 2020, p. 21).

In relation to the present study, it should be noted that one of the main behaviours associated with the sixth competency – talent management and development – is providing direction to the development by HR professionals of a succession management plan, communicating with the police commission/police services board in relation to priorities, as appropriate to the positions (Botschner et al., 2020). That is, succession planning is itself seen as a necessary competency for police executive leadership.

At present, the PSC framework and the recent CPKN update – is the only national police executive leadership competency framework available. However, the degree to which this competency framework has been adopted by police services, governments, and police boards/commissions is unknown. It should be noted that while the CPKN suggest that many police agencies have utilized the Police Sector Council's competency-based framework, Abela (2012) observed that there was little available literature on the efficacy of the model. However, research by Huey et al (2019) on Canadian police executives' perspectives on educational and training needs, found a lack of consensus among participants' on whether a police leadership educational curriculum should be informed by the Police Sector Council competencies.

Although competency frameworks have clearly become a key component of police promotional systems, there are some who have questioned the effectiveness of competency frameworks in improving individual performance. For example, Bolden and Gosling (2006, as cited in Clapham, 2017) identified several weaknesses of competency frameworks, including: "the focus on current and past performance rather than future requirements; the way in which competencies tend to emphasize measurable behaviours and outcomes to the exclusion of more subtle qualities, interactions, and situational factors; and the rather limited and mechanistic approach to education that often results" (p.77). They are also critical of the concept of leadership competencies, arguing that they encourage conformity rather than diversity at an individual level; fail to consider the broader social context of leadership "including followers, managerial rewards and sanctions, beliefs about legitimate authority, organizational systems, nature of the work and cultural environments" (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, p.151); and cannot be

distilled into several constituent elements as leadership occurs in situations (as cited in Clapham, 2017, p. 77).

Others have argued that competencies in policing have become a substitute for critical thinking and that they are overly complicated (Conger & Ready, 2004), and that they have been used or over-relied upon by organizations (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, as cited in Clapham, 2017). Bolden and Gosling (2006, as cited in Clapham, 2017) have also questioned the empirical underpinnings of most competency frameworks. Further, Clapham (2017) noted that the PLQF was based on little empirical evidence, with most of the underlying research based on two UK home office studies. Further, Pearson-Goff and Herrington (2013) posited that “the question remains whether we are using these frameworks to develop leaders, because there is a shared understanding about what characterizes effective leadership, or because of a received wisdom based on flawed evidence focusing on perceptions” (p.21). Further Sopow (2019) identified an additional concern with the use of competency frameworks. Specifically, he notes while it is one thing to establish competencies, there is a lack of clarity on how senior leaders are held accountable for delivering on those competencies.

Succession Planning and Police Governance

An important component of Canadian policing is the role of police governance boards and commissions. Police boards and commissions have the mandate to oversee their police services, including providing annual budget estimates for policing services to municipal councils, establishing policies for efficient and effective policing, and providing direction to their police chiefs (Hayes, 2001). Among their various responsibilities, a key role of police boards is hiring the chief of police and, in some cases, the deputy chief(s) (see Ontario) (Canadian Association of Police Boards, 2006). Given that they have this significant mandate, police boards are inexorably linked to the succession planning process. The selection of the next chief constable is arguably the most important decision a board can make (LaLonde & Kean, 2003).

Despite possessing this significant power, the degree to which boards are involved in succession planning has generally been unclear. While the expectation is that police boards and departments will work together to identify future police leaders, little is known about the role police boards play in succession planning across the

country. Though, in their review of municipal police governance in British Columbia, LaLonde and Kean (2003) found that few boards devote time to planning for the departure of the chief constable until the months immediately preceding the event. Additionally, in assessing police board uptake on the adoption of best practices for the Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPB), Graham (2006) specifically recommended that more attention needed to be directed toward the problematic areas of recruiting and succession planning (as cited in Sheard, 2016).

Though police boards may not devote sufficient time to succession planning, this does not mean that boards are not aware of the need for succession planning. For example, the Vancouver Police Board's *Policy and Procedure Manual* states that board has responsibility for "ensuring that plans have been made for management succession including appointing, training, and monitoring senior management" (p. A-3). Further, the Edmonton Police Commission states:

"1) The Commission requires the Chief to undertake succession planning; 2) The succession planning strategy should include assessment systems that can measure the development of skills, competencies, and required knowledge. The strategy should also incorporate coaching, mentoring, training, and recruitment methods that match personnel requirements and future needs of the Service; 3) As part of the overall succession plan, the Police shall report annually to the Commission the succession plans for Chief of Police, Deputy Chiefs and senior officers" (Police ACT RSA 2000, c P-17).

Interestingly, both examples above frame the role of police boards as essentially directing or overseeing succession planning, while the actual task of succession planning seems to fall on the senior leadership, specifically, the current chief. If this is the case, then police leaders have a significant amount of responsibility for implementing succession planning and exert considerable influence over who their successor is.

Although police boards may be "somewhat unique and distinct from standard corporate boards of governance" (Sheard, 2016, p. 113), the dynamic highlighted above is akin to corporate boards and CEOs in which the board selects the new CEO (Mace, 1971), but the current CEO drives the succession process (Vancil, 1987, as cited in Schepker et al., 2018). However, it should be noted that more recent research by Schepker et al. (2018) suggested that corporate boards may play a more active role in succession planning than previously thought. Nevertheless, there is evidence that

corporate boards face severe decision-making challenges in selecting the CEO because they are often forced to rely on others to provide key information necessary for sound decision-making (Schepker et al., 2018). Likewise, Sheard (2016) found that police boards may also be restricted by their limited knowledge of policing, and thus, are compelled to rely on police to provide them with critical information.

Moreover, much like a corporate board is responsible for evaluating CEO performance, so too are police boards responsible for evaluating Chiefs of police. As Sheard (2016) suggested, "Evaluation of the Chief is one of the key responsibilities of police boards and is closely related to strategic planning, risk review, people development, and succession planning" (p. 146). However, Sheard's (2016) work on police boards indicates that most boards struggle to effectively carry out their responsibility and neglect to have a definitive process for measuring the Chief's performance or fail to see it as part of their role at all. On paper, boards may be responsible for ensuring that police leaders are succession planning; however, in practice, they may be unwilling or unable to be substantially involved in the process. In the absence of any formal guidance, oversight, and evaluation police organizations and their leaders are essentially free to chart their own course with respect to succession planning. This may explain why only 20% of the leaders surveyed by the Police Sector Council (2007) stated that they have implemented a formal succession planning process in their respective organizations. It is, therefore, important to understand how police leaders view the role of boards in succession planning and the ability of boards to carry out their mandate.

Summary: Establishing the Context of the Present Study

The preceding review of the literature on public and private sector succession planning, succession planning in policing, police leadership development, competency frameworks, and police governance has generated several key research questions that will drive this research. While it is apparent that police services have recognized the need to implement leadership development processes and steps have been taken to identify the competencies by which leadership candidates will be assessed (Botschner et al., 2020), little is known regarding what, if anything, police leaders in Canada are doing to succession plan.

There is a knowledge deficit relating to the type of succession planning strategies being implemented in police services, the role that leadership development plays in succession planning, how current Canadian police leaders view succession, and the strategies that they are implementing to ensure that leadership transitions are as smooth as possible. There is also little knowledge on police leaders' experiences with succession, including the lessons learned from their experiences, and what they see as the challenges and opportunities that come with taking over as Chief of a police organization.

This is problematic considering the highly important role that police leaders occupy and the impact that leadership can have on a police service including on the organizational culture, legitimacy, and the organizational direction and outlook. It is important as a country and for the field of policing to have some insight into what police agencies are doing to address leadership transition and turnover.

Chapter 3. Sample and Method

Overview

The purpose of this section is to present and describe the research method and sampling procedure used to gather and analyze the data for this qualitative, interview-based study. As Huey et al. (2019) have stated, the importance of quality police leadership to the effective and efficient functioning of a police service, as well as the overall well-being of its members, places considerable importance on developing a better understanding of the processes by which individuals become police leaders. The present study is a step in that inquiry. It is a qualitative analysis of the perceptions, philosophies, and experiences of current and former Canadian police leaders regarding leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian policing. The examination is being carried out in response to critical questions that are being raised about the selection and hiring of police leaders.

These questions revolve around two key areas of concern. First, Canadian policing appears to lack consistent, standardized succession planning policies and processes, and, as a result, it is difficult to assess police services' preparedness for leadership change. Second, Canadian policing is facing significant challenges that are testing the ability of police leaders to effectively guide their organizations and support their personnel (sworn and civilian), while overseeing the implementation of needed reforms. Consequently, the heightened pressure and scrutiny on policing has the potential to disrupt the stability of police leaders' tenures, which would increase the frequency of leadership change. Therefore, it is important to understand the degree to which police services, and police governance boards and commissions, are prepared for leadership change. To explore this topic, the present study was guided by the following research questions

- RQ1: What insight can police leaders' respective leadership journeys provide about leadership development and succession planning in Canadian policing?
- RQ2: To what degree are police services implementing formal succession planning policies and processes, and what are the challenges and opportunities facing them?

- RQ3: What are the key challenges and opportunities facing police leaders following a succession event?
- RQ4: What role do police boards play in leadership succession?

This exploratory study was undertaken to gain insight into how succession planning and leadership development are currently being implemented in police services, as well as to identify the key challenges and opportunities that exist. Additional goals of the research included examining the role of leadership development programs and advanced education in succession planning; exploring what police leaders view as the most important leadership competencies; examining the role of diversity in succession planning; and investigating the role that police boards and commissions currently occupy with respect to leadership succession and succession planning. The overarching aim of this study was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian policing.

The original research was intended to be limited to subjects who were current chief constables of municipal police services in British Columbia, Canada; however, the scope was expanded to include police leaders from other parts of the country. The subjects that were eventually assembled for the study included a collection of people with such high levels of national standing and police leadership experience that it presented a serendipitous opportunity. As municipal police services in Canada are largely similar in structure and mandate (Griffiths, 2020), with some regional and jurisdictional differences, widening the focus, provided a broader view of the state of leadership development and succession planning throughout the country. The scope of the project was, ultimately, expanded to include current and former police leaders from across Canada, making it possible to look at succession planning within a wider Canadian context. This is explained further in the discussion of sampling and subject selection.

This project was undertaken amid the Covid-19 global pandemic and due to public health guidelines, all interviews were conducted using Zoom or Microsoft (MS) Teams videoconferencing software or telephone. Interviews were conducted with sixteen current and former police leaders from five (n=5) Canadian provinces. Though selection and hiring of municipal police leaders falls under the mandate of police governance boards and commissions (LaLonde & Kean, 2003), they do not appear to play a

significant role in succession planning and leadership development, a responsibility that generally belongs to police leaders. Chief constables have a considerable role in implementing succession planning and in preparing their potential successor within the organization, as well as developing future members of the executive. Chiefs thus have a lot of influence on the identification and selection of their successors because they bear responsibility for succession planning and because police boards depend on them for operational knowledge and guidance (Stenning, 1981, as cited in Sheard, 2016). Having ascended the ranks, police leaders have experiential knowledge of the pathways to leadership and leadership change. As such, police leaders were viewed as being well-positioned to discuss the current state of leadership development and succession planning and to provide valuable insight into the various challenges and opportunities that exist. Owing to the lack of standardized succession planning policies and processes in Canada, it was expected that participants' perspectives on the landscape re succession planning plan would vary.

Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Research

Creswell (2014) has stated that the purpose of qualitative research is to study human interaction to gain in-depth understanding. Qualitative approaches are based on understanding the subjective meanings that people attach to their social worlds, valuing subjective forms of knowledge-building (Hesse-Biber, 2016) through inquiry. There are a variety of qualitative methods that can be used to engage in this exploration, including ethnography, case study, interviews, focus groups, and oral history among others (Hesse-Biber, 2016). The structure of this research project sought to understand police leaders' perceptions, philosophies, and experiences of succession planning and leadership development as elements to create sustainable leadership in policing. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather valuable information in the form of emergent themes. The development of themes was critical to understanding factors that are integral to succession planning. Qualitative research offers introspection into the organizational culture and the individuals that embody that culture (Cuthbertson, 2018).

The underlying philosophy of this research is qualitative inquiry, which is designed to develop understanding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Creswell, 2014). This type of research seeks to bring meaning to the contextual world by exploring through

induction (Creswell, 2014). Hesse-Biber (2016) notes that qualitative exploratory research is generated by understanding the underlying reasons, motivations and providing insight into phenomena. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 3, as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2016) note, “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” Believing that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live, a social constructivist worldview is applied to this research study (Creswell, 2014; Abela, 2012). The meaning yielded allows for simplicity of understanding regarding the phenomenon researched. Qualitative researchers attempt to unearth meaning by exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory means (Hesse-Biber, 2016).

Researchers who utilize qualitative perspectives to understand the nature of social reality agree on the importance of the subjective meaning individuals bring to the research process and acknowledge the importance of the social construction of reality (Hesse-Biber, 2016). In a qualitative approach to research, there is a dynamic interaction between the different components of the research process. Research questions are tentative and most often not framed in terms of hypotheses (looking for cause and effect). The goal is often one of theory generation rather than theory testing (Hesse-Biber, 2016). As Sheard (2016) proposes, qualitative research “yields high levels of validity without sacrificing the rich texture and nuances in the evidence that may otherwise be lost” (p. 94). As research in the field of police leadership succession is relatively new and understudied, a qualitative approach was the best way to explore the subject area and develop insight into “what is.”

Though a qualitative research framework was viewed as bringing value to this research, qualitative methods are not beyond criticism. Qualitative approaches have been characterized as soft, non-rigorous, and overly subjective (Burgees, 1985, as cited in Mohajen, 2018), and qualitative data collection and analysis can be highly resource intensive and time consuming (Yauch & Steudel, 2003; Bowen, 2006). According to Silverman (2010), qualitative approaches to research occasionally neglect contextual sensitivities, and focus more on meanings and experiences. Further, purely qualitative research may ignore the social and cultural constructions of the variables being studied (Richards & Richards, 1994).

Among the most prominent critiques of qualitative methods is that in occupying such an immersive role, the researcher can unduly influence the participants and the integrity of the data. As Mohajen (2018) pointed out, qualitative research is subject to the influence of the researcher's "personal idiosyncrasies ad biases" (p. 20). Along the same lines, the unavoidable presence of the researcher in the data gathering process, can influence or affect the behaviour and/or responses of the research subjects. The various contexts in which qualitative research takes place, and the largely interactive nature of data collection can lead to unforeseen ethical challenges that can compromise the research (Hesse-Biber, 2016). For example, issues of confidentiality and anonymity can present difficulties during the presentation of the research findings (Mohajen, 2018).

Arguably the most consistent criticism levelled against qualitative methods is that research findings are not generalizable to broader populations, nor are they statistically representative (Mohajen, 2018). Qualitative research often relies on smaller research samples or even single cases, meaning that findings and outcomes cannot be generalized to larger populations (Hesse-Biber, 2016). Further, because of the subjective nature of much qualitative data, it is difficult to draw broad conclusions, as findings may be unique to individual participants and not representative of the broader group or population (Mohajen, 2018). However, as Hesse-Biber (2016) argues, these critiques are predicated on statistical generalization, which is not what qualitatively driven perspectives aim for. Instead, she explains, the "aim is to gain a more complex and richer understanding of the data through intense, in-depth exploration of a process such that the findings from just one case may hold a wealth of transferable information to a wider set of cases" (p. 226).

Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell (2014), in qualitative research the researcher is seeking knowledge through interpretation. This requires researchers to account for and address their motivation, biases, reflexivity, and ethics (Cuthbertson, 2018). I have been involved in applied policing research since 2013 and have been involved in multiple research projects sponsored by the Canadian Police Association, Public Safety Canada, the Vancouver Police Board, and the Edmonton Police Commission. Furthermore, I have been a part of research teams that have worked with police services in BC, Alberta, and Manitoba, and my primary role in many of these projects has been as a field researcher,

engaging primarily in ethnographic (observational) research of frontline police personnel and conducting interview and focus-group research involving sworn and civilian police personnel, government officials, community groups, and other stakeholders. This work allowed me to develop a broad network of police researchers, police officers, and police leaders across the country. Those relationships were likely instrumental in participants' willingness to participate in the research.

In addition to policing research, I have taught various undergraduate policing courses as a sessional instructor in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University (2014-2017) and as an instructor in the Criminology Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (2017-present) where I am a full-time faculty member. Finally, both my undergraduate (BA Hon) and graduate (MA) theses involved the study of policing.

Given my professional and academic background, and my connections to the policing sphere, it was important to be aware of my potential biases and to mitigate their influence on data collection and analysis. Hesse-Biber (2016) notes that, whether aware of it or not, all researchers begin their projects with a certain set of values and ideas about social reality and the way that it can be known. As such, it is critical that researchers can identify and articulate their research position before starting the research because it serves as an important guide to making coherent, ethical, and theoretically informed decisions throughout the research process. It is also important that they demonstrate reflexivity and make attempts to control bias, to not impact the credibility of the research. The disclosure of perspectives is important to indicate conditions that may distort data. In this case, I came into this study with over ten years of policing research and teaching experience, which have significantly coloured my perspective of the field. It is important to identify that in a truthful, straightforward manner.

To reduce potential bias, I utilized two strategies recommended by Cuthbertson (2018), specifically, bracketing and reflexivity. Bracketing is a process of setting aside personal experiences, biases, and perceived notions of the research topic (Hesse-Biber, 2016). To this end, I maintained a research journal and made research memos throughout the data collection and analytical processes. Memos and journal entries were used to check my biases by reviewing and noting what is written down. Journaling allows

one to acknowledge and control their biases throughout the research process. Once the research was concluded, all information related to the research was bracketed. Bracketing allows for the researcher to be aware of biases, real or perceived, regarding the interpretation of the data (Cuthbertson, 2018). Finally, reflexivity is the ability to self-evaluate to address one's biases and misconceptions (Cuthbertson, 2018). It facilitates introspection for the researcher and the study by encouraging transparency and self-reflection (Cuthbertson, 2018).

My most significant challenge in this regard centred on my police research experience and the relationships that I have with persons in the policing profession. Most policing research that I have done has been focused on operational policing, specifically, frontline patrol officers. Further, most of my friends and contacts in policing work in operational policing. Consequently, much of my policing knowledge is drawn from my experiences with frontline police officers and I tend to look at policing from the perspective of patrol officers, which can be viewed as a bias. This presented a challenge during this research, which focused on police leadership, because my experience suggests that frontline police officers tend to have a somewhat cynical and jaded view of leadership. This certainly influenced my view of police leadership and as I undertook this research, I found that I was quite skeptical of whether I would be able to get quality data from interviews. I feel that some of this skepticism was rooted in my preconceived notions of police leadership.

Consequently, I had to be very careful that I conducted the interviews with an open mind and did not project my biases on the participants, as this could negatively influence the interviews. I was conscious not to assume anything about the participants and their views on policing and leadership. Following each interview, I was mindful to document my thoughts about the experience and to reflect on how I approached the interview, and my perceptions of what participants were saying. If participants mentioned anything that challenged my preconceived notions or contradicted things I had learned from my experiences studying patrol officers, I made certain to make a note of it in my research journal. Yet, while it was important to acknowledge and be mindful of my biases, I believe they were also helpful in that they allowed me to critically assess my findings and consider the broader organizational implications of participants' responses.

Sample and Subject Selection

Study participants were identified in a variety of ways. Purposive sampling was used as the primary sampling procedure. In purposive sampling, the sample units are chosen because they have features or characteristics that will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions that the researcher wishes to study (Bryman, 2012, as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2016). These may be sociodemographic characteristics, or may relate to specific experiences, behaviours, roles, etc. (Hesse-Biber, 2016). Given the focus of this study, it was determined that police leaders would be best positioned to discuss current succession planning processes and practices in Canadian policing and to identify the key issues. For this study, a police leader is defined as an officer that has served or is currently serving as the chief constable of a Canadian police service, excluding the RCMP.

With the assistance of Dr. Curt Griffiths, an initial list of ten potential participants was compiled. As mentioned above, the original research population for this study was police leaders in British Columbia; however, the sample was eventually expanded to include current and former police leaders from other provinces. There were several reasons for this decision, the first of which was to obtain a larger sample of participants and expand the scope and robustness of the data. It was also done to increase the overall representativeness and diversity of the sample, specifically, to ensure that leaders from a range of agency sizes and jurisdictions were included, given the considerable variation in the operational strength and resources of municipal police services across Canada.

The final sample included participants that were current chief constables or had served as chief constables in large urban police services, small and mid-sized municipalities, and a First Nations reserve community. Finally, the sample was expanded in the hopes of generating a more sociologically representative mix of participants in terms of gender and cultural diversity. Unfortunately, I did not achieve this goal, and the sample only included one woman and two visible minorities. Yet, while the sample is lacking in representation, it is somewhat representative of the current demographics of Canadian police leadership, which continues to be predominantly male and white. During the data collection time frame (February 2021 – January 2022) there

were no women police chiefs and one visible minority chief in BC, the province from which the largest number of participants were drawn.

To locate research participants, I initially contacted police leaders from municipal police services in BC (See Appendix B for a copy of the introductory email). In some instances, I was able to contact chiefs directly either through publicly accessible contact information or pre-existing contacts with either myself or Dr. Griffiths. Of the initial ten BC chiefs, six eventually agreed to participate in the project. Once it was determined that the research sample would be expanded beyond BC chiefs, a similar approach was taken; however, additional approaches, including snowballing and the use of a gatekeeper, were also employed. For example, we reached out to a notable subject in the field who identified two subjects and helped to facilitate introductions. Three additional participants were also referred through other study participants, a process referred to as snowballing or chain-sampling (Hesse-Biber, 2016).

Ultimately, a mix of sixteen (n=16) current and former police leaders consented to participate in this study. Fourteen (n=14) were drawn from a range of small to large municipal and regional agencies across five (n=5) provinces, while one participant (n=1) led a First Nations police service. While First Nations policing can and does differ from municipal policing in several important ways (Griffiths, 2020), the organizational and rank structure is largely consistent with municipal policing. Moreover, the opportunity to gain insight from a First Nations police leader was viewed as being incredibly valuable to the research. Finally, one participant (n=1) had been the leader of a Provincial Police Service. While the original focus of this study was municipal policing, the opportunity to interview this individual was incredibly serendipitous and essentially too good to pass up. This participant added considerable value to the sample because of their breadth of experience and depth of knowledge of the field.

The sample included fifteen men (n=15) and one (n=1) woman. Fourteen (n=14) participants were Caucasian and two (n=2) were members of visible minority groups. In total ten (n=10) participants had served in multiple police services before becoming chiefs. Five of the participants (n=5) had served as chief of more than one police service; four participants (n=3) had experience at a previous police service before being hired as chief in their current agency; one participant (n=1) had experience at a previous service and then served as Deputy chief at their current service before being promoted to chief;

and one participant (n=1) worked at a police service before laterally transferring to their current police service, where they rose through the ranks to become chief. All participants had over twenty years of policing experience and had occupied a variety of roles in their policing careers; however, it should be noted that participants' respective career paths to executive leadership varied considerably indicating that there is no clear-cut or standardized path to leadership in policing. A common thread among participants is that they occupied supervisory and/or senior leadership positions prior to being hired as chief.

Research Ethics and Informed Consent

As this project involved human subjects research with a potentially sensitive population, formal ethics approval was required before proceeding with data collection. Ethics approval for this study was sought and granted through Simon Fraser University's Department of Research Ethics (DORE) on February 2, 2021. The university's Research Ethics Board (REB) deemed the research to be minimal risk and found that the research procedures to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Police leaders occupy a prominent, often highly public, role in policing. They are under incredible scrutiny and must be very cognizant of both their words and their actions. As the profession of policing has increased in visibility and subjected to greater public and political inspection, police leaders have been thrust into the spotlight as the highest ranking, and often most visible, representatives of the profession. This reality was highly evident during this research, as interviews took place in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd and during global protests about police brutality and systemic racism and the rise of the defund the police movement.

Given the sharp focus on policing, the intense scrutiny on police leaders, and the fraught nature of the policing discourse, there was potential for participants to be reluctant to divulge information for fear of it damaging their reputation or career, or negatively impacting their police service. The research did have the potential to expose participants to some risk if specific answers and opinions they provided were identifiable in the final report. As such, several specific measures were considered to mitigate any potential risks to subjects participating in the research.

During the data collection, I had no formal or informal influence over any of the participants, and none of the research subjects involved had any personal or professional relationships with me that would constitute a conflict of interest. No coercion or deception was utilized to acquire informed consent from the participants. To ensure informed consent, I developed a detailed study description (see Appendix A) and consent script (see Appendix C). The study description was emailed to participants with the initial recruitment email. It included my contact information; the objectives of the project; the role of the participant in the project; how any material or information collected will be treated and stored; any potential risks to the participant; information outlining the voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw; and the fact that their identities would be anonymized. While participants were emailed the study description in advance, prior to each interview they were given the opportunity to go over it with me to answer any questions or address any concerns that they may have. Before the interviews, each participant was advised of the scope of the research. They were also informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time or request any information gathered from them to be removed from the study and destroyed.

I determined that consent to participate would be obtained orally, as a signed consent form tends to give the interaction a legalistic feel and may create an aura of formality hampering the discussion. However, per the guidance of the SFU REB, I employed an oral consent script (see Appendix C) that I went over with participants prior to beginning the interview. Participants were asked a series of yes or no questions, to which their responses were recorded by me. Once participants gave their informed oral consent to participate, I documented their consent using a code for identification purposes, to minimize the potential for their identity to be revealed. All oral consent documents were stored in a designated folder in a secure digital vault storage system.

Interviews were conducted with each participant individually, using the same interview guide with each subject. A digital recording device was used to record the interviews, along with detailed hand-written notes. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked if they had any questions, concerns, or comments. All interview recordings, transcripts, and related material were anonymized, with all identifying information relating to the identity of the participants and the organizations that they represent (or formerly represent) removed. Once the interviews were fully transcribed, the audio-recordings were deleted as a safety precaution. Lastly, all data, physical

documents, and other materials gathered during the research process were stored in a secure digital file vault and will be disposed of using a secure means, as per the SFU REB's guidelines.

Research Method: In-Depth Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method for this study. The interviews were conducted between February 2021 to January 2022. Hesse-Biber (2016) states that in-depth interviews are a meaning-making endeavour between the researcher and the interviewee, requiring both active asking and listening. In-depth interviews are designed to get at deep information or knowledge (Johnson, 2002). There are three main interview approaches: highly structured, semi-structured, and low structure or open-ended interviews (Hesse-Biber, 2016). This study utilized semi-structured interviews for several reasons. First, Barriball & White (1994) contend that “semi-structured interviews are well suited for the exploration of perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers” (p.330). Further, the opportunities to change the words but not the meaning of questions provided by a semi-structured interview design acknowledges that not every word has the same meaning to every interviewee and that the vocabulary is not standard for all subjects (Barriball & White, 1994). Lastly, semi-structured interviews grant both the researcher a degree of flexibility to ask a certain set of questions, while allowing the conversation to flow more naturally, making room for the conversation to go in unexpected directions. Interviewees often have information or knowledge that may not have been considered by the researcher in advance. When such knowledge emerges, using a semi-structured design is likely to allow the conversation to develop exploring new topics, issues, or concepts that are relevant to the interviewee (Hesse-Biber, 2016).

The construction of the interview protocol involved the development of pre-determined, structured questions (see Appendix D). The final interview guide consisted of twenty-eight separate questions, which were divided among five overarching thematic areas that were partially developed from the available literature and supplemented by several areas raised independently by I and Dr. Griffiths. Moreover, probing questions emerged organically throughout the interview process. Probing questions were developed in an open-ended format to expand the process of dialogue and

communication (Hesse-Biber, 2016). The structure of the interview protocol and probes allowed or participants to address their individual, organizational, and cultural perspectives on the research topic. The semi-structured nature of the interviews also allowed participants to guide the conversation in a direction they felt was relevant and to present ideas or raise issues that they believed were relevant or important to the topic area. Interview responses were collected both verbally and non-verbally by taking notes and audio-recording the interviews. By taking detailed notes during the interview in addition to audio-recording, I was able to review critical components of the communication process and clarify and address any discrepancies.

The original intention was to conduct in-person interviews as they allow both the researcher and participants to clarify questions and response throughout the interview process (Palys & Atchison, 2008). Also, in-person interviews allow the interviewer to ask probing questions to cultivate a deeper understanding of participants' responses. The close physical proximity granted by in-person interviews also helps to facilitate the development of rapport with participants, providing opportunities to pick up on non-verbal cues and other subtleties that can be used to both direct the interview and to add important context and subtext to responses, thus enriching the data.

However, the original research plan was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, declared in early 2020. The subsequent public health restrictions necessitated a change in approach, as it did with the majority of in-person, interview-based research (Oliffe et al., 2021). Physical in-person interviews were abandoned, and all interviews were conducted either using conferencing software, specifically, Zoom or Microsoft (MS) Teams, or telephone.

Conducting Interviews via Zoom

Though the use of Zoom (and other videoconferencing software) to conduct qualitative interviews grew in prevalence because of Covid-19, qualitative researchers had been using videoconferencing software to gather data – albeit to a far more limited degree – prior to 2020, with some discussing the benefits and challenges of using these platforms. For example, the use of Skype to conduct interviews has been found to aid rapport-building (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014) and facilitate the collection of rich personal data from participants, since participants were able to be interviewed within their personal residences (Jenner & Myers, 2019). Similarly, participants in another study

using Zoom credited it with being more convenient and easing rapport-building; however, they also cited challenges with technological glitches and user connectivity (Archibald et al., 2019).

Oliffe et al. (2021) discussed their experiences with using Zoom to conduct in-depth interviews and identified several strengths and weaknesses. They found that Zoom interviews had rich therapeutic value for participants, while allowing participants to be interviewed from their homes resulted in participants being more comfortable, encouraging more candid and free-flowing conversations. Additionally, they noted that using Zoom to conduct interviews had cost-saving benefits and allowed for recruiting a (geographically) broader and more diverse sample of participants (Oliffe et al., 2021). Conversely, they found that using Zoom made it difficult to environmentally situate the interview (e.g., to observe the physical context of the interview), decreased the ability of researchers to pick up on subtle non-verbal cues such as body-language and facial expressions that are such an important part of qualitative interviewing, and presented challenges relating to pacing and flow of interviews (Oliffe et al., 2021).

The use of Zoom in the present study also presented unique benefits and challenges. First and foremost, like Oliffe et al. (2021), I could access a broader sample, interviewing individuals that were living and working in other provinces. It also allowed for greater flexibility in scheduling interviews. As there was no need to agree upon a specific physical location for the interviews and because participants simply required the basic hardware (laptop, tablet, or smartphone) and conferencing software, participants tended to have increased availability and were more easily accessible. Moreover, the videoconferencing software facilitated face to face communication, serving as a reasonable replacement for physical in-person interviews. I was able to observe participants' facial expressions, and pick up on some non-verbal cues, though not to the degree I could if the interviews had been in-person. Consequently, it was relatively easy to build rapport with participants, particularly those that I had no pre-existing relationship with – in a way that would have been unlikely with telephone interviews. In this sense, the positives I experienced echo those of other qualitative researchers that have used videoconferencing software to conduct interviews.

However, conducting interviews with videoconferencing software also presented challenges. The challenges that I faced were largely related to what Oliffe et al. (2021)

characterized as “preparing and pacing and adjusting to the self-stream” (p. 5). That is, there were times where I or participants would freeze mid-sentence or the audio/video would suddenly fail, leading to confusion and, in some cases, requiring questions to be re-asked or responses to be re-stated, which could be time consuming and disruptive to the flow of the interview. Additionally, interviews using videoconferencing software cannot, ultimately, replace the natural rhythms and nuances of in-person conversations. Subtle things such as knowing when to interject or when to utilize silence or pauses are somewhat challenging during a video interview.

Accidental interruptions were more common in instances where there was a slight delay or lag between responses. I also found that the likelihood of talking over each other was greater than with in-person interviews. It was also much more common to have to repeat oneself because of audio issues or other technological glitches. Consequently, while most interviews produced some excellent material and conversations were dynamic and engrossing, they were hampered by a degree of awkwardness and lack of intimacy that likely would not have been present had interviews taken place in-person.

Interview Process and Analysis

Fifteen of the sixteen interviews were conducted using Zoom or MS Teams, while one interview was conducted via telephone. Of the fifteen Zoom/MS Teams interviews, fourteen included both audio and video, while one interview was audio only due to technological difficulties with the participant’s video. While it would have been preferable to videoconference with all participants, the two audio-only interviews (including the telephone interview) were with participants that I had a pre-existing relationship with, and thus, had a strong pre-existing rapport and high degree of comfort.

Interviews ranged in length from approximately 50-90 minutes depending on the availability of each participant and amount of information they wished to disclose. Most participants chose to conduct the interview from their work offices, while two participants were interviewed from their homes. Prior to the interview, participants were emailed a copy of the informed consent protocol to review and were informed that all information provided in the interview would be anonymized and remain confidential.

Participants were also informed that they had the option to opt out of the study at any point during or after the interview without prejudice. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and supplemented with field notes. Participants made aware that the data collected from interviews would be stored in a secure digital file vault, as per the policy of the SFU department of research ethics. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and integrated with the interview notes.

Several identifiable themes emerged during the interviews and additional themes emerged during the transcription and analytical phase of the research. The responses of participants were analyzed in relation to available literature to determine whether the responses were consistent with what is known about succession planning and leadership development and to link the emergent themes to the broader context. The primary themes centred on participants' perceptions of leadership succession in Canadian policing and what they are currently doing within their police services to succession plan; the role of leadership development in succession planning; identifying the necessary competencies for police leaders; ensuring equity and diversity in succession planning; and the role of police governance boards in succession planning and leadership selection.

Two strategies were used for establishing trustworthiness of the data: triangulation and member checking. Triangulation is accomplished by using at least three data sources (Creswell, 2014). The primary data sources in this research were interviews, my interview notes, and my research journal. Triangulation offers objectivity in the deployment of observations, interviews, and the research journal that captures the same or similar themes (Cuthbertson, 2018). A second key component of establishing trust in the data was member checking, which involves both the researcher and participant (Cuthbertson, 2018). The researcher is responsible for transcribing each interview and transcriptions include a combination of the notes taken during the interview, the transcription of the interview and the journal notes maintained by the researcher. Transferability is a result of lessons learned from observations, interviews and the research journal that are relevant to a larger population or group (O'Leary, 2005, as cited in Cuthbertson, 2018).

Limitations of The Research

There are two significant methodological limitations of this study. The first being the small sample size and the second being the exploratory nature of the study. The study's sample of sixteen current and former police leaders is small, and thus, it is recognized that the results from this study cannot be generalized to the broader population of police leaders and police organizations in Canada. It is impossible to draw any broad conclusions from the data, nor is it possible to make any specific policy recommendations. Although the study may be replicated with a broader sample of police leaders in Canada, a limitation of this study is its external validity. This is not to say that this study has no external use, but that its limitations are recognized and acknowledged.

The other major limitation of this study is that it is exploratory. It aims to provide a snapshot of succession planning from the perspective of a collection of Canadian police leaders. It is unable to answer specific questions about the effectiveness of succession planning or to test any specific hypotheses. While this research can be used as a jumping off point for further research on the topic, it is impossible to make any definitive statements about this topic.

It is also important to acknowledge potential issues with the sample itself. Current and former police chiefs were selected as primary data sample for this research because they were viewed as subject matter experts. It is believed that, based on their extensive policing careers and experience as police leaders, that they would be able to provide important insight on succession planning and leadership development. It was also anticipated that they would be well positioned to discuss some of the broader trends in succession planning in their respective jurisdictions and possibly beyond. However, there is a risk that participants can bring their own biases and interests into the research that could impact the validity of the data. Participants may have felt motivated to portray themselves in a more positive light or wished to minimize anything that could be seen as a negative or a flaw. Further, while the participants may in fact perceive what they were saying to be representative of reality, others may see things differently. As such, it is important that the reader be mindful of the fact that what is being said here is a reflection only of the participants thoughts, experiences, and perceptions, and thus, may not be an accurate reflection of their organizational reality.

Summary

In sum, to understand Canadian police leaders' views on and experiences with executive succession planning, sixteen in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with current and former police chiefs from across Canada. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted using Zoom and MS Teams videoconferencing software, which proved to be both beneficial and challenging. Ultimately, the interviews produced a rich amount of data, from which several key overarching themes emerged. The next two chapters will focus on the central themes that emerged from analysis of the data and how the responses of participants connected to findings produced in previous research.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussion Part 1

The findings and discussion of this dissertation is divided into two chapters. Both chapters include a discussion of the key findings from the qualitative interviews with current and former Canadian police leaders. The chiefs provided rich qualitative data and spoke in significant detail about leadership, leadership development, and succession planning. Analysis of the data resulted in the emergence of five major thematic areas: participants perceptions of and experiences with succession planning; the role of leadership development in succession planning; identifying leadership competencies; succession planning and diversity; and the role of police boards and commissions in succession planning. Within these primary themes, several subthemes also emerged. The following discussion will explore these themes and will present detailed accounts from participants that illustrate the complex challenges of leadership development and succession planning, as well as the opportunities that exist for preparing future generations of police leaders.

Chapter 4 involves a discussion of the first two themes – the implementation of succession planning, and the role of leadership development and training.

Implementing Succession Planning: A View from the Top

Succession Planning the Current Landscape: From Inconsistent to Non-Existent

The arrangements for policing in Canada have produced a complex and confusing patchwork of agencies, overseen by multiple levels of government (Griffiths, 2020). Canadian policing is generally decentralized, fragmented, and siloed. Within this complicated landscape, there is a considerable amount of variation in the size and scope of police services and the areas for which they are responsible, ranging from small detachments in remote northern villages to large urban departments in major city centres (Griffiths, 2020). Interviews suggest that a consequence of the policing context is that police leadership development and succession planning is left largely in the hands of local agencies, creating inconsistency in how succession is being implemented. Though this presents considerable challenges, the lack of standardization also presents opportunities for innovation and creative approaches to succession planning.

As described in Chapter 3, the leaders that participated in this study represent a diverse cross-section of Canadian police services ranging from large urban services to small municipal agencies and a First Nations police service. The main goal was to understand how they view the landscape as it pertains to succession planning in Canadian policing. While most respondents were amenable to providing a micro-level perspective of succession planning in their jurisdiction, some were willing to provide a broader, macro-level perspective of the general state of succession planning in Canadian policing. Whether speaking to a local or national context, most of the respondents expressed a similar sentiment, namely, that the implementation of succession planning in policing has been inconsistent, haphazard, and, in some cases, non-existent. Chief 16 bluntly framed the current situation, stating that, “My biggest critique of Canadian policing is that we don’t succession plan. We do not have systems in place to create a new cadre of leaders.” Chief 3 added, “I think [succession planning] is not great. As far as what we put in place, we really just leave our up-and-coming leaders to just, kind of, flounder.”

Most respondents shared the perception that Canadian policing lacked formalized succession planning processes, describing an environment in which police services are largely doing their own thing, for better or worse. Chief 1 pointed to several recent examples of police services hiring external chiefs, which he viewed as indicative of a lack of succession planning. He felt that while police services may be talking the talk re succession planning, they are ultimately struggling to walk the walk. That is:

“I don’t think [succession planning] truly exists. You know, if you look at it...you know [redacted] went external, [redacted] went external, [redacted] went external, [redacted], to some degree, showed succession planning when they brought in [the current Chief] ...And [redacted] went external. So, if that’s true – and granted, some of these places are small – that succession planning is something that’s talked about but not really implemented or invested in.”

Chief 15 was equally critical, stating that he did not feel that succession planning was being implemented with any consistency. Referring to his own experience, he stated that current systems of promotion and development were outdated and, in his view, based on the flawed thinking that good leaders will emerge organically:

“It’s totally random, ad hoc. It is a shame on us in terms of policing in this country that we have not done a better job at succession planning. I can

tell you in [my former agency] in my time, there was no succession planning, strategically placed thinking...No, there was no real meaningful succession planning during my time, and I think I could probably speak to it right now, no significant succession planning in Canada, and that is a shame. It really is. We need to do a much better job to improve the system. Really, the always said, "Well, the cream rises." No, it doesn't, and the way our promotion systems [operate are] quite flawed, outdated. Those things need to change, but succession planning, no, it was not very well thought out. I don't know what you've heard from others, but I'd be lying [if I said otherwise]. No, it's not good. I mean it really needs to improve significantly."

Although some participants believed that succession planning was a rarity in Canadian policing, others were more inclined to believe that it was being done, though to inconsistent degrees of effectiveness. This may be due to the decentralization and fragmentation of policing in Canada, or possibly because of the differences in size and scope of police services. The variation in approaches is illustrated by the experience of Chief 6, who has worked for three police services, large and small, serving as Chief in two of them. This detailed account illustrates the variation that can exist between agencies in the same province:

"I would say it's pretty inconsistent in my experience. So, [my first agency] was really, kind of, a leadership factory that put people out all over the country. Experienced police leaders. So, there I think it was very good. And I remember as a staff sergeant, getting called in by [an inspector] and we met for lunch, and he encouraged me to apply for promotion to inspector. I had no intention [to apply]. I had a great position externally with the [provincial oversight agency] and I had no inclination to apply until I talked to that inspector and then I did [apply]. I would come to learn that the organization had done a bit of a scan and recognized that the majority of their senior officers had more than twenty-five years and all of them could retire at any given time. So, what was pointed out to them was the need to succession plan. And so, they actually ended up incenting four inspectors out of the organization through early retirement and they ended up promoting four young people. Four young, up and comer staff sergeants and all got promoted quite early. And what they were trying to do was create experience and opportunity for people who had runway who could become chiefs and deputies later on.

So, there, what I would say is that there was a conscious effort to do succession planning and make sure the pipeline was full, and to look at diversity and all of those things much earlier than had happened in other places...When I went to [my second police service], the chief had thirty-nine years, the deputy chief had thirty-seven years and had no intention of being the chief and they had nobody ready behind them. And so, as a result of that they were virtually forced to go external. So, in that case I would say there had not been a good job [of succession planning] done there.

And then [my current police service] I would say a similar thing. When I came into the organization here, I think, as you know, there were some internal issues that pointed to the need for an external chief...But, you know, when I looked even at the gene pool for the deputy chief rank, it wasn't very deep and there had not been a concerted effort or strategic focus on leadership and the development of that."

Though he worked in a different province, Chief 10 had a similar experience. He served as chief of two different police services in the province and spoke about the inconsistency in succession planning that he observed throughout his career and while in his current role. Note that, like Chief 1, Chief 10 also pointed to other services hiring external leaders as being evidence of poor succession planning. In his view:

"I think [succession planning] in [this province] is haphazard. I think it's being done individually...But when you look at, you know, generally speaking, you know, even looking at other provinces, [redacted just hired an outside chief. [Redacted]. All their deputy chiefs were hired from external [and] the chief was hired externally. So, what does that tell you? That either the culture is poisoned or the governors wanna go in a different direction. So, I think that these are all pieces. [Redacted] brought in an external Chief most recently. They've brought in external police leaders at the senior level. The [provincial police] here brought in an external police leader to be the commissioner within the last year. So, I don't think there's actually a planned approach. We're trying to build, you know, national connections but it's all randomized right now. There's no set course, there's no set path...."

Other participants described a wide range of approaches to succession planning, ranging from limited or non-existent to robust and well-developed. For example, at one end of the spectrum participants such as Chiefs 2 and 8 were honest in stating that their agencies lacked formal succession plans. That is:

"I would say that we do not have any strengths. Like, we have more gaps than strengths. I mean the only strength we have is we have the support of our board and our council to find the funding to hire...cause they're not cheap...these headhunting firms...But, to answer your question, I don't have a good succession plan at all." [Chief 2]

"So, yeah, I think – I'll be critical of myself and my current staff and process – I think we have some incredible people that are ready and poised to step into the next ranks and I have a clear view of who they are, but we don't have anything documented in terms of here is our strategic succession plan. Sometimes, you know, I think – and I'm just saying this off the top of my head – you know, I have three people in the role of Superintendent, and I have a ranking in my head right now of who would be the next best Deputy

Chief, who would be the second best and who would be the third...” [Chief 8]

On the other hand, there were participants who felt they had succeeded in implementing strong succession plans and that their organizations were well-positioned for succession in the short-term and for creating sustainable systems of leadership in the long-term. Chief 12 felt this way about her organization:

“So, I’m going to be very selfish and I’m going to talk about my police service when I talk about that. One of the things I found when I first came to this service [was] they needed...I was an external Chief, so my goal was to, hopefully, mentor and coach and develop people within this police service to become the next Deputy Chief and to become the next Chief. So, that was a specific goal that I set for myself. So, I have had the opportunity now, being here seven years, the leadership team, there is only one person on the leadership team that was here when I first arrived. Everybody else is new. And the one person, she was the finance manager, so she was part of the civilian side, not the sworn side...There’s not a beginning and an end because I’m still developing people and we’re going to be having another competition for a Deputy, and I wish [for] it to be an internal candidate.” [Chief 12]

A Question of Priorities

A possible explanation for the failure of police services to succession plan is that it simply has not been prioritized. Chief 3 attributed this to a “lack of evolution in policing” and historical attitudes of some leaders to “keep up and comers down,” whereas others felt that succession planning, an internal matter, had been neglected as external challenges, viewed as more pressing or urgent, were given precedence. That is, as police leaders feel compelled to address these immediate challenges, they fail to look forward and plan. Chiefs 4 and 5 characterized this as essentially sacrificing proactivity for the demand to be reactive. In making this argument, they attributed the failure of police to implement succession planning to an increasingly challenging external environment that has forced leaders to devote most of their attention and resources to growing demands for service and crisis management:

“Our call volume and workload are so high that it is very difficult to...we’re doing some of these informal leadership and mentorship opportunities off the corner of our desks, which is not ideal. Because you’re pre-occupied. You’re trying to do two things at once...And then just lack of resources and workload demands take away from properly implementing [succession planning].” [Chief 4]

“My feeling is that I don’t think we’re in any better position at all [re succession planning]. I think what’s happened is because of the environmental conditions facing policing that a lot of our time is now being spent, sort of, trying to find our way. Whether it be through defunding; antiracism; diversity, equity, and inclusion; service delivery. All these major issues have come up over the course of the last year, and what that’s done is it’s taken away focus from our ability to ensure that we have paths for people to succession plan and prepare them properly. Really, we’re fighting fires every single day and that becomes the inability to be strategic and really think through succession and prepare properly.” [Chief 5]

Chief 15, touched on this as well. He felt that police leaders are aware of the importance of succession planning (i.e., talking the talk), but have been challenged in ultimately actioning it (i.e., walking the walk). Like Chiefs 4 and 5, he attributed this to shifting priorities – namely, prioritizing operational matters over administrative ones. This is the theme of proactivity coming at the expense of reactivity. As police leaders are compelled to respond or react to issues in the operational environment (that often require an immediate solution), they may become unable or unwilling to think strategically about issues within the organizational environment. For Chief 15:

“Well, I would say that most [leaders] are fully aware of it...So, I think most Chiefs, if you speak with them, they’ll say, ‘Yes we’re aware; it’s just now actioning it.’ You know, when I was chief, I kinda wish we had two chiefs. One who would just deal with all the operations and one who was out there dealing with the public, right? That’s the accountability piece. So, that’s kinda what we need. I think they’re fully aware but the operations, often times, just takes over.”

Chief 11 offered a somewhat different explanation for the inconsistencies in succession planning, though it still related to conflicting priorities. He believed that because many of the key elements of succession management (planning, promotional processes, human resources, personnel development) are driven by the executive, when leadership change takes place, it creates a situation in which policies and processes are in a contestant state of flux, driven by the priorities of whomever is in charge at the time. This includes succession planning. Thus, in an ironic twist, succession planning is complicated by succession itself, as Chief 11 explained:

“First of all, there’s no perfect system. There’s no perfect system of promotion. So, no matter what you do...you’ll see every Chief comes in [and] says, ‘Okay, I gotta change this promotion process because I see that there’s a problem with it,’ and then they put their new spin on it...It’s hard to do in the organization. I tried to do that and then when I left, the next

person brings their own skillset in and says, 'Okay, we're going to have to adjust this'...There's no great process."

The Objectives of Succession Planning

The chiefs' largely negative perceptions of the current succession planning landscape in Canadian policing were juxtaposed by the opinion they shared that succession planning and leadership development were important priorities. This is reflected in the comments of Chiefs 4, 9 and 10 below:

"A high priority. Absolutely undeniably critical to the success...to have a healthy, competent police organization, succession planning must be a top priority. It is that important." [Chief 4]

"I think succession planning is really critical and it's something we're continuing to try to do here...Certainly, I've always talked to my police board about succession planning for the next chief job and, you know, that becomes really critical. You know, for a chief, I have to look [at] do I have anybody internally that I can help mentor and support knowing my timeline, or do I have to go external?" [Chief 9]

"Well, first, I would say it's critical. Succession planning is critical, and I would suggest that when a chief is hired it should be one of their main priorities and responsibilities right through the organization. So, it should be a performance or a key performance indicator – a KPI – that is assigned to the chief by the board or the commission. Because, you know, again, it's around this leadership component and keeping the organization advancing. So, for me, it's a critical piece. In fact, it's one of the most important pieces. [Chief 10]

Putting Horses in the Stable

Though the chiefs agreed on the importance of succession planning, they expressed a range of views on what succession planning is, what the goal(s) of succession planning should be and how to best to implement it. Putting it bluntly, Chief 10 characterized succession planning as, "In the sense that, my job is to find a replacement, right? So, I recognize that." Chief 1 described succession planning as an intentional act, that is clear, planned out and transparent:

"Well, succession planning, first of all, it's something you do intentionally. I don't think it's something that's hidden. I think you have to be clear about it, so it's out there. So, it's not a surprise. It's not like, 'Hey, we've secretly in the back room been grooming x to do y. So, I think succession planning is something you state, you identify, and you should be outlining almost the

timing of it [and] the opportunity that's going to exist. And the expectations of the job. What the organization is going to need as it moves forward.”

More broadly, several chiefs described the objective of succession planning as creating cadre or “stable” of viable internally developed leadership candidates that the police board or commission can consider when hiring the next chief. As two chiefs observed:

“And I’m trying to develop other horses in the stable to compete, you know, so the board can look and go, Wow, there’s lots of horses in the stable’.” [Chief 10]

“...there’s no reason why you can’t develop your own people in house who know the culture. And unless your culture is broken, then, you know, you should be able to provide your board with several options...Like, when I decide to retire, I’m gonna have at least three good options for the Chief position internally. The board will decide. If the board wants to go outside, it's 100% their prerogative, but I’m going to give them some really good choices internally.” [Chief 14]

The need to develop an internal successor was central to what most of the chiefs viewed as the main objective of succession planning. Like the quotes of Chiefs 1 and 10 above, several others cited examples of police agencies that had recently hired external chiefs as evidence of failed succession planning. The perspectives of Chief 4 and 15 highlight this. Both felt that bringing in an external successor was a product of poor succession planning and leadership development:

“Now, I would say this: I think police chiefs should be selected from within unless there is a reason not to select from within. And there’s a couple reasons [for that]. One, there’s nobody skilled or talented that has the ability and competency to carry that out, which is the result of a poor succession plan, by the way. Cause, why is nobody ready in your organization? So, that would be a failure from your succession planning.” [Chief 4]

“I always say, unless you’re having some really significant challenges or issues in your organization, I really don’t see the need to go outside. And if you’ve done the right job in terms of development and creating culture, seldom do you have to go outside.” [Chief 15]

This perspective has support in the private sector succession planning literature. For example, Schepker et al. (2018) stated that hiring an internal successor is an indicator of an effective succession planning process. Wolfe (1996) stated that the goal of an organization with respect to succession planning should focus on building a generation of talent to be self-sustaining and persons with the requisite competencies to

assume leadership positions horizontally or vertically. In this case, Wolfe's position is probably best elucidated by thoughts of Chief 9, who stated that:

"You know, I mean, I need people who are going to be leaders here for the next ten years, twelve years, and some continuity. Versus somebody who, you know, they're on the last three or four years and are looking for that promotion just to kinda get that last little bump. Although that's nice and they're probably deserving in many cases, it doesn't help the organization in the longer-term sustained way." [Chief 9]

Building a Talent Pool

Some chiefs viewed the objective of succession planning as going beyond a focus on the executive ranks – namely, the chief and deputies – to developing a broader, more capable pool of leaders at the middle management or supervisory ranks (e.g., sergeants and staff sergeants), creating a more viable and sustainable leadership pipeline. To use a sports analogy, they felt that succession planning was a way to increase an organization's "bench strength." As Chief 1 stated, "So, one is that you have a greater pool of just even looking at your senior officers. You shouldn't just be looking at the Chief or Deputy Chief or the Inspectors perhaps in terms of it." Chief 8 added, "To me, succession planning is a lot deeper than just, who's going to be the next Chief or Deputy." Chief 4 felt similarly, explaining:

"And, by the way, when I say succession planning, I'm not just talking about for my job, I'm talking about succession planning throughout the organization. Identifying leaders early on...So, again, it's not just the chief or deputy chief because here's the thing in paramilitary organizations: if you're going to be the chief, you gotta have been a sergeant or a staff sergeant, you gotta work your way up."

Chief 7 believed that the objective of succession planning was to create, not only a stable of candidates that are ready to succeed the current Chief, but a sustainable succession pipeline, which contains multiple generations of potential leaders (i.e., successors to the successor). Chief 7's view of succession planning mirrored the above perspectives that succession planning meant considering the current executive, while also looking to the next levels, to "develop talent" and create a leadership pathway or funnel for future leaders. He explained his view of succession planning as such:

"I've told [the commission] I'd try to deliver them a pool, but the next two-three chiefs should come from the inside. Not developing your talent internally, I think is a fundamental mistake by a chief cause that means

they're surrounding themselves with similar people. So, my goal is to leave them a pool of candidates...it doesn't mean you won't get other chiefs as well, but it's a failure of leadership of the day if you can't develop that talent from inside to move on. So, that's actually one of the key things that my discussion with my commission was [that] success for me would be that. And so, to do that, I gotta not only be looking at my current deputies and my current superintendents about trying to create a pathway but also a funnel where there's opportunities for those people who wish to choose to if they have the opportunity."

However, he also believed that succession planning did not simply mean creating a cadre of leadership candidates within one's own organization, but in creating a talent pool of officers who could become leaders of other organizations both within and outside of policing. For Chief 7, succession planning was more than developing the next leader; it was about developing leaders in general. In articulating this perspective, he recalled his first experience as Chief of a small police service:

"Just developing leaders underneath, me. So, you know, trying to leave the commission with a slate of candidates. And, actually, in a small police service my successor came from inside, I had two other people go on to be chiefs in other organizations, and some of my staff sergeants and inspectors go on to have pretty good jobs in other sectors. So, that's success. I didn't just create a pool of future chiefs; I created a pool of successful future candidates in other industries."

Chief 6 expressed a similar goal in his approach to succession planning and leadership development. He talked about wanting to turn his police service into a "leadership factory" in which the availability of talent exceeded the demand:

"I would like to be a leadership factory in this country and there's no reason why we couldn't be, and I talk openly about that with my superintendents when they apply for promotion. Like, if you're looking to be promoted further in the organization, like we have such great people that it just becomes a math problem. It's fortunate for us that we have so many great people; it's unfortunate that we can't promote them all. So, for some people who are really looking forward to spreading their wings in terms of leadership, that will mean having to go externally and we'll support them with that because that's still promotion and that's still succession planning and that's still expanding your influence."

Chief 11 also shared this more expansive view of succession planning. However, he described the goal of succession planning as building skillsets or expertise that enables people to perform in their current role, but also prepares them for the future. Over time, these skillsets develop as officers move throughout the organization, to the

point that the organization has created a group of individuals that have the necessary skills and expertise to move into higher-level positions in the organization, including executive leadership.

This is not necessarily how succession planning has been viewed by many organizations where it is treated as more of a “staffing” exercise, failing to assign importance on matching leadership skills with organizational needs (Hall, 1989). Nevertheless, for Chief 11, succession planning is primarily an exercise in skill-building, in that the purpose is to ensure that people acquire the necessary skills as they move through the organization, so that they are prepared to enter leadership positions as needed:

“What you’re doing is giving them nuggets of success so they can build their own credibility and move up. But that needs to be done at multiple levels all the way down the rank structure, so that you build that expertise up. Expertise meaning skillsets that that person doesn’t have that they could easily learn that could now dovetail into what they’re doing – either at the same level or to prepare for the future...So, the whole time I was commissioner, it’s always about, who is going to take over my job? Who needs a certain skillset for this to happen?”

The Role of Organizational Context: It’s all About Timing

A key theme that emerged in the interviews was the importance of timing in succession planning. In discussing their own career journeys, several of the chiefs spoke about the impact of timing on their own experiences with succession and becoming leaders:

“So, when I talk about my own career and getting into management it was all about timing. And so, I would suggest that when the chief [in my previous agency] before me...he stayed eleven years and had he gone at the eight-year mark another person would have been chief and not me. I wouldn’t have been ready at that time. But because he stayed – and it’s his decision, maybe his and the board’s – it effectively changed the timing [of succession]” [Chief 11]

“I ended up, you know, moving up the ranks pretty quickly and...uh...I kinda chalk it up to, to be honest, it’s always, I think, hard work, it’s always a bit of luck, and it’s always a bit of timing. Timing in where you are in your career [and] what you’ve done when an opportunity pops up. And I think that, you know, it’s not just any one thing. You can say, ‘Well, my hard work got me there.’ No. It’s a bit of luck and a bit of timing too, right?” [Chief 4].

“So, I had twenty-one years of service. I was an inspector within our police service and the job came open and, you know, I figured this job is going to get filled and it could easily be filled by someone from anywhere from five to ten years. So, knowing that I want to put in somewhere around twenty-eight to thirty-year policing career, I kinda figured it’s, kind of, now or never. You know, I think in a perfect world it would be good to spend a couple of years at each rank up to the Chief and then the job presents itself, but timing isn’t always like that.” [Chief 8]

“But I honestly was getting ready to retire in 2012 because I felt like our service, our policing in general, wasn’t being all it could be to the citizens, just dealing with crime. But then our chief announced his retirement and I thought, ‘You know what? I’ll apply. If I get the job, I’ll stay. If I don’t, I’ll go somewhere else because I don’t think policing is being all it can be to communities, to society.’” [Chief 15]

Timing refers to a range of considerations including the length of a leader’s tenure; when in their tenure leaders should begin to consider succession; the length of time it will take to develop successors; and the organizational climate (i.e., culture, needs, challenges) at any given time. That organizational climate also includes the current composition of the executive and whether there is enough “talent” in the organization when succession occurs. As Chief 11 posited, when, and how, succession occurs – including who is ultimately selected to be the next chief – depends greatly on timing:

“A lot of it is about timing. If you’re in a position, like, my previous commissioner, he had a great team cause everyone on that team...there’s four people that coulda been commissioner. Not four people that wanted to be commissioner, but four people that could have been the commissioner. The timing at one point when [and outsider] came in, there wasn’t one person that I would say would make a good commissioner. So, a lot of it has to do with the timing of that piece.”

Succession Planning Starts Early

When succession occurs and a new chief takes over, it initiates a new timeline. The clock is ticking on when this chief will leave, and their successor arrives. As participants asserted, a key objective of succession planning is to develop a capable successor within the organization that is ready to take over when that time arrives. As discussed above, this does not mean appointing a new successor, but presenting the board/commission with a strong internal candidate (or group of candidates) to consider appointing as chief. Although the length of a chief’s contract (typically five years, according to participants) conceivably provides a fixed timeline to work within, the reality

is that there is some uncertainty in how long a given Chief's tenure will last. Contracts may get renewed and extended, resignations or retirements may occur earlier than anticipated, and/or unanticipated events may occur that result in termination by the board. Rainguet and Dodge (2001) found that the average tenure of a chief is five years or less. Thus, there may not be a clear-cut timeline to work within. Chiefs 1 and 6 touched on this uncertainty and how it impacts succession planning:

"You know, succession planning always sounds good, but what is the plan? How many chiefs if you interviewed em today, could tell you, 'This is when I'm going to retire. I don't want you to tell my members. I don't want you to tell everyone, but I've talked about it. You know, give or take six months, this is when I'll retire'." [Chief 1]

"The other thing that happens that I've seen before is somebody gets ill, or something changes that nobody anticipated, or somebody leaves the organization for another opportunity, and so suddenly that succession plan – you only had one option – then that succession plan that you had doesn't work out [and] now, you're in big trouble." [Chief 6]

The uncertainty that accompanies a police leader's tenure creates important temporal considerations and raises questions about when police leaders should begin to consider (and implement) succession planning and when, more specifically, they should begin thinking about who their potential successors within the organization might be. Several participants felt a sense of urgency and believed that police leaders should begin thinking about succession planning as early in their tenure as possible, as it has important implications for leadership development opportunities, promotional processes, and composition of the executive. It also is important to the police service's relationships with community stakeholders.

Chief 10 stated that he learned this lesson in his first opportunity as a chief, an experience that shifted his mindset going into his second chief's job:

So, it totally changed the way I viewed it. You know, it actually made it a priority and actually changed my mindset because, when I became Chief [at my previous service] I was young, I didn't envision...to be honest, when I first got the Chief job, I thought, 'This is awesome. I gotta do this for ten years to get my pension.' So, I wasn't worried about developing anybody, but when I came back here, I was like, 'You know what? My time clock is ticking. I gotta actually start developing people.' So, it kinda changed that process for me. So, I did actually implement a ton of revamp, mostly around HR pieces..." [Chief 10]

That the seeds of succession planning should be planted early in a Chief's tenure is consistent with existing literature on private sector succession planning, which has found that first six months is the most critical stage of a leader's tenure (Por & Evans, 1991). Other participants also touched on the importance of the need to consider succession planning early on in one's tenure:

"One of the things I found when I first came to this service [was] they needed...I was an external chief, so my goal was to, hopefully, mentor and coach and develop people within this police service to become the next deputy chief and to become the next chief. So, that was specific goal that I set for myself... [Succession planning] was immediate. Even before I arrived at the doorstep, that was my thinking." [Chief 12]

"So, that process starts from day one. Actually, with the board, in my board interview to get the job, that was one of my things. Like, there's a series of interviews that you go through, and you end up getting short-listed and you end up having a final interview with the full board and the mayor. You have to do like two-three-hour interview, and it includes a presentation where you go through a PowerPoint that you prepare and, you know, talk about your vision and what are your priorities gonna be and what do you see for the future of the department, that kinda thing. So, I had, like, ten things that I went over at the time. These were my ten priorities that we need to focus on and one of them was succession planning. So, it was something that I brought up right away." [Chief 14]

"Oh yeah, day one. Like I said, I was getting ready to retire and I'm like, 'I'm gonna have to do this for a few years.' So, the day I was sworn in, I walked across the stret and I promoted two [superintendents] from inspectors. I'm like, 'Okay, who really wants this job?' Cause the minute someone's ready to take my place and ensure they have the right preparations... So, from day one I started thinking about the day that I'd be leaving and having people to take my place." [Chief 15]

Chief 1 offered that, given its complexity, succession planning should not be left until late in a police leader's tenure, adding that both the chief and the police board or commission must have a clear understanding of when a leadership transition will occur – even if that timeline may be subject to change:

"So, I think succession planning is something you state, you identify, and you should be outlining almost the timing of it, the opportunity that's going to exist, and the expectations of the job. What the organization is going to need as it moves forward, and the opportunities for people, so that you can identify them, and they can self-identify...And you can't do it six months before the vacancy...So, you know, you have to be clear, and I think chiefs and boards have to make decisions about when that transition is going to happen."

When speaking about the importance of communicating with the board about the succession timeline, Chief 10 explained that, while it may be challenging for a leader to admit, they need to be clear with themselves and with the board on when they plan to leave, so that they can plan accordingly:

“So, you know, I learned some hard lessons around succession planning. It has to be part of your KPIs, and here I’ve been working with the board to say, ‘Here’s the timelines, here’s the timeframes,’ and you have to come to a reality. Like, even myself, you know, I’m fifty, which is relatively still young, but I’ve told the board, ‘At the end of 2023, maybe another year that will give me ten years as the chief, it’s time for change. I need to leave’.”

How Much “Runway” Do People Have? Timelines and the Need to be Strategic

It is not simply the chief’s timeline that is must be accounted for in succession planning. Consideration must be given to the career timelines of personnel throughout the agency, including the current executive, senior managers, and those in supervisory positions. This includes knowing where people are in their career in terms of years of service, as well as anticipating how long they have left in their careers, something that more than one chief characterized as how much “runway” a person had. Chief 4 explained how this shaped his thinking on succession planning and the intricacies that are involved:

“Because your succession plan also has to be aggressive. It could be a longer-term plan; it could be a mi-term plan. You’re always gonna have a continual plan, but within the continual plan, you need to know when your people are leaving. Do I have five people in the next two years who are gonna leave? That has to change my plan. So, I have to be nimble on what is needed at the time. There’s a long-term plan as well, but the plan within the plan is critical as well.”

A short- and long-term consideration for police leaders is the timeline of their most senior officers as it often – though not always – the ranks from which an internal successor will emerge. Several chiefs discussed the importance of having “younger” officers in the executive ranks; officers who have experience, but are not yet nearing the end point of their careers. The reasoning behind this was that having a largely senior (i.e., later in their career and/or older) executive team undermined sustainability and created the potential for leadership instability, in that a successor with less “runway” would be more likely to retire early in their tenure, leading to more frequent turnover. The sense was that, while more senior officers could serve as Chief in an interim role (i.e., in

an emergency or in a transitional period following a sudden departure), they were not viable long-term options.

The other consideration was that more senior officers had fewer leadership aspirations, which also decreased their viability as long-term successors. For example, Chiefs 10 and 14 discussed how this has influenced their thinking on succession planning, and the need to be strategic in terms of timing:

“But even around some promotions to Superintendent, you know, I had to mix it up and I had to say to some very senior people, ‘We have to get ready for the future.’ I can’t have, you know, five superintendents that all have thirty years and are all retire-able. That’s not a good strategy.” [Chief 10]

“I’m thinking how long so-and-so has on a contract; thinking about how long people have on the job. A lot of it is time on the job, like, how long have they got to go? Cause you can promote someone to superintendent that’s got, you know, thirty-three years on the job, but how much runway do they really have left? So, there’s a lot of thigs to consider [and] I try to be very strategic.” [Chief 14]

Chief 10’s situation is also illustrative of this dynamic. In this case, Chief 10 viewed the younger deputy chief as a viable long-term successor, while the older, more experienced chief, was viewed as a potential short-term successor or transitional leadership candidate because she, admittedly, had less time left in policing:

“So, I just promoted...well, not me, our board just promoted two deputies and one of them – I supported both, they’re both excellent people – one is at thirty years, she’s at a later stage of her career and she’s been very honest in saying, ‘Listen, I’ll commit five years, but I want to develop the future.’ The other is a twenty-year member. He’s got his PhD. The kid’s flipping brilliant, and I basically said to the board, like, ‘This guy’s the chief.’ You know, he’s really young. Like, we gotta get him experience otherwise the job will eat him and kill him, but I go, ‘This guy’s brilliant. I want him on the team.’ But it’s hard to do that...Like, I’m into my sixth year. I’ve got two more years and contractual agreement with the board and that’s my succession plan getting both deputies really good at what they’re doing now to take over. Whether it’s the [woman deputy] for a couple years and then [the younger deputy], that’s really the board’s decision.”

The experience of Chief 12 is a prime example of how timing can influence how a Chief goes about implementing succession planning. As an external hire, Chief 12 entered an organization in which the existing executive team was largely senior and were now in a situation where they would have few opportunities to advance further within the organization during her tenure (five years). This ultimately led Chief 12 to shift

her focus beyond the executive – echoing the earlier discussion about the objective of succession planning – to those in supervisory positions and middle management because, as she saw it, this is where the next generation of senior leaders (and her potential successor) would come from. In this sense, the timing of her arrival did not align with the timelines of her executive, but it did align more strongly with her middle managers, and thus, determined who she prioritized for leadership development:

“So, I have the opportunity now, being here seven years, the leadership team, there is only one person on the leadership team that was here when I first arrived. Everybody else is new...Like, I slowed down opportunities because I was an outsider coming in. So, I capped off, for at least five years – cause that was my original contract – [opportunities for the executive]. Some were a bit long in the tooth, so they retired anyway, and a couple of individuals indicated that they were fine where they were, they weren’t looking for further development. So, my focus wasn’t on the leadership team, my focus was on the middle managers and getting them ready to sit at the table for the leadership team. So, that’s where I put my focus.”

Chief 6’s experience was similar. He entered a smaller organization in which the highest-ranking executive was extremely senior and was not a candidate for being his successor. This compelled him to focus on middle management officers in the police service and to develop officers who could possibly ascend to the executive level during his tenure:

“One of the things that I noticed at my previous agency is that nobody had applied internally for the job. There was a bit of a gap there, as people had left the organization. So, you know, the most senior person who was the acting chief when I got there had about thirty-six years and then the next person in line had seventeen years. And so, there were two people – one was sergeant, and one was a staff sergeant – that I talked to the police commission because they too recognized the need to be able to produce candidates internally who could compete for the job.”

Chief 6’s experience also highlights an important point about timing in succession planning and re-affirms why it is necessary to identify and develop people with the aforementioned “runway” left in their careers. While a leader needs to develop a viable internal successor (preferably more than one) during their tenure, it is important that they avoid a situation in which their departure is too closely aligned with the career timelines of the executive. That is, if the timelines are too closely aligned then the departure of the Chief could be accompanied by the departure of other members of the executive,

creating a leadership/experience vacuum in the organization, while leaving the in-coming chief with a dearth of executive experience and institutional knowledge to draw upon.

If succession is well-timed, then the organization will be ready to transition at the conclusion of a chief's tenure. As participants have stated here, this means not only having a viable internal successor prepared but having a cadre of people in the leadership pipeline to create a level of stability and sustainability. The worst-case scenario is for a chief to complete their tenure and to "leave the cupboard" bare so to speak – that is, leave the agency bereft of leadership talent and experience, leading to organizational instability and discontinuity. In some cases, the inability to develop an internal successor may compel a board to extend a chief's tenure, which can be detrimental to both the organization and the next chief. Chief 2's experience is a good example of this, as he entered an organization where they had failed to develop an internal successor leading to the previous Chief having to extend his tenure. Ultimately, when Chief 2 entered the organization, there was dearth of talent and experience at the executive level, leaving him with few options for forming his executive team and creating a challenging environment for succession planning. As Chief 2 recalled:

"When I came in the deputy position was vacant, so I promoted one of the inspectors who was very senior and had been acting for a number of years. It's a long sordid story I won't get into, but the chief wanted to leave a long time ago and the board was, you know, hanging on to him and hanging on to him and they didn't wanna hire a deputy because they knew the chief was leaving and they didn't wanna, you know, hijack the new chief with an installed already person, so they left the deputy position vacant. So, I promoted the acting deputy, and I knew I had no choice because he was a long-serving member, he had been acting, [and was] totally competent."

The dynamic that Chief 2 encountered is something that participants seemed to be acutely aware of and wished to avoid. Recall that several participants spoke about the need to have clear timelines and keep the board updated on the anticipated or likely time in which leadership transition will occur. In some respects, this speaks to the need for chiefs to be aware of their own mortality, or to acknowledge that they have a professional shelf-life. As Chief 10 explained: "It was partially that I had a couple of good mentors saying, 'You're like a bag of milk. You gotta get out of the fridge before you get smelly and curdled'." Yet, in addition to being mindful of their own mortality, they also need to be aware of where the organization stands as they near their anticipated endpoint. If the developmental timelines of their internal candidates do not align with

their departure and there is no strong internal candidate available to take over, then it could lead to the chief extending their tenure (which presents several issues) or the board having to find an external successor.

Creating Runway: The “External” Internal Successor

A possible way to avoid this situation is through an external/internal successor, an approach that a few chiefs discussed. Essentially this approach entails bringing in an outsider from another police service with the intention of preparing them to be the internal successor candidate at the conclusion of the Chief’s tenure. This strategy is meant to provide an injection of talent into the executive ranks, while also bringing in a candidate that is further along in their development and is better positioned to assume the role of chief.

Bringing in an outsider during the chief’s tenure also allows for that individual to familiarize themselves with the organization and vice versa. Among the current sample, perhaps the best example of this approach was provided by Chief 9. He was brought into his current police service from another agency and hired as deputy chief during the last two years of the outgoing chief’s tenure. The purpose was to develop a potential successor to the chief. In addition to explaining how this process helped with his integration into the organization as an outsider, he noted:

“As you know, it was, kind of, pre-ordained...non-pre-ordained, but I would be potentially the successor for the chief. That the chief would have the opportunity to mentor and train me. What was valuable for me was, if I’d applied to a different department as a chief without having that mentorship program in place would have been a real detriment. Having the chief take me under his wing, having learned about the culture, having learned about, you know, the different areas of the organization, for me was absolutely beneficial. I’m very fortunate to have had that opportunity with the chief and learn from his and learn about this organization.”

He also outlined how that experience has impacted his own succession strategy. Although he maintained that his goal was to develop an internal successor, he acknowledged that as he entered the final years of his tenure, that if the internal talent was not yet developed, he would consider taking the external/internal approach of his predecessor:

“You know, for a chief I have to look [at] do I have anybody internally that I can help and mentor and support knowing my timeline, or do I have to go

external, and that was a really critical decision. You know, ultimately, I'll have to make that final decision in the next year or so, but if I have to go externally then I would like to do something like [my predecessor] did. You know, where I have a year or two minimum with the person to help them, you know, introduce em to the team.”

A similar series of events occurred in Chief 12's case due to timing issues. An early retirement at the deputy chief level left an opening that potential successors in the department were unable to fill because officers who might ascend to the executive level had not yet developed the requisite competencies and so were not viable successors. As a result, an external candidate who was further along in their developmental timeline was brought in to be the new deputy, as well as a possible successor to the chief:

“I was a chief already, the deputy had retired earlier than expected, so I was hoping that the inspectors would have more time to develop because when I first arrived, they were all staff sergeants. They were now inspectors, but they hadn't had that robust leadership time yet. So, the board, who is responsible for hiring the deputy and the chief, they identified an external candidate who came to the service, and I felt if he progressed as anticipated, he would be the chief when I left.”

In Chief 6's second experience with succession, his arrival was preceded by the departure of both the chief and members of the executive team, thus presenting him with the opportunity to establish a new executive team, with succession as a key consideration. Following an assessment of the talent pool among officers in the police service, he decided to bring in three external deputy chiefs. While there were many factors that influenced this decision, Chief 6 noted that succession planning was a key consideration. Interestingly, timing played an important part in his approach to developing these external insiders. In his view, while the objective was to be forward thinking and developing a successor for the future, it was also important to acknowledge that leadership is fluid, at it is important to have a successor available in the short-term, as well:

“So, the strengths for me – and I related this to the commission recently – is that in terms of from deputy chief to chief...so, if I were to leave, they would be in good shape. Mainly because we've had three external hires. I've got four deputies here. One's internal and he's not interested in being the chief. He's senior and he's not interested. But the three external deputies probably are interested, and so at the end of the day, they're all different and all of them are capable of being chiefs.”

Chief 1 also spoke about taking this approach, or at least considering it. In his agency, they have created a secondment as a way to bring in an external insider. In this case, the individual is not directly hired, but instead brought in on a one-year secondment with the possibility of being hired as part of the executive team. Though somewhat different, the strategy is still aimed at a similar goal:

“Here, what’s going to happen is – and we’re happy with it – we actually created...a senior officer will come here from [another police service] on a one-year secondment and will work alongside myself. They will be involved. They are not just here to watch and observe. They will take on the role of – I don’t care – assistant to the chief constable or whatever. So, when I’m not here, they represent me at meetings. For that person, it’s development. If they really like it and do well here, well then, they can look to apply when one of the deputies’ leaves. Or we can send them back. It’s a twelve-month secondment. So, we’re looking to be a bit more creative and open.”

Succession Planning and the Small Agency Experience: Challenges and Opportunities

The experiences of participants indicate that the size of a police agency can impact efforts to effectively implement succession planning and leadership development. The broad spectrum of agencies – in size and strength – means that succession planning may look incredibly different in a small or mid-sized department than in a large urban police service. As Chief 4 noted, he cannot necessarily look to a large agency as a model for implementing succession planning in his department, because they may be operating in distinctly different contexts:

“So, I worked in [a large police service]. You know in [that department] when I worked there, it was [over 1000] cops. I’m now the chief here and we have [under 300] cops. It’s a big difference between [that] and a department with almost 1500. You know, large to small organization. Organizations have to look at, not what big departments are doing...certainly, you can watch at learn, but what they have there may not be applicable here or it’s done in a different context. Or the principles are the same, but I do it differently because of the budgets, resources, and the staffing that I have to implement it. So, I think each agency has to critically look at their own infrastructure, their own ability cause you wanna set these things up for success and not export someone else’s plan that may not be easily implemented in your organization.”

Leaders of small and mid-sized police services may be challenged to develop an internal successor or successors during their tenure because the size of the organization

can limit the amount of talent in the leadership pipeline. This is because as the size of an agency decreases, so too does the proportion of the workforce in leadership positions. As such, smaller agencies may struggle to develop leaders because they are limited in the number of experienced personnel, they can utilize to provide development and expertise (Schafer, 2019). Chief 1 explained that this dynamic can limit a chief's options, forcing them to zero in on one person rather than developing a broader pool of potential successors:

"I think [succession planning] is more challenging in a smaller agency. In a larger agency, you're naturally going to have a larger pool. So, for succession planning you probably have a better opportunity to create several options as opposed to identifying just one person. Putting all eggs in one basket."

As such, according to Chief 9, the smaller talent pool in a small organization means that there is less margin for error when succession planning. For a succession plan to be successful, it requires near perfect alignment in all phases:

"I think the only difference is – to put it in a better perspective – smaller departments need a lot of things to align perfectly to make it happen. Whereas a larger organization has so much more opportunities to make it possible. So, we need that perfect alignment, but I can tell you when I first became chief, one of my priorities was to make my successor an internal candidate. I'm not necessarily sure that will happen despite trying to get some people where I need to get em to. I don't know if everything will align how I need it to align to make that happen."

One issue identified by chiefs is that in smaller agencies the gaps in experience and seniority between executive officers and supervisors can be more pronounced, which can present challenges for a chief seeking to implement succession planning. This may lead to recruiting a chief externally from the department. As Chief 2 noted:

"I'll just start with the small PD perspective. It's very difficult to, sort of, succession plan or plan you future because...you know, people get to these positions later in their career and, often, they're not junior enough to, kind of, give you a couple bumps. So, you end up promoting your more senior people to these inspector ranks. It's really hard for a fifteen-year or twenty-year sergeant to be promoted to inspector [in municipal policing]. I don't think they would have the respect of the rank and file because they would be viewed as having taken short cuts or they must be in the hip pocket of management or a suck up to get there. So, it is more difficult. I think...like a good example is even me with [my current service]. Like, they had to go out to a head-hunter to find an outside chief. And another more recent example, just this week and in the last couple months is, I've gone

out to a head-hunter to find my deputy. My deputy police chief is vacant right now because my deputy retired. So, it is hard to find internal talent sometimes at the most senior levels. So, that's why you see these firms becoming really popular to, you know, find executives because there is no succession planning."

A Deficit in Resources and Opportunities

There was a sentiment among some chiefs that large agencies (e.g., \geq 1400 members) may be better positioned to implement succession planning and leadership development processes than small and mid-sized agencies due, in part, to their having greater resources, more management and supervisory positions, and increased access to and opportunities for development. That is, small and mid-sized agencies typically have a small number of managerial and executive-level positions, which limits a chief's ability to promote from within and restricts developmental opportunities for upwardly mobile officers. This organizational structure creates a barrier for chiefs that hope to develop future leaders within their leadership timeline, in that it may be more difficult to develop and promote people in mid-tier ranks to upper management ranks. For example, a large organization may have multiple deputy chief positions, as well as superintendents and inspectors, whereas smaller agencies may only have one or two deputy positions, few or no superintendents, and a limited number of inspectors. For example, Chief 9 noted how the structure of his organization has challenged his succession planning efforts:

"I guess one of the other challenges is, you know every department's different, but, you know, for me, I have four senior management positions – four inspectors – and then I have two deputies. So, for me it's unfortunate because I don't have a lot of turn over. So, it's more challenging for me to start building someone up to be a deputy because I may not be able to build them up through the ranks in the appropriate time, in say, my five-year contract. I'll give you an example. Right now, I have a couple sergeants who could easily be a chief down the road. I have a staff sergeant who I could see [being a chief] but I just don't have the opportunity in the period of time I have to get them through the ranks and give em [developmental opportunities] ... If I only have four inspectors and let's say I have three who have no aspirations of moving up – and they pre-exist me being here – that puts me in a challenging position to internally develop the person I need to. Now, [a larger agency] is much more fortunate because they have, I think, thirty to thirty-five inspectors and eight superintendents. So, they have a lot more space in order to develop their senior executive team."

Chiefs that had worked or were working in smaller agencies revealed that they felt constrained in their ability to provide developmental and promotional opportunities due resource and staffing limitations. Small and mid-sized agencies may struggle to provide both the depth and breadth of experience that is a critical component of leadership development and succession planning. For example, small and mid-sized agencies may lack the financial resources for extensive training and can struggle to allow personnel to attend off-site training and developmental experiences (Schafer, 2019).

Yet, as several participants noted, beyond struggling to provide external experiences, it is providing internal developmental opportunities where small and mid-sized agencies face greater challenges, particularly in comparison to their larger counterparts. This is a challenge that Chief 1 touched on:

“I think in a smaller agency it becomes more difficult to offer the same amount of opportunities or challenges for a variety of people...even a couple people versus just one person.”

Due to having fewer opportunities for exposure to different aspects of policing as their careers progress, once officers are in leadership positions, they may lack the requisite knowledge and experience to excel in the position. Chief 5, who became chief of a small police service after having been in a large urban service, viewed this as a significant challenge. He recalled that when he came to the police agency, “We just didn’t have very qualified people in leadership positions. They hadn’t been outside of their bubble. Their experience was very narrow.” The primary issue was that his officers lacked exposure to training and knowledge about the many facets of policing and he recalled that he struggled to create and provide opportunities for development both within and beyond the organization:

“I think, you know, because it’s not just formal education, it’s making sure they have the ability to make decisions where they struggle through two rights or where they struggle through two wrongs, and how they make sense of two wrong decisions, and they have to make lemonade out of these lemons. I think that in an organization our size it’s about creating opportunity because often it’s very easy for me to put someone in a position and leave them there for a long period of time and not have to worry about it. You know, because they learn the role and responsibility, they typically do a good job otherwise we’d remove them. And then, why move them someplace else where they’ll continue their learning when we don’t have to, and especially when you’re talking about three superintendent spots.

You know, you're either in operations, you're in investigations, or you're in admin, so there's not a lot of change."

Consequently, Chief 5 believed that smaller agencies have historically been prone to hiring external chiefs because they often struggle to develop internal leadership talent due, in large part, to lack of exposure and experience. Moreover, Chief 2, who led one of the smallest agencies among the sample, noted that, while there are external secondments to other agencies that chiefs can make use of to expose officers to different experiences, there were currently few mechanisms to do so at the executive level. He suggested the implementation of a leadership internship program that would allow officers from smaller agencies to spend time in leadership roles in larger departments:

"I really think the answer is, in a smaller agency you need a mechanism to expose the people that you believe have the best potential...you need to get them out of the organization temporarily and into leadership positions in a larger agency with more exposure to let them hone their skills [and] make some mistakes that don't affect their home agency. I think we need a formal program to let people take on those challenges and then come back. Almost make it like a formal...and it's not like a leadership school or anything...it's actual on the job [experience]. And I don't know who funds that. And that's the problem why it never happens. There's complexities to it but that's the answer. Like, you gotta bring people out of their small, little agency. You gotta let them grow in a larger agency and let them come back and give them that responsibility."

The limited number of personnel in small agencies can present additional challenges beyond an absence of internal experience, as Chief 16's circumstance demonstrates. He explained that he was struggling to succession plan due to a lack of interest in senior leadership positions among the people in his organization. In a police service of less than twenty-five members, this was particularly acute and led him to conclude that his successor would likely be an external hire. Thus, although he had developed a promotional process for the purposes of succession planning, he had no candidates who wanted to be promoted:

"Two years prior to becoming chief, I developed a promotional process. It is an executive officer to chief program intended to develop a successor. The problem is in my agency right now, there's a lack of desire to go to the next level. People are risk averse to go to the next level and I don't know why."

According to Chief 11, this can also lead to the promotion of unqualified individuals up the chain of command, creating a weak leadership group. He believed that the more insular nature of small agencies creates an environment in which patronage prevails over merit, further enhancing leadership gaps. That is:

“...the smaller the agency, the more it’s an old boys club. ‘I know so-and-so. I knew that guy, I covered his butt one time over the years and now the person thinks I’m great so I’m gonna get promoted’.”

Bigger is not Always Better

Though they may face challenges, small agencies may have advantages for leadership development and succession planning. For example, the smaller scale of agencies can make it easier for executives to monitor the development and career aspirations of all employees and provide for individualized employee development and succession planning. This does require senior executives to support these efforts (Schafer, 2019). Chief 4’s comments reflected this perspective when he was explaining why he believed that the relatively small size of his agency (less than three-hundred members) was an advantage for succession planning and development:

“I think there’s advantages and disadvantages to having large organizations and small organizations. As I said, larger organizations can maybe have more time and money that they could commit to [succession planning]. I don’t have that, so I’m gonna work within what I have and if I find there are significant advantages because I can personalize development. I can pay more attention to it because I’m seeing my people more often cause I’m working more closely [with them] and we’re more tight knit.”

Schafer (2019) noted that, while larger agencies may have considerable internal training resources and deeper pools of internal expertise, smaller agencies may be nimbler and more adaptable to change. Chief 4’s insights suggest that the leaders of smaller agencies are more familiar with their employees and can have more routine interactions with them. Where there is a strong desire to succession plan, it may be easier for leaders to directly shape the process through a variety of ways that do not necessarily require significant resources. For example, Chief 5 mentioned that one way he has attempted to create a stronger pool of experience is by creating new executive positions that have not traditionally existed in his agency, stating that:

“...our police board has given us permission to have three superintendents. Really, an organization our size should never have a superintendent, but to ensure that someone has the education, experience and exposure to be able to succession plan and be prepared for their next role we need to make sure that we have given them that experience in a role where they can actually build those skills and experience failure and experience challenges and successes.

So, what we have done as well now is we have taken that to the next level, and we have put in place...for example, my executive officer used to be a non-sworn person and I turned that [position] into a sworn person. And the reason is that it gives exposure to governance and the police board that our members would never have the experience to be able to have. And how do we prepare them to be able to take on leadership roles if they've never worked with a governance board, such as a police board? So, that would be one change. Another change they've allowed us to do is to go over strength in relation to our inspectors. We know have an acting inspector role that allows us to continue to push those boundaries of development of our staff sergeants to continue to take on the next level, making sure that we get them ready.”

Chief 6 shared a similar experience with succession planning in a small municipal agency. To provide developmental opportunities for those in the leadership pipeline, he created two new positions that had not previously existed in the police service. In doing so, he showcased the flexibility and nimbleness that working in a small agency can provide if the desire to succession plan and develop employees exists:

“And so, there were two people – one was a sergeant, and one was a staff sergeant – that I talked to the police commission about because they too recognized the need to be able to produce candidates internally who could compete for the job. And so, I pointed out to them [that] if you look at the application for the position, you had people applying from large organizations – superintendents, assistant commissioners – that had way, way more experience than that. If you ever want to produce somebody internally who could compete, then we need to change the structure of the organization a little bit. So, what we ended up doing – and this was approved, and it was done before I left – we got rid of the deputy chief position and created two Inspector positions. So, that's a smaller agency to have two Inspectors but it's done purposefully, so you've got a couple of people for the commission to think about into the future and, of course, when you get them at the Inspector rank in the province here, you get them at completely different tables. They can participate in committees at the Association of Chiefs of Police. They can be members of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. They can be on committees there. They get to all kinds of meetings with peers and stuff like that and dealing with strategic level issues that, frankly, they weren't doing before, so they never would've been competitive in that sense.

And then you start sending those people to courses, and again, some of the training courses they would not have qualified for before as non-commissioned officers. And so, you set them up for success. It really excites me every time I go to the Association of Chiefs of Police now, I see these two Inspectors from [my previous agency] – who were previously a sergeant and a staff sergeant – and I see these two participating and contributing in meaningful ways and I think to myself, that's changed everything there.

Though there was a general perception among the chiefs that larger agencies were better equipped to develop their personnel and succession plan, having this capacity does not directly translate into an ability to do so. The experiences of several chiefs in this study indicate that, despite their perceived advantages, large agencies may struggle to develop leaders and succession plans. For example, Chief 6 assumed the leadership of a large police service where little attention had been given to succession planning, while Chief 15 indicated that there had been no evidence of a succession plan in a large urban police service when he became chief. Although the size of an agency can and does have an impact on succession planning and leadership development, the bigger factor is the degree to which executives prioritize succession planning and the amount of time and energy they devote to it. The following quote from Chief 13 emphasizes this point: "You know, it's where you set your priorities, Josh, and I think not enough leaders are setting their priorities on developing leaders."

Small Agency Succession Planning: A Brief Case Example

Chief 13's experience is an excellent case example of the personalized approach to succession planning and leadership development that is afforded by a small police service. He served as Chief of a small First Nations police service and one of the key mandates during his tenure was the development of an internal, Indigenous, successor. In seeking to fulfill this mandate, Chief 13's approach to succession planning and leadership development demonstrates the benefits of small agencies identified by Schafer (2019). The relative simplicity of the agency's structure enabled Chief 13 to control all aspects of the succession planning process and to provide individualized development. He had the freedom to move people within the organization, bring in external talent to fill gaps, and create new positions based on the needs of the succession plan. He also had the ability to be sufficiently flexible to change directions in the planning process if circumstances required.

The selected quotes from Chief 13 provide some valuable insight into this dynamic, beginning with his perspective on the importance of succession planning and leadership development. It is notable that, early in the process, his ability to know the department, by virtue of its small size, assisted him in identifying potential leaders:

“So, instead of setting people up for failure...cause I’ve seen this many times in First Nations policing, where they’ll say, ‘Okay, we’ve got our own police service now’ and maybe they’ll go through a couple of transitional chiefs or whatever, and then they take some poor local guy, they make him the chief of police, you know, and maybe he was a constable or a corporal in [federal policing] or a municipal service and say, ‘Here it’s yours. Go out and fail.’ You know, it was my goal to make sure that these people who were potential replacements for me needed to have the tools required to be able to do it. I also realized that not everyone’s gonna be able to do it.”

“...I had my guy that I thought was probably gonna be the guy, but I started looking around and I first identified for or five potential people. You know, sort of, natural leaders within the group [and] maybe had already been promoted once down there. That type of thing. And you know, started giving them jobs to do, assignments to do, you know, ‘report back to me on this or how do we do this?’ We had lots of discussions with people. I then identified three really strong candidates – actually, two really strong – I identified three candidates who I thought might be able to do it.”

Like the experience of Chiefs 5 and 6, Chief 13 had the flexibility to be creative in his policies, including changing the rank structure and creating new ranks for developmental purposes:

“I hired a consultant to come in and run a promotion process for me...So, anyhow, we did that, and they identified two guys, the best two guys. They identified them and they said, ‘They don’t come near being an inspector, but they meet the majority of the competencies for a staff sergeant.’ We didn’t have staff sergeants, so I went to the police commission, and I said, ‘Okay, here’s the report. Here’s how it came out.’ I’m a big believer in not setting people up to fail. I’m a big believer in making sure people have an opportunity to learn and progress at a rate that’s appropriate. I said, ‘Let’s do away with the rank of inspector for the time being. Let’s initiate the rank of staff sergeant. I’ll promote these two guys to staff sergeant. I’ll explain to them and to the police association what the difference is and why we’re doing it...So that’s what happened. I had my two guys promoted to staff sergeant and I put one in charge of operations and one in charge of non-operations. I took the guy that was strong in operations, and I put him in admin, and I took the guy that was strong in admin, and I put him in operations. Okay? Learn something new [and] work together with each other.”

As Schafer (2019) described, as leader of a small agency Chief 13 was able to closely monitor the career development of his people and provide more personalized development:

“We had a member that was seconded to [another agency] as an instructor, and in the summertime, she came back to work during Pow Wow time and I talked to her and what her aspirations were and stuff, and she did not wanna come back from [her secondment]. She’d been there three years, I think, at that point. We had empty positions and I only had one female member besides her, and I said, “I’m sorry but you’re coming back,” and she did not like me. I said, “We need you here. We need the experience that you’ve had as an instructor.” [She’s] a remarkably bright lady, so I could see the potential there as well. So, brought her back [and] put her as an acting sergeant...She came back, I put her into an acting sergeant role, we go another year [and] we run another sergeant’s process through the company. One of the guys that failed the previous year and this [woman] get promoted.”

This was combined with external hires that aimed to increase the pool of talent and expertise in the organization, while also filling experiential gaps, for example:

“So, this lady that was the sergeant, knew a guy. She’s from another First Nation, originally, that had their own police service in another province. She knew a guy that was a detective/investigator with a major municipal police service in that province and was looking to get back into First Nations policing, so we ended up hiring him as a sergeant and put him in charge of [our plainclothes] area as well. He was a really strong performer.”

The capacity to be nimble and adaptive in the face of change was also evident in Chief 13’s experience. In this case, once again, being able to alter the rank structure in response to evolving circumstances, namely, the evolution of the succession plan:

“So, we had three Staff Sergeants and I figured, ‘Okay, this is part of my pool to mentor people beyond this.’ We run an inspector process [and] all three met the competencies, as we judged them, for Inspector. I go back to the police commission and say, ‘Okay, we’re working towards getting a deputy chief here. These three people are all First Nations people, they meet the Inspector competencies, just, but they do. I think it’s time that we do away with the staff sergeant rank, make the inspectors rank again, and put them in the Inspectors rank.’ It was also important at this point to get them into a commissioned rank because they were finding it was a conflict for them to be in the police association because there, they’re doing discipline and all this kinda stuff. So okay, we’ll do that, and we did.”

Chief 13’s ability to take a hands-on approach to succession planning and leadership development – based, in part, on the intimacy that comes with leading a small

agency – established an internal leadership pipeline that eventually produced his successor and a new executive team, all of whom were Indigenous. He described the outcome of the process:

“The other inspector is doing really well, and we run a process and it’s deemed that he’s ready to become deputy chief and he becomes deputy chief. He’s now the chief of police there...The woman who was the [seconded] instructor becomes the inspector...The guy that we hired as a sergeant to run plainclothes is now the other inspector, the operations inspector.”

In sum, what Chief 13’s experience demonstrates is that although small police services lack the resources and strength of personnel of their larger counterparts, it does not mean that they are destined for a revolving door of external leaders. It is possible for small police services to develop internal leadership candidates and to create a leadership pipeline that facilitates succession planning. Doing so may require executives to be creative, flexible, and diligent in their approach to overcome the resource and experiential limitations that small agencies often face. Yet, by virtue of working in a small agency executives may be in a better position to be flexible and innovative in their approaches, while also having the ability to take a hands-on approach to leadership development in a way that executives in large agencies may not.

The critical element is that succession planning, and leadership development is viewed as a priority and the chief is willing to devote the time and energy necessary to implement it. Again, Chief 13’s experience is a prime example, in that he (and his board) prioritized developing an internal successor, took an intentional and comprehensive approach, and played an active role in personnel development.

Succession and Developing Leaders: Education, Training, Experience and Mentorship

As participants articulated their perspectives on succession planning and described their efforts to implement it within their respective organizations, it became clear that leadership development occupied a central role. Succession planning at the executive level cannot happen without leadership development – the concepts are synonymous. As Schafer (2013, as cited in Schafer, 2019) stated, “leadership it is not a given quality or commodity. It is a set of attributes and characteristics that need to be

developed within an individual” (p. 236). Subsequently, the prevalent attitude among participants was that succession planning cannot simply be about finding the next leader of a police service. To achieve its purpose, succession planning must be about developing effective leaders that are equipped for the many challenges of contemporary Canadian policing. They acknowledged that it is not enough to expect effective leadership to emerge organically within the ranks of policing. Specific approaches, strategies and programs are needed to develop police leaders who can move the profession forward.

However, the interviews revealed that establishing effective ways to do this in Canadian policing remains elusive. Just as there is wide variation in the degree to which succession planning is being done in Canadian policing, so too is there a plethora of approaches to leadership development. This is further complicated by the competing expectations that key groups – including police personnel, police boards, police associations, and communities – have for police leaders, as well as their competing visions of what effective police leadership means in practice. According to Chief 5, this is the crux of the challenge and why leadership development will likely continue to be a complex and challenging endeavor:

“And I think that it’s even gonna be tougher. So, we think of great leaders that have the ability to connect with our troops, to build strong engagement and ensure that they are highly attuned to their work and are contributing at high levels, so we’re getting maximum efficiencies out of our people. We want that from someone. But, at the same time, we want reform. So, at the same time we want them to say, ‘You know, what you’ve been doing for the last five years, ten years, fifteen years – however long you’ve been a police [officer] – is wrong and we shouldn’t have been doing it and everything we’ve taught you in relation to that is not correct and we want you to now do it this way.’ You know, so how do you balance that between what a police board expectation is, what a police association expectation is, and what the expectations of the community and our members are?”

Participants’ pathways into leadership exemplify the generally haphazard approach to leadership development that has historically existed in Canadian policing. Though their experiences indicate that there does not necessarily need to be a one-sized fits all approach to leadership development, it is evident that there is a lack of clarity in policing on how to best develop effective leadership for the position of chief. Participants’ experiences with leadership development throughout their own careers makes it difficult to identify a particular developmental path, set of proscribed check

points, or evidence-based program, that one can point to as a possible template for police leaders.

For example, some participants came from largely operational policing backgrounds, others spent much of their careers in administrative positions, while others had more circuitous or unconventional paths into the executive. Many participants had pursued some form of advanced education as part of their development, yet there were others who did not have a university degree or had only pursued advanced education following their promotion to chief.

With respect to leadership development training, most participants had been exposed to some form of leadership program(s) or course(s), specific to policing or otherwise; however, there were differing opinions about the value of these programs to their leadership development. There were also variations in the specific leadership development opportunities that participants experienced or were exposed to during their careers. Some cited specific specialized opportunities within policing (e.g., leading a specialty unit, working on an integrated policing team, or overseeing a task force), while others pointed to experiences outside of policing including secondments to provincial oversight entities, work in other provincial or federal government postings, and experience in the private sector. Several participants also had served in police associations, working within the union/labour environment, and felt that this experience had played a valuable role in their leadership development.

The diversity of leadership paths and experiences with leadership development among the chiefs influenced their respective philosophies of leadership development and how they approached it from their position as police leaders. Though their philosophies and approaches differed in certain respects, all generally viewed leadership development as being a combination of experience, education, training, and mentorship. A theme that emerged from discussions about leadership development was that participants placed importance on developing well-rounded leaders who had both depth and breadth of knowledge and experience. Key to accomplishing this was exposing people to challenging environments both within and outside of policing, although there was uncertainty about how this could best be accomplished.

Preparing Police Leaders: Experience and Exposure

Beyond the Comfort Zone

Chiefs expressed the general view that providing developmental opportunities to officers as they advanced through the organization was an essential component of succession planning. This is consistent with the perspective that developing the capacity of police officers to lead is “pivotal to effectiveness of performance and improvements in the service delivered by police agencies” (Huey et al., 2019: p. 11). It also supports the assertion of Montgomery (2019) that, “Ensuring that officers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to exercise their authority, make decisions, take actions, and treat people fairly and with respect is a key responsibility of police leadership” (p. 223). Police executives and senior officers are expected to navigate an evolving web of social, technological, and other challenges facing police organizations, and it is important that current and future generations of police leaders are equipped with the necessary skills and abilities to do so.

For the chiefs, an important way to accomplish this is through the accumulation of experience through exposure to different areas. To this end, creating opportunities for prospective leaders was the focus of many of the participants’ succession planning efforts. As Chief 9 noted, “You know, the people I see having that upward mobility is giving them opportunities in order to broaden their experience or leadership skills.” Chief 5 provided described this:

“...to ensure that someone has the education, experience and exposure to be able to succession plan and be prepared for their next role we need to make sure that we have given them that experience in a role where they can actually build those skills and experience failure and experience challenges and successes...I think, you know, because it’s not just formal education, it’s making sure they have the ability to make decisions where they struggle through two rights or where they struggle though two wrongs and how they make sense of two wrong decisions, and they have to make lemonade out of these lemons...”

“...It begins with the ability for us to make sure that, as leaders, we are creating environments where our people can experience some of this and make decisions in this highly ambiguous environment. So, I said decisions between two rights and two wrongs. Those are often the decisions we’re making now. It’s no longer, jeepers it weighs out on this side, right? You know, both of these suck, now which decision are we gonna make?”

The importance placed upon this experiential component of leadership development relates to the perspective (noted above) that it is unwise to assume that leadership will emerge organically as officers move through their policing careers. Officers that are viewed as having potential for executive leadership or that aspire to executive leadership need the opportunity to gain leadership experience and build the necessary skills and, as Chief 5 notes, to be able to employ those skills in a range of environments that present different, often complex, challenges. It is the latter aspect here that most participants viewed as particularly important to development, namely, breadth of experience. This is partly to create more well-rounded leaders, in terms of both skills and knowledge. Chiefs 9 and 14 shared their respective views on this topic:

“When I identify a solid sergeant or staff sergeant, I give em those opportunities in other areas that challenge em and are outside their comfort zone. I stayed in my comfort zone, but I remember one chief did put me in a couple areas that were completely outside my comfort zone and taught me a lot, and had I not had those experiences I’m pretty confident I would not be the same leader I am today. So, I guess that’s another thing when I look at sustainability. Really people that have a broad range of experiences and are more marketable to an organization because of that experience.”
[Chief 9]

“I look at well-roundedness and I don’t expect that everybody is gonna have well-roundedness in all three major service areas as I would call them, cause that’s not realistic for some people. And we’ve got some great officers that, you know, have worked in a couple of areas and that’s fine. If you’ve worked in two of the three that’s big for me. If you’ve only worked in one area but you’re a top-notch cop, that’s someone I would look at and go, ‘Well, we need to diversity their experience.’ Because you might get someone that’s great in patrol and then they go to ERT and they excel; and they go to Strike Force and they excel; and they go to Dog Squad and they excel, and it’s like that’s great, but every one of those is, like, high profile operational area and we need you to be that – we want that – but I also wanna know if you can handle working in HR or P & R or if you can handle working in a detective office. Like, you need to be broader than just, you know, the strictly operational uniform stuff. I want people to have a bit of breadth of experience, so I look at that.” [Chief 14]

One risk of not getting officers out of their comfort zones, Chief 6 notes, is individuals tend to rely on what they’re most familiar with and if they spend most of their career in one area – an area where they are technically proficient – they may approach executive leadership through that same lens:

“Either you move it backwards in time and evolution to what you used to know if it worked well or, similarly, lot of times leaders – and this is one of

the big challenges, I think for leaders when they're making the transition to executive leadership and the strategic leadership – is they tend to think back down to where they're comfortable. And so, if you put them in an area where they were very technically capable and strong, the risk is even higher that they'll get down into the weeds cause they're very comfortable in those weeds.”

To mitigate this issue, Chief 11 believed that the role of a leader was understanding what skills officers required to advance and endeavoring to provide the opportunities or experiences to develop those skills and accumulate leadership expertise. This might involve moving officers out of their comfort zones or exposing them to areas they may not be inclined to experience:

That's what's often missing, because if you leave it up to the individual, there's so many people throughout my career that have said, 'I just love what I'm doing. I wish everybody would just leave me alone and let me do my job here.' But knowing that that person has a huge skillset, and they can actually go to the next level or two levels higher. I've seen people that could jump two levels but [say], 'Well, no. Just leave me be. I just wanna do this.' "Yes. If we allow you to stay, there and continue to love what you're doing then you're isolated into a bubble on its own. The longer you're there, the less opportunity to move and expand from there." Cause they don't know. All they know is they see some guy over there [and go], 'Oh I don't wanna do it. There's too many headaches.' The easiest thing to do is stay where you are when you love what you're doing. The hardest thing is to move.”

The underlying premise of their comments is not that police officers cannot accumulate valuable experience and knowledge through one career path. Rather, by remaining in one career area, their skills and abilities will likely become increasingly specialized, whereas executive leadership requires a broader skillset and more diverse level of knowledge, necessitating exposure to a range of experiences, ideas, and ways of thinking. For Chief 13, this was a key component of his approach to leadership development:

“As an example, we needed software for policy, and we needed new video cameras in the cars. So, I went to IACP [International Association of Chiefs of Police] in Orlando, Florida and I took my deputy with me, and we spent our whole time at the trade show, and I said, 'We're gonna find what's best for use and our conditions.' The trade show at IACP is like, you know, you fill up the Orlando convention centre with police toys, like, it's ridiculous. It's so big. And I made him – I said, 'I need a report. You tell me what's going to be best. What we're going to use.' You need to do that type of thing and involve people in it in order for them to be able to develop to become the leaders they need to be.”

Chief 1's experience illustrates of what Chief 11 is describing. In discussing his journey into the executive, he recalled how the chief at the time made decisions about his developmental path for him to gain expertise. Chief 1's experience touches on a few the key points made by Chief 11:

"In my case it was the chief [at the time] who probably recognized something in me before I recognized it myself. And so, when I actually made it to sergeant, everyone's dream was to...and it's kind of a joke, not dream...you all envision that you're gonna go to patrol division. You're gonna be on the watch. You're gonna be working night shifts. And I remember getting a phone call saying, 'You're going to be promoted to sergeant and, oh by the way, you're going to be going to Community Services and Media', oh and traffic.' Community Services, Media, and Traffic. And you're talking to a guy that didn't write tickets and I was like, 'Oh my god.' I had learned later that after this promotional competition that the Inspectors and...uh...staff sergeants had sat around – cause there was a bunch of promotions – to pick their team and I remember giving one guy a hard time like, "Well why didn't you pick me to be your sergeant?" And where I learned it was from him. He was like, 'No, no, no. The chief was really clear that you needed to develop in a certain area because you'd already proven yourself [in operations] and you were going to Community Services.' So, it was probably [The chief at the time] who saw something that said this is an area of development that will enhance your position."

Building Transferable Skills

However, several of the chiefs asserted that although it was important to expose aspiring leaders to different policing experiences as part of their development, the way in which most police services did this was flawed. In their view, the police sector has traditionally treated career and leadership development as the accumulation of technical expertise and knowledge, the expectation being that officers require technical expertise in an area to be able to be a supervisor or leader in that area. However, as Chiefs 6 and 11 noted, leadership development should primarily be about the acquisition of leadership skills that can be transferable across various policing areas. As Chief 11 suggested, "the higher you go, the less you need of expertise knowledge, the more you need of people knowledge. Understanding how to treat people."

The argument being made is that, from a succession planning and leadership development perspective, exposing officers to diverse experiences within policing should not be for the purpose of gaining technical expertise, but building a skillset that can increase leadership competencies. Chief 6 shared his experience with this while seconded to the provincial government:

“I was seconded externally right over to the Provincial Government, and so, I saw a completely different way of doing business there. So, for instance, in policing we, kind of, have this thinking that if you didn’t at some point participate as a member of the dog unit, for example, later on down the line you couldn’t be a supervisor or a manager in that area because, of course, you wouldn’t understand. In the provincial government what I saw was a different model where they took senior leaders and general management skills, and leadership capabilities were transferable everywhere. And the idea was you didn’t necessarily have to have the technical expertise and, in fact, sometimes it was better if you didn’t.”

Chief 11 recalled how his own career experiences shaped his perspective on development. His policing background – and most of his technical expertise – was largely in forensics; however, his first experience with executive leadership was in communications (supervising dispatch personnel), an area in which he had very little technical knowledge. This experience made him realize that leadership development was not about the accumulation of technical knowledge but required exposure to different situations for the purpose of building a transferable leadership skillset and not the accumulation of technical expertise, which Brown (2021) has criticized police promotional practices of overemphasizing. For Chief 11:

“Just because you’re a specialist in forensics doesn’t mean you can’t be a commander in communications, you know, something totally different to the operational side. But you can, if you truly understand that all you’re doing is developing skillsets, of which, those are transferable... I went from there as an Inspector to a Superintendent in charge of all the comm centres across the whole province. Now you’ve got [inaudible] people and all the pressures associated to connectivity and radio response. “Okay, let’s take that to the next level. That’s a huge problem. How do we solve it?” and that continual mentality. So, that’s the thing, in my mind, when leaders progress up the ranks, if they don’t experience things like that, then they’re going to be challenged at the next level. You know, because they get to a time where they cannot solve the problem and what happens then? How are you going to build the trust of people that you’re working with if you cannot solve their issues?”

Chief 11 explained how this event influenced his approach to succession planning and leadership development. He explained that he changed the promotional system for the executive to focus on developing leadership skills rather than technical expertise. He stated that this was a key component of his succession planning strategy:

“In [my previous agency] every promotional process system, you had to apply for that specific job. So, you wanna be a superintendent in charge of intelligence? You apply for that. So, guess who’s gonna be the individuals

that have a better chance at winning? Anybody that's going to be in that silo of intelligence, which makes no sense cause once you're at the superintendent level any skillset...like I said, a person coulda been coming from communications could do that job if they're a people person, if they have those people skills. So, we're measuring the wrong skillset to get them into the role.

You know, I devised this whole system where, let's do a pool system like the municipal agencies do, so the basic skillset is aligned. You can get promoted and you have a baseline of skillsets at that rank level, the new rank level. Then, you make the selection of which position and it's not always up to them. So, the trouble with having you select, 'Okay, I want that specific position,' is that there's a lot of people that will never be into that position, and hence never get promoted. Whereas a good leader will assess those people in the pool...because someone did it to me. Someone said, 'I'm gonna move you from this place to the next place.' So, I get you out of your silo and I build more skillsets for the next level. Always thinking. It's like a chess game. Always thinking to the next level. Not the existing level that you're promoted to, but the next level."

Chief 15's experience of rising through the officer ranks illustrates the points made by Chief 11. As he was promoted, he continued to be exposed to areas of the department that he was unfamiliar with and, like Chief 11, he came to understand how he was accumulating a leadership skillset and the importance of being able to gain and apply these skills in different environments. In doing so, he suggested that it was this experience that made him a better leader, rather than the technical knowledge he gained while in each role:

"So, I get this promotion and typically when people get promoted, they're now vying for, 'Where do I wanna be transferred to?' I'm just thankful I got a promotion...They transferred me to – again, not a place where most people wanna go – Organizational Development and Support/Research and Planning. I became a change manager for the police service. To this day, I will tell people that was probably one of the most pivotal things that happened because every week or every two weeks, I'm in front of the executive and I'm getting an opportunity to see how that part of the service actually functions. And it just really dawned on me, I'm like, in order for this service to be really good for the people, they need good leadership. And people don't really see that, yeah, its strategic, its planning, it's researching, all of that. But I actually enjoyed that...and I got promoted again.

You know, I went to an area that, again, nobody wanted to go: Evidence Control. Who wants to work [there]? Well, here's what I would tell people. I would go, 'It doesn't matter what we do, if we don't manage the evidence well, good luck. We're gonna be a benign police service.' All of a sudden, that area, which was considered just a really horrible place to be, turned around. For me, it was about taking care of the people. So, I got promoted

again, and I got promoted again. Three years later, I'm an inspector and I'm like, 'Wow. You get to wear a white shirt [and] supervise 200 people. You're really fortunate. How did you get here?' The service went through a reorg where they formed a new division. It was called Records and Reports Management and I remember the deputy of the day put out a request for one of the inspectors to go work there. You know how many volunteers they got? Zero. I was a junior guy, and I was like, "How can you guys do this?" because it was supposed to be this really contentious place. Two hundred people working in an environment like that every day and not want to be a volunteer and go help fix it? So, I'm like, "I'll go," and the rest were, like, patting me on the back, honestly like, 'Thanks for taking the hit.' I'm like, 'No. We should want to create the best environment for our people.'

While Chiefs 11 and 15 were exposed to these ideas through their policing experiences, Chief 6 noted that it was not until he was exposed to an environment outside of policing that he came to a similar understanding. This is important because a common theme among participants was the need to expose people to external environments. While there were conflicting attitudes on what external exposure should look like, they tended to agree that it was an important component of leadership development. Chief 1 explained his thinking on this, stating that it was important for people to get outside of their specific policing context or, in his words, going beyond "your own four walls":

"Some of the things for succession planning preparation would be getting involved in things externally. So, [my eventual successor] who was successful...I encouraged him, and he got onto the BC Association of Chiefs of Police Board, which eventually got him exposure. So, in order to get some of these outside experiences – and I'll take it away from education – you need to put your hand up and you need to get outside and become involved with things that you might not necessarily see within your own internal world. So, from my own perspective, I'm the co-chair of the [redacted] I've been on the [redacted] Board of Directors, and I've sat as the acting chair or [redacted] for eighteen months. I'm on the [redacted] Board of Directors. So, I can say well, 'I'm on the [redacted] Board of Directors and I see this crap every month and I'm talking about ops plans and budgets.' So, you can get that experience if you don't limit yourself to your own four walls. But you have to recognize that you're doing that to bring it back to help your organization in the moment and your organization in the future."

Several other chiefs shared a similar perspective, and, like Chief 1, they cited external committee work as one of the most common ways to do this. A big part of their succession planning, and leadership development processes was exposing officers to police governance boards and special committees and associations such as provincial

and national associations of chiefs of police. The belief was that this would help prepare officers for the leadership environment by exposing them to other leaders, allowing them to exchange ideas and to learn about how leaders from other police services respond to challenges and make decisions. Other chiefs felt that exposure to police governance boards was useful because it was an opportunity to learn about the relationship between boards and police services, while also providing insight into the political dynamics of policing and police leadership. It is also a way to familiarize the board with potential successors or get these people on the boards' radar. The following selected comments are representative of the chiefs' perspectives on this:

"A lot of chiefs don't include their deputies in high-level [committee] meetings. I got to do that, and it was a huge benefit...I try to include my leadership team in high-level decisions with other organizations." [Chief 3]

"And here's the other thing. I'm also inviting our staff sergeants to our police board meetings. Like, the in-camera meetings, so they can see what happens behind closed doors...So, guess what happens? When people get promoted its seamless. They've already been at the table." [Chief 4]

"...my executive officer used to be a non-sworn person and I turned that position into a sworn person. And the reason is it gives exposure to governance and the police board that our members would never have the experience to be able to have. And how do we prepare them to be able to take on senior leadership roles if they've never worked with a governance board, such as a police board?" [Chief 5]

"...when you get them at the inspector rank in the province here, you get them at completely different tables. They can participate at the Association of Chiefs of Police. They can be members of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. They can be on committees here. They get to go to all kinds of meetings with peers and stuff like that and dealing with strategic level issues that, frankly, they weren't doing before, so they never would've been competitive in that case." [Chief 6]

"The first time, for example, I sat on a senior managers' meeting with all the other city managers was when I was chief. Like, that should never happen. So, I started taking my superintendents and deputies to these meetings, so they're familiar with the environment. So, I'm like, everybody needs to be exposed. You know, going on conferences, all of those pieces. I never had the opportunity for any of that, but I said this should never happen for another individual." [Chief 15].

Although these external opportunities were viewed as providing officers with experience beyond their specific policing environment, most still have a nexus to policing. On the other hand, Chief 7 felt that leadership development required exposing

people to experiences completely removed from policing – most notably exposing people to the private sector and other government agencies. In explaining his perspective, he echoed the criticism of Chiefs 6 and 11 regarding the traditional approach to development. He believed that this approach created a monolithic class of police leaders, and ultimately undermined evolution and growth, a stark contrast to some of the perspectives discussed above:

“I think a barrier to [leadership development] is narrow focus. So, that’s just a policing lane. We need to get them out of policing and expose them to several different or other things. It’s probably the single biggest thing that’s allowed me to be more successful in areas that I did okay at. The traditional police officer, you know, growing up you gotta do so many years here, and so many years here, and so many years here, it’s leading us to building everybody the same. And then we all go to the cliff together and nobody’s actually seeing what’s coming our way.

You know, I think business is a real lacking perspective in policing. And I know policing and business aren’t the same thing, but there’s so much to learn. I mean, there’s a not a lot of police chiefs out there that are good with money or finances or HR...My experience is nothing really related to policing and that’s why I had my entrepreneurship. Like, some of the best things I did for my development [were business-related]. And then I’ve had media training outside of policing...I think that is truly probably, for me personally, has been a difference maker. You know, everybody says – I get this from pretty much everybody I talk to – ‘Chief, you don’t sound like the typical police chief.’ And I say, ‘Well what is the typical police chief?’ And that’s the problem is we have a typical police chief, and we don’t have a typical CEO of some of our large companies. It’s made up of, you know, people that come from many different areas.”

A central premise of Chief 7’s argument here was that much of a contemporary police leaders’ role involves functions that do not fall within the traditional policing sphere including budgeting, financial management, and human resources, and thus, a police-centred developmental path would not necessarily provide the necessary training or experience to tackle these challenges. As such, Chief 7 stated that he was making efforts to provide private sector opportunities as part of his leadership development process, though Covid had currently disrupted this:

“I’m trying to work out a deal with – we had it pretty close to being done till Covid hit – with some pretty major companies and I said, ‘Hey, I’d like to second a person to you guys for a year. Would you be interested?’ Cause, what we actually have is that whole tactical, you know, operational planning skillset...policing and the military are second to none. That’s valuable to

the corporate community and we undersell that. But what they can teach back to use actually makes it that much more beneficial.”

However, one of the challenges to taking this approach is finding the appropriate external opportunities and overcoming officers’ resistance or unwillingness to venture outside of policing. Chief 7 provided an example of attempting to place one of his deputy chiefs in a provincial government position, only to have the officer resist because he thought the placement was a form of punishment:

“I’ll give you an example. As soon as I got here, I put one of my deputies in an acting role in government, assigned to an associate deputy minister to look at policy, to look at influence, to look at change and he just thought I was trying to get rid of him. I mean, that’s madness. A) you wouldn’t put somebody in that’s that close to some of your funding bodies and your policy if you’re trying to get rid of em. But it’s because the traditional mindset here was, ‘This is what you gotta do. You gotta develop within. It’s us against the world.’ Us against the world isn’t gonna work.”

The belief that external involvement is an important part of leadership development and succession planning is reflected in the literature. For example, the IALG identified that external opportunities like secondments, placements, and exchanges with public or private organizations domestically or overseas were important ways to stimulate innovation and diversity of experience and thought (Outram et al., 2014). They felt that the key goal of this approach – as the chiefs in this study also identified – is to broaden the mindset of future leaders, which is particularly important for developing diversity of perspective and judgement of police leaders (Outram et al., 2014).

Leadership Development Programs: The Current Landscape

As police leaders recognize the need to provide officers with developmental opportunities, is there a sufficient array of options available for them to do so? In exploring this question, participants’ opinions varied about both the quality and quantity of existing leadership development programs available for senior officers and middle managers. Huey et al (2019) found that police leaders had differing perspectives on the quality and availability of police leadership programs in Canada, In the present study, participants’ perspectives were quite nuanced, and it was evident that there is no consensus among this sample of police executives regarding the “best” options for executive development.

Several of the chiefs did express positive opinions about the current state of educational and training opportunities for senior officers and officers who were in the executive pipeline. In general, they felt that there were sufficient options and quality courses, citing specific Canadian and international leadership courses, as well as graduate level educational programs being offered by academic institutions across the country. For example, Chief 2 believed that there were several programs and course options available to senior police officers, mentioning a few programs both within and outside Canada:

“...I know that [another police service] invested heavily in the Queens University government leadership program. It’s very expensive, but I’ve got the money for it and I’m gonna send some of my people on it. And you’re not with police officers. You’re with other leaders of other businesses, you know, telecoms companies and whatever. It’s basically, like, they do the fully 360 and problem solving and teamwork and team building. And then there’s the Canadian Police College out of Ottawa...That’s where I took one of my courses. It was the Executive Leadership Program. It’s so well done that it gives you a whole bunch of credits towards a master’s degree. It’s at that level. It’s actually a graduate level [program]. And then there’s other opportunities. The FBI in Quantico Virginia has what they call the National Academy, which is an international ten-week, live-in course where you’re learning with other police leaders about leadership, change management, technology, ethical decision-making. I went on that, and it was unbelievable. So, there’s lots out there if you just look for it.”

Chief 2 was not alone in mentioning the FBI National Academy. Chief 4 cited it as well:

“I had the luxury of going to the FBI [National] Academy for ten weeks. It’s called the National Academy. So, I did ten weeks at the FBI’s National Academy in Quantico Virginia. And if I had to put to you one thing that I learned – I mean, I learned lots of things cause it was 10 weeks. There was an academic component [including] courses from the university of Virginia we had to complete and stuff.”

Chief 13 mentioned to the strategic management program offered by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) as being particularly valuable to his development as a leader:

“So, I was given an opportunity to go for training, but they wanted me to get training at a senior level that would benefit me in my role as chief of police. And it wasn’t like, ‘Oh we’re going to send you to get your master’s degree,’ it’s like, you know. So, I went to PERF in Boston to do the strategic management program, and it’s like a four-week course in Boston [and] it’s

absolutely fantastic. I came back and I used that – that was 2013 – to strengthen our strategic plan and that gave me the mentorship that I need to just, sort of, drive me on to the next level to make me a better strategic thinker and understand the formalization of that process.”

Chief 8 also felt that there were many opportunities available for senior officers, citing PERF like Chief 13, as well as the Senior Police Administrative Course (SPAC) at the Canadian Police College (CPC), and the Leadership in Police Organizations (LPO) course operated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). While he felt that each program offered helpful content and helped to build important leadership skills (e.g., building a business case, providing constructive criticism, having hard conversations), he was most positive about the LPO course:

“So, I think there are lots of different opportunities. Our police service, we’re heavily involved with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), which is out of Boston in the United States. I went down on that Police Executive Leadership Course. We send a lot of our members there...That’s a one-month course that really focuses on everything from ethics to diversity and integrity to leadership and hard conversations, constructive criticism. You know, all of those essential tools that I think police leaders need. But the Canadian Police College also has some great leadership and police management [programs]. You know, there’s the SPAC, which is the Senior Police Administration Course at the Police College. We send a lot of people, you know, in the sergeant, staff sergeant, and even inspector rank to that course. It teaches you how to put together a business case.

We also have put a significant number of our organization through this LPO course. Have you heard anyone talk about that? LPO stands for Leadership in Police Organizations. It’s a course sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. It’s a three-week course but it’s done in one-week modules. So, you go for a week and then a month later, you go for a second week and then a third month, you go for the last week. It’s at the [provincial] Police College here. You’ve heard me say our organization is roughly 600 people, I think we’ve got about 340 that have taken the Leadership in Police Organizations Course. And it just focuses on understanding strengths and weaknesses of an organization...It’s outstanding. It’s the one course that I’ve never had negative feedback on from anybody.”

Chief 6 also mentioned the IACP when discussing leadership programs. Yet, unlike Chief 8, he saw the primary benefit of the program not necessarily in the specific content being delivered, but in the opportunity, it provided for senior police officers to be exposed to other police leaders and to build relationship networks. These programs introduce individuals to the leadership experience and provide a glimpse at what being a police leader looks like:

“A big key for me was attending the IACP leadership program. And, of course, the program there – you’re probably aware – was developed at West Point. So, it’s scientific it’s got a research foundation to it in evidence. So, then you start to get exposure to people at different levels of the organization. And I think one of the most important things there is just humanizing people. I think it’s important and I don’t think the importance isn’t necessarily direct. The value of going to those and participating in some of those programs isn’t necessarily intrinsically in the participation itself. Some of it is in the networks you begin to build and that sort of thing, right? I think those things are quite valuable as well. And, like I say, even to begin to have conversations with other police leaders, including senior leaders who present on those things who get into their pants like everyone else. It demystifies the whole leadership experience, I think.”

Learning through exposure to other police leaders is something that Chief 5 also raised in discussing the value of sending senior officers to the leadership courses operated by PERF and the FBI National Academy. Like Chief 6, he felt that the value of these programs, was not necessarily the content of the courses per se, but in being able to learn from exposure to the experiences of other police leaders:

“But we have found great success in sending people to other experiences where they see other police leaders and struggles, they’re dealing with and being able to grow from that. So, the FBI National Academy, they’re’ with 256 other people. PERF. SMT, I think it’s called. The Police Executive Research Forum, where they have the opportunity to be with sixty other police leaders.”

Chief 13 shared a similar perspective on the value of these programs, stating:

“Quite honestly, organizations like CACP, First Nations Chiefs of Police, provincial associations of chiefs, they’re really great ways to build your network and to understand and to have the opportunity to ask people, ‘Well, what do you mean by that? Why do you do it that way?’ And then, the committee work provides you even more access to these people.”

It is important to note here that a central theme of most of the interviews was the prominent role of four or five institutions in providing leadership training and development, including PERF, the FBI, the IACP, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CAPC) and the CPC. While participants had differing perspectives on the quality of programs/courses offered by these organization – and of the capability of the organizations to deliver these programs – it was clear that within the policing sphere, this cluster of disparate institutions have emerged as the primary sources of leadership development for Canadian policing.

This finding is not surprising given that there is currently no entity in Canada that has as its primary responsibility the education, training, and development of police leaders (Montgomery, 2019). While CACP and CPC have sought to fill that gap, the fact that participants frequently cited international (typically US) institutions suggests that learning opportunities within the Canadian policing sphere are limited. However, Chief 6 cautioned that, considering the issues in US policing that were exposed in the death of George Floyd, relying on US programs to develop Canadian police executives should perhaps be reconsidered:

“But I think increasingly we’re a little more careful about what we’re exposing our people to out of the US. Even the networks they build. You know, like when you’re talking about some of the issues in US policing, you know, I’d actually...to be honest, I’d probably look to the UK or Australia these days before I’d look to the US for executive leadership opportunities.”

Chief 15 raised a similar point. His feeling was that there is a tendency for Canada to look to other jurisdictions that should not be necessary given the potential for excellence in Canadian policing. He felt that Canadian policing should be better utilizing the tools at its disposal to develop police officers in general, and police leaders, specifically:

“I think it’s all here. It’s all right here. Honestly, I never went to the FBI. I never did this; I never did that. I never did all these things that people are talking about...So, I say we have it here in our country to do it right. I think Canada, we often sell ourselves short. We think we have to look somewhere else for excellence, but I can tell you right now that Canadian policing is some of the best you’ll find anywhere on the planet, and most of the development is coming from right here. So, I guess part of my challenge to use would be stop looking elsewhere. We have all the tools here to develop our people. We’re some of the best policing [in the world].”

The reliance of Canadian policing on external jurisdictions for leadership education and training is consistent with the research of Huey et al (2019), who found that when compared to other countries, there are limited professional or academic degree-based opportunities for Canadian police leaders outside of the traditional university and college programs. Chief 6 referred to this in his discussion of the current landscape, stating that, “If you were looking for a template for how to grow a police leader and you had some sort of process chart, I don’t think you’d find one.” Chief 1 also felt that one of the key issues was the absence of a defined path or specific program or set of programs that are viewed as “must take” courses for police leaders or those in

senior positions. Further, in his view, the programs that do exist lack clear goals and measures of success. This creates a situation in which police leaders are flying blind when attempting to identify appropriate educational and development opportunities for themselves and for officers who have leadership aspirations:

“The problem is, there is no identified program or identified paths that someone can point to and say, ‘This is what you need to take. This is what will truly help you.’ Is it Rotman’s School that does something on policy and governance? You’ll hear of people taking the FBI National Academy programs. PERF in Boston. But again, remember what I said before? So much of that is police-based. Like, we go in there and that whole idea of how often do you review that it’s achieving its goals? What are the measures of success for it? And so, I think it’s really limited.”

Chief 16 also noted that there were no academic institutions in Canada with the mandate to train police leaders. Although the CPC has a training mandate, the chief felt that there were significant issues with its programs:

“The issue here is there is no academy or school of policing that exists in Canada. To get a doctorate, I had to go outside of my field. In my case, I did it in education. I found the Wharton School of Education around the time that the province was talking about developing a provincial police academy. I thought that a Doctor of Education would help if I wanted to teach at the academy. I took courses related to policing within the education program. What is out there now, has some issues. Larger agencies are using the executive development program at the Canadian Police College, but I don’t think it provides the necessary skills and education.”

Chief 5 expressed the same concerns as Chief 16. He felt that the lack of an education and development “north star” outside of the CPC has created a circumstance in which police agencies are on their own in terms of selecting which programs to send their senior officers to. He was particularly critical of the CPC in this regard:

“It’s absolutely incumbent upon the agency to do their own thing. The only north star, sort of, is the CPC and no one believes in it anymore, and that’s the problem. No one’s sending anyone to SPAC or to any of the senior leadership courses that CPC is putting on, and the reason being is because they’re not able to keep up with the growing trends of what’s new.”

While this is a particularly damning characterization of one of the few institutions in Canada that is currently providing police leadership development programming, it is a sentiment that was shared, to varying degrees, by other participants. The lack of faith in the ability of the CPC to provide adequate education and developmental programming is

likely one of the reasons why police leaders are more apt to send their officers to places like PERF, the FBI National Academy, and/or the IACP, or to direct them towards university-based degree programs.

Other chiefs also voiced concern with the quantity of the available options, but also with the quality of what was being offered. A key point raised in several interviews was that current leadership courses within the policing sphere do not adequately prepare officers with the skills and knowledge necessary for their ascension through the ranks. For example, Chief 9 felt that one challenge was not only finding leadership courses for his senior officers but finding relevant courses, particularly those that would be relevant to succession planning and the development of senior officers. He noted that many of the existing programs are directed at either at the highest ranks or at the sergeant-level and there was a lack of programs for officers entering the inspector ranks, which is generally the entry point into the executive in most police services:

“Certainly, leadership courses are, you know, critical, but finding the right courses. There’s been some real hit and miss as you know. I guess what I’m trying to find out is, there’s good courses on how to be a good sergeant, but where’s the course on taking the next step cause it’s a huge leap from staff sergeant to being an inspector and I just don’t know if I’ve seen those courses.”

What Chief 9 seems to be getting at here has been discussed by Schafer (2019) in his work on leadership development programs. He found that many of the developmental programs that leaders are encouraged or expected to complete are offered only after the officers have been promoted. The goal of post-hoc developmental programs is to develop leaders upon promotion, rather than developing officers interested in (or demonstrating the potential for) promotion and seeing whether promising leaders emerge from that process (Schafer, 2019). While there are courses that are intended to help develop officers at their current rank, there are few options for officers seeking pre-promotional development. Due to some of these concerns with police leadership development programs, universities have becoming increasingly relied upon to fill the void.

There continues to be a lack of evidence that the leadership development courses or experiences that participants identified result in concrete outcomes in terms of improved competence of officers. This challenge is exacerbated by the scarcity of

empirical evidence that graduates of these programs are better leaders than they would have been otherwise.

The Growing Prominence of Advanced Education in Police Leadership

A Basic Requirement

Several chiefs viewed education as means of exposing officers to those external, non-policing environments they cited as being an important aspect of leadership development. Also, because many of the responsibilities of contemporary police leaders fall outside of traditional policing functions, chiefs stated that they have been compelled to seek out university education to better prepare them to perform these functions.

While most chiefs viewed advanced education as an important component of succession planning and leadership development, there was a diversity of perspectives on the suitability and availability of current leadership programs and educational opportunities for senior officers, the benefits derived from these programs, as well as what constituted the most effective options. The chiefs also had varying perspectives on the capacity of police services to provide educational and training opportunities to those within the leadership pipeline, with those from smaller or mid-sized agencies suggesting that they face barriers (highlighted in the previous section) in accessing this training that generally do not confront leaders in larger police agencies.

There was, among the chiefs, discussion of the specific role that they should play in the provision of training and education to prospective leadership candidates and those in the leadership pipeline. Or to what extent this was the responsibility of individual officers who aspired for leadership positions. A key theme that emerged from the interviews was that, as policing has become more complex, this has increased the need for police executives to provide or facilitate advanced education for prospective leaders in their departments. What was once viewed as a preferred requirement of those seeking to enter the executive ranks, is becoming considered as a basic requirement:

“Yes, [education] is a necessity. I’ll loosely say at this point because we haven’t identified something [specific]. I would say it could be anything subject to some limitations, right? I don’t think an advanced master’s degree in horticulture is gonna do it. And part of it is this: one, we’re looking at if people can demonstrate the ability to continue to learn, right? Whether

it be, you gotta write papers and do research and you keep those skill sets sharp. Second of all, is that education should spark discussion, different ideas, other people's opinions and there's a place to debate it within an educational setting. And you should listen to it." [Chief 1]

"...you know a master's degree, that's just going to be the ticket for administration here coming down the road for a lot of senior leaders. So, if we think that's additional, then you're wrong." [Chief 5]

"Of course, education is gonna be critical to a police board and we have a lot of people who don't have their Bachelor of Arts or a university degree or have even taken on extra education. So, I think it hinders us because our board's not gonna want to hire somebody to be in charge of a fifty plus million-dollar organization and not have some level of education...So, I do think at the very minimum a police chief needs to have a postsecondary degree. I think a master's certainly doesn't hurt. I think people expect that the leader of such a challenging organization as policing has to be very alive always to changing social issues and concerns. You know, if you're not a learned person, it will certainly put you in a more challenging position." [Chief 9]

"And again, I personally believe...I don't think you can jump from high school into policing in this complex world we're living in. I just don't think you can. The issues we deal with are so complex, equally so when you're a police chief and you're getting paid the amount of money we're getting paid. I gotta be honest, I think the public expects us to have some form of academic credentials. Personally, I think it's a requirement cause also, the people we're hiring, Josh, they all have academic degrees. They all have university or post-secondary degrees. Many of them have graduate level degrees." [Chief 10]

"I think it's really important. I think because of the caliber of people that we're bringing in, it's critically important. If nothing else, it's just getting to the point of that critical thinking and just the legitimacy, all of those pieces today because we're having so many people coming in with...okay when you look at all the people I just hired [in my new role], for example, some are PhD's. So, I think it's critically important going forward that people in those senior roles certainly have that..." [Chief 15].

The sentiment here that contemporary police leaders should be pursuing advanced education lends some credence to Murray's (2019) findings – mentioned in Chapter 2 – that the current crop of Canadian police leaders, as a group, are more educated than their predecessors. The sample of chiefs in the present study reflected this, with all but two of the sixteen participants having an undergraduate degree, while several chiefs had some form of advanced degree (masters, law degree, doctorate) or were currently pursuing an advanced degree. Chief 12 suggested that this trend is only continuing, as advanced education is common among her senior leadership team:

“There’s a few that are taking masters among the senior officers. All of our senior officers have a degree. We have one individual that is working on his second masters. So, people are understanding the importance of academia now; whereas, like, when I think of my dad, you know, ‘You don’t need a degree. You just need to be a good cop,’ kinda thing. That was his thinking. I don’t agree with that.”

Moreover, Chief 10 felt that this shift to a more educated leadership class was a necessary step, given the complexity of the profession, as well as the level of financial resources that are being managed. He felt that, as other chiefs did, that as multi-million-dollar organizations, police agencies should be treated more like corporate entities, and thus, as the CEO police chiefs should have a commensurate level of education:

“I do think there’s more development required in Canadian policing around academic rigor for chiefs. It’s a demanding job. It’s a complex job. And I’m talking even to the levels of, you know, graduate degrees and/or MBAs cause you’re running million or billion-dollar organizations. You know, mine is a \$225 million dollar organization... These are big responsibilities and I’m not sure the public understands that. But I’m not sure our own members understand that, you know, to attain and grow in the organization, you have to continue to learn and grow. You have to be committed to learning.”

This perspective is illustrative of the increasing adoption of private sector principles in the field of policing, including strategic planning and data-driven practices (Griffiths, 2020) and the need for leaders to be equipped to implement these approaches. Though policing is not a for-profit enterprise, police organizations operate with substantial budgets, with larger organizations responsible for operating budgets in the hundreds of millions of dollars, while employing thousands of civilian and sworn employees. In the present study, the chiefs believed that those tasked with operating these increasingly complex (and costly) organizations will need to have a higher level of academic training than what has historically been expected or required of police executives. As Chief 1 opined:

“On a personal level, you have to self-develop. You have to find a way to do continuing education. And...I always just that is something that’s important. And you know, there’s no one set of education. Whether someone wants an MBA or wants to get a PhD or a master’s or do whatever they like. And I almost profess that it has to be a formal education.”

Creating an Intellectual Leader

Chief 1’s perspective reflects the thoughts of several chiefs who emphasized the importance of graduate level education for leadership development. The sense among

them was that, although a four-year university degree was important, it was no longer sufficient for those entering the executive ranks. In addition to being an important aspect of professional and personal development, participants believed that graduate-level education had many benefits for current and aspiring police executives. One of the benefits of education identified by several chiefs was that it exposed officers to new ideas, different perspectives, and different ways of thinking. As Chief 13 stated, “Education just really opens your eyes on how to do things differently [and with] a different perspective and broader perspective, I think, probably as much as anything.” Chief 7 echoed this, stating that those in policing need to be exposed to new experiences and perspectives outside of the traditional policing “path” to create a workforce that is more diverse of thought, experience, and skillset. Education is one avenue in which to do that.

The idea that without exposure to new ideas and experience, police will be less prepared for “what is coming our way” seems particularly relevant in the current policing context. According to Chief 1, advanced education provides police leaders with the opportunity to think critically about the issues confronting policing, but also, exposes them to issues outside of the policing sphere, a point raised earlier in this section:

“One of the classes I had to take the first part of last year was theoretical perspectives of law and my paper and research was on how critical race theory [explains] how laws were created to suppress blacks in the US. I would never have studied that in the past. I actually have a quote from that paper I wrote that the instructor sent me saying that the police were racist. I just said our biases make us, by default, racist.

This past semester I took an elective in immigration law and when we talked about say, xenophobia, I had always thought that other countries had xenophobic histories and how that impacted the flow of refugees to Canada. And, in fact, what I ended up writing my paper on is that Canada actually has xenophobic laws and how those laws have prevented the flow of refugees into Canada. So, it was completely opposite because I was with refugee lawyers and instructors who could point to readings for me. You know, education requires an element of interactions. Be involved. Challenge the instructor.”

To this point Chief 1 added:

“I would almost encourage that the education is done...at least half of it should be outside the policing sphere. What I mean by that is...so, part of what I’ve also done is, I’ve got an Executive Program Certificate from Queens University. Like, you know, three weeks of executive development

back there. And some of the best leadership courses I've had I was the only police officer in the room with businesspeople and heads of organizations that talked about budget issues, and HR issues, and policy issues... I really do encourage that education and I would say about half of it should be outside [of policing]. You shouldn't just be listening to other police officers tell you stories about what they did. Because, chances are, half of its bullshit and half of its wrong."

Further, Chief 13 spoke of the benefits he experienced from taking a course that was offered by a provincial ombudsman's office and how he was able to bring the skills and knowledge he obtained while working within a different sphere back with him to policing:

"I got to take a course there called "Sharpening Your Teeth" doing administrative law investigations out of another provinces Ombudsman office. Again, exposed to a different perspective on how things get done or [don't] get done. I worked an investigation with another senior investigator on a health profession and, basically, we, through our recommendations, it was dismantled and rebuilt and everything because of whatever, and it gave me an idea of how things can go so wrong and still, on the face of it, be within the parameters of what it should be."

Chief 8, who did not have a university degree, believed that senior leaders who had pursued advanced education may be better prepared for the increasingly complex issues that they are being confronted with at the executive level. While he was having to familiarize himself with these issues and concepts on the fly, he felt that senior officers who had been exposed to some of these issues in an educational context would likely be more equipped to navigate them because they had a more sophisticated level of knowledge, informed by research and academic rigor:

"Now, what I will say is once you get into senior management – and I'm a great example of this – the complexity of the issues that you deal with...you know, I just actually before you and I talked, I was participating in a Canada-wide videoconference with the CACP on a variety of different issues. So, we talked about decriminalization of illicit drugs, we talked about police use of force and reform, systemic racism, defunding the police, artificial intelligence, the public safety broadband, and the next generation 911. Well, those are complex issues and, you know, I can tell you that anyone that will have done, not just a university degree, but gone on and done a Master's degree or allowing themselves to submerge themselves in, maybe, a research project or whatever, they're going to have a leg up at understanding some of these issues and coming at them from a different angle than someone like me."

Chief 8's perspective is consistent with Huey et al's (2018) findings when studying police leaders' perceptions of evidence-based policing and police leadership programs. They noted that there appeared to be a shift in thinking among police leaders in terms of a willingness to draw on research to inform policy and practice. In examining the avenues for police executives to gain exposure to research and the application of research, Huey et al (2018) found that individuals who had pursued graduate education were most likely to be exposed to research and research methods, as well as applying that knowledge.

Similarly, the chiefs in this sample that had pursued graduate degrees also cited the role it played in exposing them to research and providing the necessary skills to apply that research. For example, Chief 4, who had recently completed a master's degree, felt that an advanced degree was important to becoming a more well-rounded leader and, for him, being more well-rounded meant being able to properly consume research and translate it to action, as well as being able to think more analytically:

"I think it's critical to the success of leaders and there's a couple reasons for it. I think that in order to function in a world with so much information and change, you need to be well rounded. You need to be able to read reports, abstracts, and you need to comprehend them. You need to be able to come up with a plan. You need to be a good writer. You need to be an analytical thinker. So, additional schooling, in my mind...I'm not talking about school that you get after you graduated [high school] and, you know, you did your Bachelor of Arts and that was twenty-five years ago. Which is why I went back to SFU and did my masters, because I felt that it was really needed. That also then makes me into a more well-rounded leader [and] a bigger thinker."

Chief 5, who has obtained both a masters and PhD, had a similar perspective. He cited the role that graduate education plays in exposing individuals to research, as well as teaching them on how to conduct research, including being able to differentiate between something that is peer reviewed and something that is not:

"We just did a report to the Police Board that covered off the importance of formal education, cause we do believe it's important. But I don't believe it's the single stepping-stone to being a leader, I just want to clarify that. But we do believe it is a foundational base that someone should have a graduate degree, sort of, to be able to have the ability to understand what you don't know sometimes and how to be able to go get what you don't know...Reading, writing, research, right? Those are the three. Meaning that, you learn that you gotta be continuously reading and updating. You learn that it isn't about continuous learning, it's about, sort of, just growing

and advancing your knowledge base and it's about knowing the difference between an article written in MacLeans magazine and something that is researched and evidence-based and has academic credibility.”

Chief 12, a major proponent of evidence-based policing, recognized the role of advanced education in exposing police executives to research and evidence-based principles and, as such, felt it was important to provide those opportunities to her senior managers:

“It's making our middle managers and senior managers competitive, so they have that academic vigour behind them and really promoting the use of evidence-based policing to make them successful.”

It is evident from the findings here and in the studies conducted by Huey et al (2018) and Murray (2019) that the current generation of police leaders are more educated, have a greater understanding of research, and are more willing to utilize it. However, while many of the participants in this study pursued advanced education, it was not viewed as a mandatory component of leadership succession. As a result, the need to provide leadership candidates with educational and training opportunities is not a core requirement of succession plans and HR policies in the chiefs' departments. However, it does appear that as they are exposed to more education and training, Canadian police executives are beginning to recognize the need to build education into their succession planning and leadership development processes. Beyond making advanced education a basic requirement for police executives, this requires police leaders (and police governing boards) to encourage individuals to obtain education; to facilitate (financially and logistically) individuals that express a desire to pursue advanced education; and to develop and provide educational opportunities for individuals currently within the executive pipeline or that demonstrate potential to become police executives. As Chief 13 stated:

“I'm a big believer that education really helps understand things in the bigger picture, so I encouraged people to get education and there were several people that got their bachelor's degree while I was there...I think that those opportunities provided me the wherewithal in understanding the importance of continuing to mentor people, give them opportunities to improve themselves. My deputy went on to take his master's degree at Royal Rhodes, as an example. The female inspector has taken her bachelor's degree at Charles Stuart in Australia.”

Filling the Developmental Gap

The perceived gaps in police leadership courses have compelled senior officers or those with ambitions of entering the police executive to access academic institutions. Recall that Chief 16, at the rank of inspector, decided to pursue his PhD in the field of Education both because he felt it was applicable to his career aspirations (i.e., to become a trainer) and because there were no options provided within the police sector. Also, the growth in educational level of police leaders suggests that academia has increasingly filled the void in leadership development. One of the possible reasons for this is that, as it stands right now, police-based programs are aimed at enhancing technical police skills but fall short of providing skills that are more transferable to leadership or management positions.

Chief 4 asserted that, while policing excelled in training officers in the development of policing skills and abilities, it did little to enhance leadership ability. He spoke about this in relation to his experience being promoted to inspector of HR and finding that all his pre-existing, specialized police training had not prepared him for how to manage and lead a human resource section. Consequently, he had to turn to both the private sector and academia to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills:

“I went out of my way. Went out of my way to get it. It was not there, available, [or] provided to me. A lot of what happens in policing is we have what’s called, ‘core competency courses’ to give you a skillset. So, if you go into the detective office and you wanna be a detective, we’ll send you on a two-week interviewing course. Like, we’ll give you the technical skills to do a really good trauma informed interview or how to write a search warrant. So, those are practical things. Those are offered within the police department. What’s not offered is the stuff that makes you a better leader, about leadership, you know, ‘how did I conduct myself?’ ‘How do I deal with a performance management issue?’ So, a lot of that, in HR, I sought myself. But it wasn’t offered in the police world, it was offered in the private sector, or I would go to university or colleges, look at law and policing [courses] and if there was a session or seminar held by lawyers that had a component on human resource management, I obviously gravitated to that. I actually had to find my own way of what I needed.”

As chiefs turn to the private sector and academia for their own self-improvement and for providing educational and development opportunities to their senior officers, it does appear that there are a considerable range of options from which to choose. In addition, several chiefs noted that Canadian universities have started to recognize the potential role they can play in providing educational opportunities to policing. Chiefs 4

and 10 noted that there were a range of opportunities within the academic sphere depending upon an officer's chosen career path:

"I think there's enough opportunities there. I mean, you can always say there could be more. But now, if you look at distance education; you look at online learning; you look at professionals...pretty much every university out there has some sort of professional development, online component for working professionals. Fifteen years ago? That didn't exist. Like, universities have caught on that people are wanting to be better and they're wanted to [go back to school]. So, I think that the opportunities are endless." [Chief 4]

"I think that, you know, our university system has grown immensely in the way that people can participate in higher learning and higher education. So, I think there's ample opportunities for those that are aspiring to be executives. You know, you look at hybrid learning, you can do intensive weekends and then online work. You have some universities that are completely online. You have, then, some programs that are a hybrid of that, and then you have the classic some people learn better by going to class every week...I think there's tons of opportunities, it just depends on where you want to go. So, you know, you may wanna go the public administration route; you may wanna go the business administration route; you may wanna go the criminal justice route. Some specialize in, you know, emergency management or terrorism. It just depends on where you're heading on your leadership path. But I think there's tons of opportunities..." [Chief 10]

AS Chief 7 explained, while the menu of options within the policing sphere may be limited or overly police-focused, there are opportunities out there for education and leadership development, it just requires police leaders to look to other areas including the private sector. Chief 7 felt that it may be more helpful to expose individuals to education and training outside of policing and then supplement that with policing courses, stating that, "You know, it's to get that education outside and then complemented by PERF and then complemented by [experience]."

Finally, Chief 12 raised a point pertaining to the role of police leaders in providing educational and training opportunities to senior officers. She explained that, beyond playing a role in providing educational and training opportunities, it was the responsibility of police leaders to provide opportunities to senior officers to apply what they have learned in an operational policing context. The opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge is a further step in the developmental journey:

“But once they have the education, they need to apply what they’ve learned. So, you can train people or provide them academic opportunities, but they have to be able to apply it in the police setting. So, once people have taken the training part of the depth chart was giving them initiatives that they would lead, and sometimes they’re successful and sometimes they’re not but we learn even when things aren’t successful, even more than when things are successful. So, it’s a blend of operational experience and the academic experience. That’s part of our succession plan that we have here.”

From the materials gathered in interviews with the chiefs, it appears that as Murray (2019) found in her review, the leadership class in Canadian policing is becoming more educated and better trained. Consequently, this more educated class of leaders, many of whom undertook postsecondary education to both self-improve and to fill the gaps in existing police developmental programs, have begun see the importance of advanced education for police executives, and thus, the need to include it as a component of succession planning.

Participants in this study touched on the importance of providing educational and training opportunities to individuals that are either in the leadership pipeline or that have demonstrated potential to move up to the executive level. One barriers to doing so is that there is currently no “north star” for police education and development. Within the policing sphere, a cluster of national and international organizations, including the CACP, CPC, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Police Executive Research Forum (, PERF) and the FBI National Academy, seem to be providing most of the programs. However, the chiefs expressed mixed views on the quality of the content offered by these entities. As Huey et al (2019) found, some of the courses offered can also be challenging to access due to limited seats and, as some participants indicated here, the cost. Therefore, Canadian police leaders are largely left on their own to identify the most effective and relevant courses and programs. As Chief 1 noted:

“But to me there isn’t...Let’s just say, I take this Master of Law Program out at Osgoode. Since then, I’ve had people approach me, whether they’re Inspectors from [another agency] or Deputy Ministers in the Province who are all like, ‘Ooh how was it?’ ‘How good was it?’ ‘Did you like it?’ And so, you know, you try to weed through. Like, what is your purpose? I took it cause I do a lot of police discipline cases and I wanted to educate myself on the administrative law. So, that’s why I took it. And I like post-secondary. And I like arguing with lawyers. So, it was fun. And I said to one of em, ‘Are you taking it because it’s not overly demanding?’ You know, so what is your

purpose and why are you taking this program? So, should police Chiefs have MBA's cause it's a business? I don't know."

While advanced education is becoming a basic rather than a preferred qualification for police executives, there remains much uncertainty regarding the type of education that is most useful for those aspiring to senior leadership positions. This is exacerbated by the lack of empirically grounded or evidence-based leadership development curricula (Mastrofski, 2006; Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2013).

Guidance and Direction: The Importance of Mentors

In addition to experiential development, leadership training, and advanced education, most of the chiefs cited the key function that mentorship plays in leadership development and succession planning. Participants characterized mentorship as guidance and coaching provided by senior, more experienced officers (often, in higher ranks) to younger, less-experienced officers at various points in their careers. They also referred to mentorship as senior leaders recognizing officers with leadership acuity and/or potential and taking an active role in their development, most commonly through specific career interventions. Others discussed mentorship within the context of experienced police leaders providing counsel to executive neophytes, or leaders of large agencies sharing knowledge and experience with leaders of smaller agencies. The common thread that connects these conceptions of mentorship is the provision of guidance and direction from one generation to the next or from one group to another.

Like other dimensions of the leadership development discussion, the chiefs' own experiences have influenced their views on the value of mentorship. Most participants recalled how the positive intervention of mentors at various point in their respective careers contributed to their development as leaders. The following selected comments illustrate the role that mentors played in participants' development:

"Leadership was never an aspiration for me. I had key people in my life, mentors, that recognized in me and pushed me to pursue those opportunities or provided opportunities to me." [Chief 6]

"I had mentors. You know, I was the president of our police association for a number of years. So, I was pretty in tune with our union, collective bargaining, all those different things, you know, relationships and building change with management...And then around that in the association world, there was some people that I looked to and I always thought that you never

wanna be just like one person, you wanna steal the best of several people.” [Chief 7]

“So yeah, the rest is kinda history. I went for promotion to staff sergeant, was promoted, [and] was very fortunate to work with [the future chief]. So, I was really fortunate to have some phenomenal mentors.” [Chief 9]

“And when I was running a patrol division as a superintendent, I had some people coming to me saying, ‘Have you ever considered a larger role? You’re doing some good things.’ So, that’s kinda where I picked it up and clearly, like, I had a couple of mentors. You know, people supporting me. I think that’s a big part of it. You need someone who pulls you aside and says, “You’re really talented, I’m going to give you some opportunities here.”

“So, someone gave me the opportunity. Someone looked at myself and said, you know, ‘He needs a chance to do this, and if he can do that, he can start to go to the next level and so on.’ So, that mentorship becomes very important. Someone that can identify those skillsets and help through that process.” [Chief 11]

“But [it was] a combination of hard work, doing your thing, nose to the grindstone, but also people definitely gave me opportunities. I had people who I could talk to and turn to informally, I would say, to ask questions. So, it was helpful to have people that mentored you.” [Chief 14].

A key theme in these comments is that, beyond providing guidance and support, participants characterized their mentors as being persons, most often in senior management or leadership positions, who recognized their leadership potential and sought to nurture it in some way. This connects back to the discussion earlier in this section about providing developmental opportunities. As several participants have noted here, their mentors provided some of those key developmental opportunities.

These responses suggest that mentors occupy an important role in leadership development and succession planning because, in the words of Chief 11, they “identify those skillsets” in people “and “help them through that process.” The challenge, however, is that, according to the chiefs, most police services do not have formalized systems of mentorship. Consequently, most mentorship takes place informally and is often relationship-based or is predicated on having people in leadership positions (e.g., frontline supervisors, senior managers, and the chief) that can recognize leadership talent and are willing to provide mentorship and all that that entails.

Chief 13 explained that this was not always the case, which can ultimately undermine a police service’s ability to develop leaders and a succession plan. He

discussed this in the context of his experience working within a First Nations police service that had historically struggled to develop internal leadership:

“One of the things I’d seen...the chief when I was there was fabulous to me, but I never saw anyone, including him, really put an effort into mentoring people to become the leaders in an organization like that. As a matter of fact, they typically hire [police from other agencies] to lead the police services and to even do the supervision and that type of thing without working with their own people from within.”

Chief 13’s experience is indicative of that relationship-based approach to mentorship, in that he received mentorship from the chief because they had a strong working relationship, but that this type of mentorship was not necessarily extended to anyone else throughout the service. Chief 11 expounded on this, arguing that most police services do not have formal systems of mentorship because they are unwilling to invest the time and energy required. As such, most mentorship tends to be peer-to-peer or relationship-based, which ultimately undermines effective leadership development:

“We don’t have formalized mentorship program. What we have is mentorship programs that are just randomized based on relationships and not based on processes. So, you really need some type of process that will cause that to happen. No matter how many organizations try to develop mentorship programs, very seldom are they successful because the business of policing kicks in and takes over all the time, instead of saying, ‘No. You really have to dedicate time and effort for that mentorship piece.’

In doing so, it has to be at the right level, which means, yes you can have peer mentorship. You know, we can sit around all the buddies, a group of people at the same rank level and that’s one thing and have a discussion and so on. But eventually you’re going to compete against those people and that’s the other piece that’s often triggered. Is this a competition or is this an evaluation for you as an individual? Because if I’m competing against my buddy, I know sometimes that that will have a hugely negative effect. Then, if one of you are successful, that negativity continues. As opposed to, how do you focus on it that has nothing to do with the person beside you; it has to do with you and your ability to fill that role and this time and based on that skillset. That’s why that mentorship umbrella needs to be there at all levels. It really does. Because you have to have that perspective from outside that says, “Listen, I think you’d be a good fit for this, and these are the reasons why.” All you have to do is look at your skillset and ask, ‘What’s missing for that position over here? This piece is missing, let’s fill that gap’.”

In this environment, the degree to which the type of mentorship that Chief 11 is describing is happening within a police service depends on the chief’s orientation and

whether they and/or their senior managers, are inclined to provide it. An additional issue that the absence of formal systems of mentorship creates is the potential for inequity in the provision of developmental opportunities. A relationship-based or non-systematic approach to mentorship may lead to certain individuals being prioritized for developmental opportunities and career guidance over others. Chief 13 referenced this practice, stating that, "Something else that I'd seen before was, 'Okay, let's pick one guy. Let's mentor this one guy,' and you put all your eggs in one basket." From a succession planning perspective, such an approach would appear to be inefficient in that it limits the number of people in the succession pipeline. Further, while focusing mentorship efforts on a limited number of individuals may successfully lead to the development of a future leader, it is not a particularly effective strategy for implementing sustainable leadership.

To address the absence of a formalized mentorship program in his police service, Chief 8 stated that he and his executive were in the process of implementing a department-wide mentorship strategy. The program is an attempt to create the multi-level mentorship that Chief 11 believed was so important. Chief 8 described it as bringing together individuals at different levels within the organization to bridge gaps, exchange knowledge, and to foster relationship building. He added that it was also a way for officers in supervisory and senior management positions to provide counsel junior officers, as well as exposing them to the realities of senior management. Such a program may be a way to help identify potential leaders earlier in their careers and to provide important career advice and guidance in a more equitable manner:

"We've actually also talked recently about implementing a mentorship program within the organization. Now, that would be organization wide. That would be an opportunity for, in my view, you could have an inspector paired up with a constable, and it's about alerting one another to what their challenges are at their level and at their position within the organization. So, that the constable sees what the inspector is dealing with and why is it important that we go out and build relationships with the community. Often, a constable is just like, give me the next call for service and I'm gonna go to the call, right? But, at the same time, it's important...So, if we can get this mentorship program up and running, you know, it'll help us out with succession planning cause it's going to expose people at a more junior time in their career to what senior management talks about, thinks about, goes through. Some people will do that and say, you, 'Fuck that. No way. I never wanna do that.' And others will say, 'Oh my god, I love that. I love the strategy and the thought behind the implementation of these things and that's something I'd like to strive for."

However, the type of mentorship discussed here is not the only form of mentorship that participants described as being important to leadership development and succession planning. As previously noted, the chiefs also spoke about the need for those already in the executive, particularly first-time chiefs, or those in the leadership pipeline, to have mentorship opportunities. Some participants felt that a gap in succession planning in policing is that leadership succession often does not allow for the in-coming chief (or those moving into new positions created by the succession) to learn from the out-going chief, making the exchange of institutional knowledge difficult.

A consequence is that newly promoted Chiefs may not be as prepared for the demands of the job. As Chief 10's experience demonstrates, Chiefs are not always willing to mentor their potential successors:

"Nobody ever had a courageous conversation with me on my way up the ranks. Like, when I took over the police service – the other chief had taken a government job – we met for three hours and had a transition meeting. So, you know, he started a new job, he was disenfranchised with the police board so, it wasn't a really healthy transition. Whereas [in my other agency] when I left [and] the deputy became the chief, him and I, we worked for three months together to transition. Right? So, you know, I learned some hard lessons around succession planning."

Chief 8 added that this gap is not unique to chiefs, but often occurs at other levels of the executive and beyond. He believed that the absence of pre-promotional mentorship can put people at a disadvantage when they enter their new position. This is like Schafer's (2019) criticism of leadership development courses.: that most developmental programs that leaders are encouraged or expected to complete are offered only after they have been promoted. For Chief 8, the issue is that police services often wait for the dominoes to fall before acting, rather than proactively preparing for when the dominoes will fall. In his view, this practice represents a lack of strategic thinking and ultimately undermines effective succession planning:

"I think one thing that I'll tell you that we absolutely do a shitty job of, and this I'm gonna blanket policing with is, we tend to give people the keys to the car and say, 'Figure it out.' When I became chief of police there was no overlap, there was no manual, there was nothing. You basically get told where your chair in your office is and so you go. So, I think we have to do a better job of, if we know who the next inspector is going to be, or who the next superintendent is going to be, we have to give them a period of transition where they can mentor with someone who's been in the role for a while and. make that transition a bit smoother.

Sometimes, I feel like we set our leaders up to fail at every level in the organization, again, just expecting that, hey, you wrote for promotion so you must know what you need to know to do this job. Well, at the end of the day, I think we have to spend some time and get them up to speed. In policing we tend to move things like it's a chess game and so, you know, Josh doesn't move into Mike's spot until Mike moves into Laurie's spot. And so, Laurie retired, Mike moves, Josh moves and Mike has no time to tell Josh what to do because he's so God damn busy trying to figure out what Laurie was doing. So, that succession planning is something that we do a terrible job of and as much as we talk about it, I don't know if we've yet figured out the exact way to do it."

Chief 9 gave a good example of the potential benefit that this type of mentorship can provide. He was brought into his current agency as a Deputy Chief, with the intention that he would be developed as a potential successor to the Chief. He explained that this arrangement facilitated his mentorship under the incumbent Chief which he felt was invaluable when he was eventually promoted:

"... being a Chief is being a much different beast than being an Inspector or even a Deputy. I remember a colleague told me that when I finally told him I was going for this position. He said, "Be careful what you wish for because there's a big difference between being a Chief and a Deputy," and I was able to learn that. You know, I mean, learning about the politics, learning about the police board structure, learning about the financial, learning about the morale. You know, there are just so many components when you're working in the areas that I worked in. I had to build teams and be a leader, but it was in a different capacity." [Chief 9]

One potential way to address the lack of formalized mentorship opportunities is the development of specific programs at the national level. Chief 10 stated that the CACP was in the process of developing a national police leadership mentoring program. This program would involve current chiefs providing mentorship to aspiring police leaders and new police leaders:

"So, it's a unique piece and I think in Canada the work that Canadian chiefs have done with, you know, global studies, strategic foresight course, the mentoring course, we're trying to create a national mentorship program. [We're] trying to build, you know, national connections but it's all randomized right now... you know, kudos to [a chief] who has launched the Canadian chief mentoring program that we're trying to get off the ground. The pandemic has, kind of, screwed it up. Two years ago [a fellow Chief] came to me and said, 'I need your support at the CACP. I wanna push this through.' And he's bang on."

Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the two most prominent themes to emerge from the interviews – succession planning and leadership development. The chiefs painted a critical picture of leadership succession planning in Canadian policing, suggesting that the degree to which it is being done is haphazard, fragmented, and inconsistent. Though they acknowledged its importance, most did not seem to feel that it had been prioritized across the country. Part of the challenge here is that police chiefs and their organizations seem to be charting their own course and are attempting to implement various ideas in the absence of evidence and avenues for collaboration and coordination. Further, it is unclear whether what they are doing is effective or produces strong leaders, as there are few evaluative frameworks or methods of assessment in place. At present, the chiefs indicated that the primary goal and measure of success is to develop one or more internal successor candidates that can be viable options for their police boards and commissions.

Directly related to succession planning is leadership development and training. Participants' approaches to succession planning were centred on developing officers in their services that could become leaders both now and for the future. There seems to be three main ways to do this – though both internal and external experience, advanced education and training, and mentorship. Yet, there was much variation in perspectives on how to best develop people and the value of various approaches. There does seem to be a reliance on the traditional developmental path in policing, which involves officers getting exposed to different areas of the organization as their careers progress, acquiring and developing specific technical skills that are applicable to police leadership. Yet, there also appears to be a changing perspective on this, with some chiefs discussing the importance of external experience and exposing police officers to more non-traditional developmental paths, to expand their horizons and change their ways of thinking.

An interesting finding here was the role that advanced education is playing in leadership development. This group of police chiefs was highly educated and saw significant value in advanced education for a variety of reasons. However, they noted that there is no proscribed educational path for police leaders, and it remains unclear if and how advanced education tangibly creates better leaders. The same can be said

about leadership training and development programs. As with advanced education, these programs, provided by various law enforcement organizations and academic institutions, are a key tool in the developmental toolbox of police leaders. However, the chiefs were somewhat critical of the current landscape of options, particularly in Canada. The result is a reliance on international programs, particularly those in the US – namely, the FBI National Academy and PERF. As with education, it is unclear whether these programs ultimately create better leaders, as there is little empirical basis for their effectiveness. Ultimately, it seems as though police leaders are basically responsible for curating their own menu of leadership development options and cobbling together a succession management strategy as best they can.

In Chapter 5, the discussion will shift to the other key themes that emerged from interviews. The focus of Chapter 5 will be on leadership competencies, diversity, and the role of police boards and associations.

Chapter 5. Findings and Discussion Part 2

Chapter 5 involves a discussion on the three additional themes that emerged from the interviews. This chapter will explore the chiefs' perspectives on leadership competencies, the challenges, and opportunities for incorporating diversity into succession planning, and the role of police boards in leadership succession and succession planning.

What Makes a Leader? Succession Planning and Leadership Competencies

A primary goal of succession planning is to identify the future leaders(s) who will be entering this complex and challenging context. The literature indicates that competency frameworks have come to play a considerable role in the identification and assessment of potential police leaders. Police chiefs bear primary responsibility for succession planning and are largely responsible for identifying, preparing, and appointing the next generation of police leaders and determining which officers have the requisite competencies to meet the challenges that accompany the position. This will impact the officers who are selected for the senior management team or executive team, one of whom may be ultimately selected as the chief's successor.

Huey et al. (2019) note that competencies and skills are not discrete categories of leadership, but rather "they act together organically to give rise to the ability to accomplish organizational goals" (p. 9). The challenge lies in both identifying the competencies, skills and attributes that are required for police leaders and then developing succession planning and leadership development processes that are aligned with these competencies. While the literature on police leadership (including leadership approaches and philosophy) is growing (Neyroud, 2019), there remains a lack of clarity as to the competencies required to be successful as a police chief.

A primary objective in the present study was to explore what police leaders identify as the core competencies and key attributes of police leaders, and the dynamics surrounding succession planning and implementation. This line of inquiry is important given that there are not national standards of competency framework for police chiefs in Canada.

The Police Sector Council and a National Competency Framework

The absence of national standards or competency framework was identified by Chief 10 as a barrier to succession planning and leadership selection. He believed that national standards applicable across jurisdictions should be developed and applied to create consistency, while providing police boards a framework for more rigorous hiring practices and the facilitation of long-term succession planning:

“So, succession planning has to be part of the governance structure and, quite frankly, provincial governments, which control policing in Canada have to recognize that and, in my view, they should be setting adequacy standards for the board around competency frameworks for the Chief of Police, hiring practices and encouraging the long-term succession pieces. I think that there should be national standards. I think that there should be a national framework for police leadership. Not everybody agrees with that because they don’t want to, you know, lose control over what they’re doing locally. But I think if you create a national framework and national competencies, what you end up with is probably a skillset that is, you know, from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, you know what you’re getting.”

Chief 12 expressed a similar sentiment regarding the need for a national policing competency framework, including for police leadership:

“One of the things that I am a proponent of is the competency-based management framework. So, I would like to see across our country, a framework that is consistent. It needs to have some local emphasis too. I understand that, but if you’re going to the Atlantic Police Academy or you’re at the Ontario Police College, or the Toronto Police College, or if you’re in BC you know what the expectations are for the recruit training and everything; you know these are the standards and these are the competencies. And using the competency-based framework at all of the different ranks, including executives, including the deputy chiefs, including the superintendents, including the chiefs, so that people know that this is what I need to have to become this rank...So, you need to have some consistencies, but it’s a framework or a guideline because there’s no entity like the College of Physicians and Surgeons that says, ‘Okay, you shall do this.’ But we need consistency and that to me is part of succession planning. Having a framework that all of us can work from.”

It should be mentioned here that while some participants felt there was a need for a national leadership competency framework, such a competency framework does exist. Recall that the Police Sector Council (2012) created a list of fourteen leadership competencies with the intention that it be used as a national framework. That

competency framework was updated by the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN), Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), and the Canadian Police College (CPC) updated the Police Sector Council's Competency Based Management Framework, creating a new *Competency Profile for Police Executive Leadership* (CPKN, 2020). Like the Police Sector Council framework, the updated CPKN leadership framework is meant to serve as a national framework for police leadership. The perspectives of Chiefs 10 and 12 indicates that there may be a lack of awareness of the framework or questions about its applicability across policing. Though, the new framework has only recently been completed, and thus, has likely not had the time to promulgate throughout the policing field.

Though some participants seemingly discounted the Police Sector Council competencies, several participants, including Chiefs 4, 6, 12 and 13, did mention them. All three suggested that the PSC executive leadership competencies had value in identifying and selecting leadership candidates. Chief 4 felt that the PSC competencies have had a positive impact on succession planning, largely through the identification of a profile of leadership with measurable standards:

"I would tell you what really helped police agencies, you know, ten years ago, there was a group called the Police Sector Council. Did you hear about the Police Sector Council? They had competencies that they actually formalized for different ranks. You wanna be an inspector? Here are the competencies and skill set you need for them. Now, all of a sudden, you're like, 'Okay, if we're going to promote for that, we need to measure for that.' And again, there needs to be some sort of evidence-based approach to getting the right people with the right skillsets to those jobs. If you don't have that catalogued or identified, how the heck do you know what a good deputy chief looks like? So, the Police sector council, in my opinion, started modernizing and set the path cause they were doing it for all police agencies across the country."

Chief 6 also commented:

"Well, there's – certainly though the work of the Police Sector Council – there was the development of the competencies for executive leadership. I think it's about taking those, cause those are fine, right?"

Chief 13 elaborated on this perspective, noting that he had an executive promotional process within his organization that was based largely on the Police Sector Council competency framework. He believed that this enabled him to standardize the promotion process while also creating an element of independence and fairness. That is, selections were based on candidates' ability to meet the necessary competencies rather than the preferences of the chief. The competencies became a key component of the leadership development and succession planning processes that he established during his time as chief, ultimately basing his promotional process around the competencies, as a means of evaluating candidate's suitability for the positions they were being considered for:

"I identified three candidates who might be able to do it and then, as a godsend, I learned about the Police Sector Council's leadership competencies. They had just developed that and were just promoting the hell out of it...I got the information from them, and I hired a consultant to come in and run a promotion process for me. So, we took those leadership competencies – and, as you know, they're broken up by rank level and what competencies you need at each one and whatnot – and I hired this company to come in, ex-policeman-type guys. And I wanted to run a promotion process that was independent from the police service because the feedback I got from members was all the promotions were based on whoever the chief wanted getting the job...So, I wanted that kind of independence so I could show the members that they would be judged on their actual abilities.

So, I hired the consultants, they took the policing competencies, working with me, we came up with some tests – interviews and things of that nature – that were appropriate for our police service and used the competencies. So, what we were looking for were inspectors. We had people at the sergeant rank, and I wanted two inspectors that I could mentor and train towards being a deputy chief and chief. But I said when you evaluate them, I don't just want you to evaluate if they have the competencies to be an inspector. I want you to evaluate the competency level they're at. Okay? So, they did this...I mean, we had already widely promoted this Police Sector Council [competencies]. That it was the Canadian standard now for promoting and all of this kind of stuff."

The way Chief 13 integrated the PSC leadership competencies into his succession planning process is a useful example of the benefit of having a national competency-based framework of the kind that Chief 10 advocated for. However, Chief 13's approach was an outlier in the current sample, suggesting that the PSC competencies are not necessarily playing a significant, or at least inconsistent, role in leadership succession planning. Also, it does not appear that police governance boards

are relying on the PSC competencies to inform their hiring decisions. Though this is difficult to confirm from the current sample of interviews. In the absence of fully implemented national standards and a national competency framework, police chiefs and police boards have been left to their own devices, which hinders consistency in the succession process.

Part of the challenge with developing any type of competency-based framework is the broad spectrum of views on what makes a good leader (attributes, skills, personality traits, leadership style, etc.) in policing, an issue that Chief 8 commented on:

“So, I don’t know. I know there’s been some pushes nationally for us to put together, kind of, a competency legend that not only shows that if you want to be a frontline police officer and get hired, here’s your basic competencies. But what then do those competencies evolve as you move through your policing career? You know, you wanna be chief of police, well here’s some things you should be able to do.”

The chiefs shared range of views was about leadership competencies and the skills they believed were required of strong leaders. There was variation among the chiefs in terms of the priority they assigned to certain competencies or skillsets, as well as in their leadership philosophies.

Being a “Good Cop” vs. Being a “Good Leader”

Traditionally police promotional processes have relied largely on performance in an operational setting and proficiency in technical policing skills (Brown, 2021). Officers are often promoted and placed into leadership positions based on how well they do their job – that is, how good of a “cop” they are and have been throughout their career. This is buttressed by the belief shared by many rank and file officers that legitimate police leaders are those that have spent most of their careers doing “real” policing, namely, frontline policing and criminal investigations, while also possessing the attributes of how most police officers define a “good cop” (Griffiths, 2020; Brown, 2021; Taylor et al., 2022; Abela, 2012). 15 was critical of this approach, stating, “In the past they told you that they’ve been to homicide, they’re a good investigator, they’re this, they’re that. I can tell you that is for naught.” Chief 7 also touched on this “traditional” approach in promoting officers:

“Like, traditionally, police services, most of them go through the same promotional process and they look at their career and they spend so much time in public complaints, you spend so much time in patrol, so much time in a major crime squad.” [Chief 7].

Their perspective lends support to Brown’s (2021) argument that a flaw in many police promotional systems is a focus on technical skill, discounting conceptual or human skills. Arrests, citations, files generated, cases cleared, and meeting specific crime reduction goals, – often assessed by crime rate and clearance rate, have been paramount performance metrics for police services and their officers. While they may be effective in assessing technical policing skills, these measures are not designed for, nor are they particularly capable of, assessing an officer’s leadership ability, which can make it difficult to identify officers that could potentially be strong and effective leaders. Chief 11 commented on the challenges of this approach:

“Because the whole succession planning process is flawed in policing. Just because you’re a good constable and you write a lot of tickets doesn’t mean you’re gonna be a good sergeant. The way they used to measure success is based on your outputs because in the old days that’s all they cared about.”

Chief 3 held a similar position:

“I don’t think we do a great job – at least in my experience – of identifying potential leaders. Selecting those people, even ten years out, from [being eligible for] a management position. Identifying them and preparing them for a career in management or leadership. We need to do a better job of recognizing those people, so they feel like they have the opportunity to advance. We do a good job of identifying good cops, but we don’t do a good job of identifying leaders...So, I guess my mandate or my edict to my new team was, you know, I wanna hire leaders. I’m not trying to hire the best cop, I’m trying to hire the best leader.”

A key point raised by several chiefs was that being a good police officer was not necessarily a pre-condition for being a good leader. A police officer who performs at a high level in patrol may not have the skills to supervise or lead a team of patrol officers, nor does being a skilled investigator mean that one will be able to effectively lead an investigative section. Several of these chiefs made this distinction. Including Chiefs 9 and 14:

“I just had this argument or debate with my group that’s doing all the hiring for promotions, and I said, you know, one of the negative things we do is when we’re running our promotional competitions, is police officer comes

in who's a phenomenal street cop or a phenomenal detective and now they want to go for promotion to be a leader. Some of my worst leaders I've ever worked for were phenomenal investigators, but they lacked the leadership skills." [Chief 9]

"...cause you get some people that are really good cops but they're not necessarily good at leading people. Like, I can think of guys and girls that are great police officers. You would want them showing up to your house or you would want them investigating a crime against your loved ones, but they're either not interested or...Like, all cops have a certain level of leadership ability for sure, but as far as leading groups of people, it's a different skillset. Some of them just aren't interested or they struggle at it. You'll have other people that are really good at leading people, but they don't necessarily have the best work ethic or might be a bit rougher in that area. So, you need both. You need leadership skills and ability, but a lot of that can be taught and that's part of you know, a lot of what we were talking about before with succession planning."

The Leadership Skillset

Thus far, several of the selected quotes allude to a leadership "skillset"; yet there are few specifics as to what this skillset looks like, especially in the minds of the chiefs. From a review of the research on police leadership, Pearson-Goff & Herrington (2013) identified seven common characteristics important for effective police leadership: "ethical behaviour, trustworthiness, legitimacy, being a role model, communication, decision-making, critical, creative, and strategic thinking ability" (as, cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019: pg. 52). The review identified the main activities as important for leaders to engage in as including creating a shared vision, engendering organizational commitment, caring for subordinates, driving, and managing change, and problem solving (Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2013, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019).

When citing what they believed to be the core competencies for effective leaders, most participants identified the characteristics and activities listed by Pearson-Goff and Herrington, with the most common being communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, strategic thinking, managing change, creating a shared vision (collaboration, team building), and engendering organizational commitment (trust-building). The following selected comments highlight these attributes:

"So, when it comes to those type of core competencies, you know, the ability to competencies, you know, the ability to communicate effectively, to deliver on it, and to show ethical behaviour, and having written and oral

communication skills, and leading by example, and being ethical, and that. A lot of them are, kind of, generic to just doing the job.” [Chief 1]

“Obviously, communication. That’s probably the main one. Nothing is urgent in our world. Our in-box is never free. We’ve got to consult and communicate. Change management is probably the number two one for me because most everything you’re doing is about change and getting people inside to feel like they’re part of the process...Obviously you need to be a problem-solver. Like, that’s all you do. People bring you problems. There’s actually a really good quote I saw online: ‘The definition of a police chief is like your building is on fire, your desk is on fire, your office is on fire, and the fire is on fire.’ Like, everything is on fire, all the time.” [Chief 2]

“So, when you talk about the competencies that we’re looking for, we’re looking for, we’re looking for people who can problem-solve. We’re looking for people who are critical thinkers. We’re looking for people that are good communicators and can communicate, not only to a shift briefing table, but can communicate to a police board, and can communicate to the Premier. You know, which is...those skills aren’t easy to have, right? Those are three things that I think are critically important. Critical thinking, problem-solving and communicating. You know, we talk about leadership, but what the hell does leadership even mean? Leadership is just influence and you get influence by being a problem-solver, being a critical thinking and being someone who can communicate and persuade. Whether it be at a shift briefing table or at a high-level mayor meeting.” [Chief 5]

“I go back to when I created the job profile for the deputies that I brought into the organization. We identified, you know, competencies that we needed to have this round. You know, some of the things you would expect to see, like communication, strategic thinking, change management, all of these things. But a premium this time was placed on teamwork because those are things, we found in consultations had been missing from the previous executive and it eroded trust. So, we had to make sure that we brought people in who were going to adhere to those values, so that we could actually lead as a team.” [Chief 6].

“You know, I certainly wanna see people that are collaborative, especially when you’re up at this level. I mean, the best leaders that I’ve been around will always provide their opinion last. They go around the table on an issue, and they listen to everybody and then they will eventually come up with a decision instead of being autocratic. I think, you know, the higher you go in the ranks, the more collaborative [you need to be].” [Chief 9]

“Having strategic foresight. Like, almost being a futurist. I think a chief in many ways needs to be a futurist because you’re setting the groundwork for the next person, and if you don’t do it right now...I’m dealing with this now in some collective agreement pieces where I’m thinking, ‘My god, they should have dealt with this twenty years ago and now its three million dollars when we could have done this twenty years ago for five hundred thousand.’ I think you almost need to be this envisioning for the future, but

you also need to be a change manager because everything is changing consistently. So, those are, kind of, at the top of my head.” [Chief 10]

“Yes, there are [core leadership competencies]. The key ones for me are collaboration, being a strategic, adaptability, communication, financial acumen, and non-risk averse. Now, the competencies are similar between ranks, but it’s the level of competency that people have that’s important. I think that gets missed on people.” [Chief 16]

Blending the Tactical and the Interpersonal

A theme that permeates these comments is that the chiefs tended to favour a transformational leadership style, which has become a prominent model in the field of police leadership (Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). Such an approach to leadership is thought to encourage and foster greater workforce participation in the process of cultural change (Smith, 2016, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). Critical to this approach are communication skills and the ability to encourage and facilitate collaboration. This is probably best represented in Chief 2’s comment that a police leader’s role is ultimately “about change and getting people inside to feel like they’re a part of the process.” Driving change through participatory communication and decision-making processes, as opposed to a more hierarchical process is an important feature of transformational leadership, as is an openness to challenging existing practices. The willingness to challenge the status quo is something that both Chiefs 7 and 11 referred to as “vision” and invoked as being a necessary attribute of strong leaders:

“I think one of the key things that I was exposed to, probably that made the biggest difference for me, is like thirty different things that allowed me to look at things differently. So, vision. Vision is, to me, one of the critical pieces to me that gets most overlooked. Like, you gotta kinda see where the puck is going. And a lot of people come into positions like this and, it’s not making anybody better than anybody, but it’s, you know, maintaining the status quo, tweak it a little bit. It’s about job protection. It’s never been [that] for me. That’s not something I even consider. It’s not in the realm. So, I’m not afraid to...as I use the analogy, brains get you to the first step in the step ladder, networking gets you to the second and third, and clout and influence bring change. And I think all of those are critical pieces, but you don’t have to be the smartest in the room to get it right.” [Chief 7]

“But you need that vision, and that’s what’s missing in a lot of police leaders I see. You gotta relate to that vision of what’s beyond what you’re doing today. That whole strategic mindset. And in order to get to that, you have to always ask the right questions. Are we doing this right? What is a better way of doing it? How can we do this more efficiently, more financially effective? All of those basic questions that build up a skillset. Some people

just don't like that. They like the status quo too much, whereas I think visionary leaders are the opposite. They can't stand the status quo because they're always striving for something better within the organization. If they're striving for something better for themselves, then that's a different story and you develop poor leaders that way. If you're striving for how to make the organization better and how to make the profession better, then that's, to me, there's a dividing line there that goes across." [Chief 11]

The desire to make the organization and profession better espoused by Chief 11 is indicative of a transformational leadership approach. Bass (1990, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019) observed that transformational leaders are more apt to inspire, energize and intellectually stimulate employees, encouraging them to look beyond self-interest for the good of the organization. To accomplish this, a leader must set the example and demonstrate that they are focused on the good of the organization and not, as Chief 7 frames it, focused on "job protection."

An additional theme that emerged from the chiefs' responses was an emphasis on soft leadership skills with a person-focused orientation although not to the exclusion of hard or tactical competencies. There was a general view that contemporary police leaders needed to be able to integrate the tactical or technical with the interpersonal and that the inability to do so would serve as a barrier to effective leadership. Chief 6, for example, noted that it was not about devaluing technical skills, but prioritizing soft skills that have historically been underappreciated in policing:

"But also, I think more and more we're seeing your technical competence is, you know, that's okay, but I think you need to be humble, and you need to be able to demonstrate compassion and be real. Those soft skills nowadays, I think are absolutely critical and I think in the past may not have been valued as much as they probably ought to have been." [Chief 6]

Similarly, Chief 7 held the view that the attributes of a good leader are not necessarily valued in policework. Rather, what he viewed as the most important characteristics of a good leader – open mindedness, vulnerability, and humbleness – are considered weaknesses rather than strengths:

"I just think that open-mindedness of what leadership is versus what a good police officer is because there are a lot of leaders that are actually better leaders than they were cops, and it doesn't mean that's bad. I always use the analogy, a leader without followers is just a man or women out for a long walk. So, I don't think we really look at the ability to be personable, to be vulnerable, to be humble because some of those things are actually seen as weaknesses in policing."

The hierarchical nature of the professional model of policing (Griffiths, 2020), can minimize, and often discourage, open-mindedness in officers. Moreover, the historically hyper-masculine culture of policing has prioritized toughness and confidence, discouraging officers from showing vulnerability and humility. As Chief 7 noted, the attributes of the archetypal “good cop” often do not include some of the most important characteristics of a good leader, and thus, assessing one’s aptitude for leadership should not necessarily be predicated on the degree to which they meet the standard of being a good cop.

Part of the issue may be that an inherent feature of policing is the need to address issues immediately, which is more reflective of transactional leadership styles (Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). Transactional leaders generally tend to be more results-oriented, accomplishing goals by rewarding good performance and penalising underperforming workers (Bass, 1990, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). The reactivity and results-oriented nature of policing may tend to emphasize or favour more transactional qualities in officers that, while part of being a good police officer, are not necessarily favoured in the leadership domain, where transactional leadership has given way to transformational leadership as the favoured model (Bass, 1990, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019). This was certainly the case in the present study, where most participants identified competencies that were representative of a more transformational approach to leadership, and thus, may be part of the reason why some participants believed that great cops do not necessarily make great leaders, as discussed above.

Chief 10 also spoke about the shift in emphasis to softer, more interpersonal skills but also felt that it was not an either-or scenario. That is, he felt that good leaders needed to have blend of tactical and interpersonal skills:

“So, I think, you know, the competencies required, it’s totally shifted. In my view, you know, communication, relationship-building are key. You know, mediation skills, engagement skills are all key. These are all, sort of these very tactical skills. Like, everybody says, ‘Oh interpersonal skills,’ but you have to be a skilled communicator cause you’re negotiating and dealing with so many different levels of the organization, and the community, and government, but even around, you know, bridge-building. Then, of course, you get more tactical around financial acuity, political, acuity, strategic foresight. Those are all key pieces...You need to have, you know, financial acuity to understand budgets but you’re not the one that’s actually

managing the budget, you know? So, I think the pieces are changing from the framework, but I would say, obviously, you know the whole communication piece, engagement piece are really the key leading competencies right now. How do you bring people together? How do you engage? How do you communicate?" [Chief 10]

With respect to the prioritization of soft skills, Chiefs 4 and 9 both identified emotional intelligence as being a critical attribute of leadership. They felt that police leaders need to be able to connect to their people on a human level. To do so effectively requires emotional intelligence, which as Chief 4 noted, is ultimately a constellation of attributes that shape an individual's ability to be what he referred to as an "authentic leader" – or being intentional in how one engages with the people they are leading:

"The highest quality is emotional intelligence. And I'm kinda cheating because emotional intelligence now has four or five different things in there. How I define emotional intelligence is being self-aware; critically looking at the impact you're having on others; leading with respectfulness, kindness, caring; being empathetic to the situations people are in. And I think that people respond to people. People respond to people who care. [People] who are, what I call, authentic leaders. Not doing it because somebody told you to do it or to tick off a box, but actually asking people." [Chief 4]

"So, emotional intelligence is critical in a leader. If a leader doesn't have that, I can send them to a whole pile of leadership courses, that's a hard thing to teach if you don't possess it already in your toolbox." [Chief 9]

Chief 4's idea of "people responding to people" was also raised in the interview with Chief 15 who noted the shift to a more people-centered or people-focused approach away from the crime-focused or results-oriented approaches used by police leaders. Chief 15 mentioned that understanding the need to be people-focused was a required competency for police leaders:

"We forget this...you know, working as an inspector in this division that I told you about, I remember writing these words in my book, 'People first. Inside out.' We tend to forget that this is a people business that we're in. No matter what we're dealing with, it's people. You need to understand that this is all about people. So, are you able to connect with people [and] recognize what their real needs are? Truly, it about people inside out, and when I say that I'm not talking about inside the police service, I'm like, you gotta deal with what's happening inside the person that you're dealing with.

So, it's people first, inside out and then you give them all the tools to be successful. It's actually a very simple formula but it works. Most police leaders in the past, they weren't talking about what a person needs. It's like, 'What are the stats? How many arrests?' Even when you look at the things that we measure and we typically put on television, those aren't the

things that we need to be talking about. So, we're shifting that...So, the number one competency is understanding that it's people first. You know, we're in a people business. Same thing when we're dealing with people out on the street. It's about people. It's a people business, but we forget that. We haven't talked about those sorts of things in the past."

Chief 11 felt that the ability to engage in problem-solving – generally regarded as a more hard or tactical skill – required a people-centred approach, like the perspective offered by Chief 15. In Chief 11's view, the need to effectively problem-solve required understanding the importance of engagement and the ability to do so. Chief 11's perspective perhaps best represents the blending of the tactical and the interpersonal:

"Again, it's all about people. How do you deal with those people? You got a problem? How do you solve the problem? It's that problem solving ability by asking the right questions, that evidence-based [approach]. The stuff that, you know, for you to get to where you are at a PhD level, you're always asking different questions and you know that if you don't ask the right questions, you're not going to make progress. So, you got a problem over here, how do we solve the problem? How do we get down to the basics and how do we build from that?"

So, it's that mindset. Always thinking about how can the organization achieve it, what can I do to make sure that happens, how can I get our folks to solve these problems? You can't do that without talking to the people that do the work every day. If there's a gap between wherever that leader is and the folks that are doing the work every day, that gap has to be shrunk in order for a leader to be effective, in my view. I see it now in Police Chiefs where there's that huge gap and there's nothing in between...I'll give you a great example. We'd sit around the board room table, and the commander would come in and say, 'Okay, this is what we think we should do with the purchase of these new vehicles and what goes into each vehicle.' I say, 'Okay, fine. What do the troops say about that?' You go from this old school process of, 'Well, we'll tell them what they get,' to, no, it should be the reverse. You should ask them what they need and then we facilitate to make sure they get what they need. That whole mindset is different."

There is research to support recognizing the value of soft skills and competencies more closely aligned to transformational leadership approaches. Dobby et al. (2014, as cited in Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019) discovered that behaviours associated with transformational leadership had a positive effect on officers' attitudes toward work, job satisfaction, and organizational performance and, subsequently, recommended that transformational leadership be provided by every police leader, as it increased the likelihood of higher performing and more motivated teams. From their study of policing leadership styles, Ramshaw and Simpson (2019) concluded that effective leadership

incorporated transformational principles as the basis for organizational management and change.

The prioritization of transformational leadership attributes suggests that police leaders are moving in the right direction. However, several important issues remain. Although the chiefs interviewed for this study spoke positively of transformational leadership, it was not possible to determine whether they actioned its principles in their leadership activities. As noted in the Chapter 2, there is a paucity of materials on how to assess the performance and styles of police leadership (Neyroud, 2011; Cookcroft, 2014).

Health-Oriented Leadership: A Missing Skill?

Although many of the chiefs discussed the need for a more people-centred approach to leadership, with an emphasis on soft skills, notably absent in many participant's responses was any discourse around organizational health and employee health and well-being. This is somewhat disconcerting given that leadership in police services has been identified as a key factor in preventing or exacerbating the mental health and wellbeing of employees (Griffiths et al., 2021). A lack of confidence in the leadership of a police service may also lead to low morale and low levels of job satisfaction. This may result in officers leaving for other police services. As such, there is an increasing focus on the role of "health-oriented leadership" in police services that has as a major focus creating organizational and operational environments that mitigate officer stressors and are sensitive to the health and wellbeing needs of police members (Franziska, et al., 2014).

Recent studies have found that health-oriented leadership can buffer the effects of work effort on police officers' burnout levels (Santa Maria, et al, 2020). In the present study, despite the chiefs' belief that leaders need to be more people focused and emotionally intelligent, most participants did not mention the need for leaders to be health-oriented or to have attributes of health-oriented leadership such as caring and compassion. Chief 6 cited the need for leaders to demonstrate compassion as being part of the new leadership repertoire and Chief 4 referred to empathy and caring in defining emotional intelligence. Beyond that, being health-oriented was not identified as a competency or skill, with one notable exception. Chief 12, the lone woman in the study, identified caring as a key leadership competency. Echoing the sentiment of Chief 15 that

policing is, first and foremost, a people business, she went on explain that this required effective leaders to care about the' well-being of their personnel:

“If I look at forty years ago and if I look at the leaders maybe that I gravitate to, even within the policing community, yes, they're visionary, they're change managers, they can handle finances, strategic thinking, and all of that, but one of the key pieces is caring. A caring leader that is transformational is important and, you know, some people will say, 'You care too much.' No. You can't care too much. In the policing industry, it's all about people. We're a people organization. You have to have healthy members come into work, so you have to care about their well-being. You have to care about your community and everything. That's not a characteristic that people think about in a leader, but I do.”

The point that Chief 15 raised that caring for one's people is not a characteristic that is typically considered and may explain its absence from most participants' top competencies. It may be that, since health-oriented leadership it's a relatively new concept in policing, it has yet to widely enter the lexicon of contemporary police leaders.

The challenge is that many of the soft-skills and competencies associated with a transformational (and even a health-oriented) leadership approach identified by participants are difficult to develop and cannot necessarily be acquired through training and education. Although some of these skills can be learned and honed through training, they are generally not a component of most pre-service and in-service police training, where hard skills have historically been prioritized.

The interview materials suggest that current police leadership training is also not focused on the development of these skills but rather is more focused on the development and expansion of more tactical leadership skills (e.g., strategic thinking, financial acuity, change management) rather than the more humanistic that most participants identified as being so important. As police leaders look to identify and develop potential successors, the pool of candidates with a transformational and health-oriented skillset may be quite limited. Given the challenges police services face in developing these skills in their officers, it may be incumbent upon them to bring people into their organizations that already have these skills and competencies. This point was raised by Chief 13, who argued that, if police services want police officers – and by extension police leaders – to have these competencies then they must recruit people that have them because it is unrealistic to think that they can be acquired or developed

through training. He added that doing so will require a shift in the competencies that police services prioritize and in the type of people they hire:

“When I was hiring police officers, I liked nurses, social workers, teachers, all of this stuff. That’s what I looked for. We’re hiring the wrong people. I don’t want gun nuts. I don’t want, you know, karate specialists. I mean, if you know this stuff, there’s nothing wrong with that but that’s not...I don’t want the guy that that’s his personality...If you look at what’s going on, one of the biggest complaints about policing is exactly that. We just don’t treat people well. I don’t think we can train everybody to be empathetic and caring and everything, so you have to recruit people that have those qualities. And we can’t train everybody the proper protocol to deal with a Blackfoot Ceremony or a Somali public gathering or anything like that, but what we can train them to do is to be respectful and to ask. “I haven’t been here before. What do you need from me?” Like, all of this kind of stuff, [it’s] really lacking.”

The challenge for police leaders as the competencies for contemporary police leaders continue to evolve is to create a culture that fosters the development and growth of these transformational skills, providing officers with appropriate opportunities to learn and hone these skills, and to understand what it means to effectively apply these skills in a policing context. It also means that police services will need to place a greater focus on recruiting people that already have these soft-skills and have been able to apply them in a professional setting. Importantly, beyond hiring people with these skills police services must ensure that they are encouraged to grow and develop and that these valuable attributes are not diminished and marginalized by a culture that has historically prioritized the tactical over the interpersonal or, as Chief 7 opined, “We gotta stop deprogramming them to be a cop.” Chief 11 summarized the challenge:

“So, that whole process needs to change because if you don’t start at the bottom, you’re never gonna get to the top and that senior leadership. It’s gotta start at the bottom, and that builds culture within that organization. And policing culture is the hardest thing to break, change, evolve, manage – all of those things. It’s so hard because it’s engrained in everything we do. And I can tell you that because my daughter’s on the job now and she came over on the weekend and she’s talking like she’s got thirty years on the job and, you know, she’s got two. She’s embraced that culture so fast. That’s my daughter and I know that wasn’t her before. So, I’ve seen it happen so quickly.”

Diversity & Inclusion in Succession Planning: A Critical, Nuanced Issue

Central to discussions of succession planning and leadership development, is the issue of diversity and, more specifically, the need for increased diversity and inclusion in policing and police leadership (Silvestri, 2019). It could be said that this emphasis on diversity had reached a critical inflection point, as the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota had placed intense scrutiny on issues of systemic racism and discrimination in North American policing, further highlighting the need for police services to better represent the communities that they police. Chief 2 made this observation:

“It’s gonna be part of the conversation because Canada is such a diverse [country] and [this region] is so [diverse]. And so, it’s so expected today that you cannot ignore the make-up of the community. I think in policing you need to the trust of the community to be effective. That’s a bottom line. You need that, and if you’re not representing the community and you’ve lost trust, then you’re not going to be relevant for very long.”

Chief 2’s above statement is reflective of the growing consensus about the importance of diversity to police legitimacy and public confidence in police; however, staffing data reveal that, despite proactive recruiting and hiring efforts, Canadian police services are not representative of the communities they police, with police services in Canada remaining a generally homogenous workforce dominated by white males (Griffiths, 2020). This is most evident within the ranks of senior leadership, where white males dominate the policing executive, particularly at the ranks of chief and deputy chief. This is an issue Robert Reiner (1991: p. 351) observed almost three decades ago, arguing that “if there is one outstanding defect in present-day chief constables is it heir socially unrepresentative character...they are all white, middle-aged, conservatively inclined (small ‘c’) males” (as cited in Silverstri, 2019: p. 99). Over twenty-five years later, it appears that while there has been some change, particularly in terms of the increased presence of women, white men continue to predominate in police leadership roles. This reality was something that participants were acutely aware of, as reflected in the following selected comments:

“To give you an example, I think we have one female deputy [chief]. You have one non-white chief and two non-white deputy chiefs [in the region]. I

would suggest that when they look at it, it fails tremendously right now.” [Chief 1].

“My agency has not done well...we don’t have a good track record. It’s been white males as our senior leaders. I’m looking to change that.” [Chief 2]

“It absolutely plays in [succession planning]. We have a real dearth of female and visible minority leaders in Canada. It’s plain to say. We haven’t done a good job of addressing that.” [Chief 3]

“I think the other [thing] we’re still behind the times on, for example, is inclusion. You know, being more inclusive. So, you know, let’s be blunt. Right now, in [this province] we have never had a municipal female chief of police. You know, that’s a broad decision; that’s not a PD decision, so ultimately the boards [have] gotta take responsibility, but I mean, I think that’s pretty telling.” [Chief 9]

“We’ve lacked significantly in our profession around equitable approaches to leadership. There’s four female police chiefs or police leaders in Canada out of 194 agencies. Quite frankly, that’s not acceptable.” [Chief 10]

Recent years have seen an increased and sustained emphasis on encouraging greater diversity within police leadership. Although the participants recognized both the historical and contemporary homogeneity of police leadership, most also felt that progress was being made at diversifying the executive ranks, exemplified by Chief 10:

“Even if you look at diversity in Canada in police leadership, you know, we had [redacted], a racialized chief, we have [redacted], a racialized chief. We have a series of Indigenous police leaders leading, not only Indigenous police services, but other police services...I think, for example, in the LGBTQ2S+ [community] we’ve made significant progressions around that. There’s a number of openly gay senior police leaders. So, I think we’ve made a lot of headway, but it’s also around encouraging that whole piece.”

Other chiefs reflected on the changes they had observed throughout the course of their careers. Chief 6 stated, “I mean, long gone are the days where – and I saw this when I was with the Senior Officers Association [in my previous agency] – the senior officers were all largely white males.” Chief 2 added, “You’re seeing way more, you know, minority officers that joined twenty years ago and are now senior inspectors or superintendents or deputies.” Chief 14 expressed a similar sentiment, noting that tangible progress can be seen simply by looking at the evolution of the executive within his police service:

“You know, when I look back even when you walk down the hall of the [executive offices] here, you’ll look at the old [pictures] of senior

management teams going back to the seventies and it's all white males, white males [and then], oh, there's a female, there's another female, there's a South Asian inspector. You'll see the progression." [Chief 14]

Chief 12, the only woman police leader in the study, pointed to her own experience as a reflection of the progress that has been made in terms of the increasing presence of women in policing:

"When I joined policing [in my first agency] there was 110 female officers in 1981. I look at it [now], almost forty years later, like, there's almost a thousand. I don't know the exact figure. I shouldn't say there's a thousand, but over 25% of the service is women. Now, it doesn't reflect the 51% of society but it's so different, and you see women in different roles, at different ranks. That's my personal experience."

At present, there are few women chiefs in Canadian policing. Chief 12's experience is illustrative of the point made by Silvestri (2019) that, while there has never been a time in which women have been so visibly present and engaged in leadership and administration of policing, the dominance of men and lack of diversity is still a defining feature of police officers in leadership positions.

Incorporating Diversity into Succession Planning

Given the increased public, political, and organizational pressure on police leaders to diversify their ranks, it is unsurprising that participants viewed increasing racial, cultural and gender diversity within executive ranks as a key priority. Several participants made a point to emphasize that diversity needed to be a major consideration of succession planning processes. This is highlighted in the following selected comments:

"While [diversity] can't be the sole factor, it has to be a big factor. ...I'm open about it. We're about to run a sergeants competition and I am open about the fact that diversity is one of the issues. Now, diversity is not just gender. There's a whole bunch of questions that come with that right? And I tell everyone that you still have to have the skill sets and the characteristics, but this is what we're looking for." [Chief 1].

"There's also a huge community expectation that the senior leaders and the department represent the community. So, if you've got a diverse, multicultural community, which requires a more diverse, representative police department, then you need your senior management to also, you know, be equal to that. Unfortunately, because of demographics [in policing], white males have tended to rise to the top because the

department is predominantly white males. And the more senior people are white males because we required those males in the eighties. So, now they're all the leaders and I think that's a problem. We need to find gender balance. We need to find a way to encourage, you know, more minority officers, more female officers, to aspire to those positions." [Chief 2].

"It would be my opinion that because of diversity and because of the need for us to be very strategic, for lack of a better term, in the selection of people as they move through the ranks and how we ensure that we have this, not only culturally diverse, but gender diverse workforce I think that we're spending more time thinking about it." [Chief 5]

"It's impossible for [me] to sit as the head of our organization and say that I know everything about diversity and inclusion when I'm a white male who's fifty years old. So, the importance of diversity around the executive table and my senior management team. So, again, kind of, back to the root of your question, assembling a senior executive team that isn't made up of a bunch of fifty-year-old white guys has been an essential part of what we do." [Chief 8]

"It's certainly something that I would recommend to my board, that, you know, when they hire the next chief that they be mindful of demographics and race and ethnicity and those types of things, because I think that's important. And that does take some looking ahead to start to put people in the right position to be successful and be, you know, now." [Chief 9]

"You know, gender equity was very important for me. When I started, you know, our senior leadership team had one female senior leader in an organization of twelve hundred people. You know, I'm very pleased to say we have thirty-six senior leaders and we're almost fifty-fifty. In fact, I think we may be fifty-two percent female, which is great, but it takes a lot of work to get there, and it takes a lot of development. So, what I realized was, you know, the succession piece was important for me...." [Chief 10]

Subsequently, several chiefs mentioned that they currently have at least one woman that is in position to become the next chief or is among the group of succession candidates. Others noted that, while not yet part of the executive, their services had recently promoted women to positions that are on a direct path to the executive. For example, Chief's 2 and 5 had each recently hired new deputy chiefs from outside their organizations, both of whom were women. Chief 14 had also recently promoted a woman to the rank of deputy chief, acknowledging that she was a strong leadership candidate. Chief 13 added that a woman in his former service that he promoted to sergeant was now a deputy chief, while Chief 8 stated that it was highly likely that at least one of his internal successor candidates would be a woman:

“We are in the process of hopefully exploring the opportunity to go to a second deputy. I think we’re a big enough police service that we could have a second. So, it is my hope that we can go to that. I was the person who promoted our current superintendent into her position...I know she’s a critical thinker, she’s a hard worker, she’s all of the things that you would want in a police leader. So, I did promote her with the intention of trying to position her in a place in the organization where she would be able to compete for that position when it comes up.”

Moreover, Chief 6 explained that when he entered his existing service, the leadership (succession) pipeline significantly lacked diversity, and thus, compelled him to look outside of his agency (like Chiefs 2 and 5) to address the issue in the near term or, as he put it, to alter the internal ‘gene pool’ of police service:

“The other piece is diversity. So, there was really none in the pipeline and clearly if I was going to send a message about increasing diversity and valuing that, then I had to demonstrate that. So, that, I can tell you, this organization had never gone externally for deputy chiefs before. So, that took a lot of work actually sitting down with the superintendents and the senior officers’ association [and] basically saying we’re a large and leading municipal police service in this country with the third most diverse population in Canada. We can’t just be going to the gene pool we have internally.”

Research suggests that it would behoove police leaders to promote more women to senior management, as academic discourse on women police and leadership indicates that women are more likely to adopt a transformative leadership style compared to their male peers (Dick et al., 2014; Silvestri, 2003, 2006, 2007, as cited in Silvestri, 2019). Research in this area suggests that women officers adopting more transformational leadership styles are “more open to challenging existing practices, are more amenable to sharing power and information, adopt more inclusive, consultative and participatory communication and decision-making processes, and are more supportive of colleagues supportive family commitments” (Ramshaw & Simpson, 2019: pg. 51). It is likely that increasing the number of ethnic minorities in leadership will have a similar transformative effect, with Hong (2017) asserting that that increased ethnic representativeness will affect a police service’s culture, which can have an organization-wide impact on members’ attitudes and actions as well as relations with the community, including communities of diversity.

Chiefs identified several reasons for increasing diversity in the executive ranks, including what they perceived as being the primary benefits of a diverse workforce and

executive team. Their responses about the benefits of diversity tend to align with what scholars have defined as the business case for diversity (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2011) along with the concept of bringing about difference through difference (Kennedy, 2012), both of which are common in assessments of police diversity (Silvestri, 2019).

The belief that diversity brings difference is based on “the belief that members of different groups bring ‘alternative’ and ‘improved’ ways of working” (Silvestri, 2019: p. 106). This is connected to the concept of a representative bureaucracy, which is based on the premise that public agencies should mirror the society in which it functions to best serve the citizenry (Kennedy, 2012). Elements of both perspectives were present in participants’ perspectives on diversity. For example, Chief 2 emphasized spoke directly to the value of difference that diversity can bring:

“Because people with different experiences bring a different perspective and that’s the value, the intangible, that the senior management team gets. They’re not all looking through the same lens at this problem. You’ve got different experiences and different cultures, different languages, and they provide a much more well-rounded perspective.”

Chief 4, while also identifying the potential for diversity to bring differing perspectives to the table, emphasized the value that diversity can bring to organizational performance (i.e., the business case), likening it to a football team and the need for varied, but complimentary skillsets:

“The other thing is, we need to recruit people into our police departments from many of these communities including women... I believe that strong organizations and strong leadership has people with varying backgrounds, varying ethnic backgrounds...you know...gender plays a role in this [too]. I use the analogy of a football team. I don’t need five running backs or ten wide receivers or five quarterbacks. I need a team to be able to execute. Same thing in hockey. I don’t need five goalies. I need one goalie, a couple defense and a couple forwards. Well, each of those skills are different. So, that’s what makes a team more solid.”

The perspectives of Chief’s 8 and 12 embody the concept of Kennedy’s (2012) description of representative bureaucracy:

“So, while you always want the best person for the job, I think we recognize the importance of having diversity amongst our senior management team, amongst our rank-and-file officers so that we are reflective of the community and that we are looking at things from every possible angle and we’re not, you know, we don’t have the blinders on thinking that everything’s fine in our privileged world...So, what that does, all of these

different types of things, it starts building relationships and before long, hopefully, those relationships bear fruit, which, in our case, is people putting their hand up and saying, 'I'd like to come and work for you guys. I think I can contribute,' and better yet, 'I think I can see myself in your organization.' The only way they can see themselves in the organization is if they see others in the organization who think like them, who have the same standards and morals and upbringing and all those types of things." [Chief 8]

"And you need a wide variety of people and personalities to be successful because you have to adapt to everybody in your community. Like, it's great to see people who are gay or transgender in police services because it's really tough to relate to those communities." [Chief 12]

Similarly, Chief 13 discussed the positive impact that representativeness can have on public trust and legitimacy in a police service. In his view, community members were more likely to have confidence in, and thus, more likely to cooperate with a police service that is more representative of the people within that community, both on the frontlines and in the executive:

"And, you know, once you build the reputation of your police service and you get the confidence of your community and they see people that look like them, not only in the cars driving around, but wearing the white shirts, their confidence in their own police service grows a lot, and their willingness to work with the police service [grows]."

A few of the chiefs cited a further benefit of diverse leadership: that increasing representation in leadership can send a positive message about equity in the promotional process to women, LGBTQ2S+, and racially diverse officers within the organization. Further, officers from these communities who are promoted to leadership positions can serve as role models both within and outside of the organization. This has historically been a significant barrier to recruitment, retention, and progression of minority officers (Silvestri, 2019). Speaking to this point, Chief 8 spoke about his hope that the increasing number of women in supervisory and leadership positions would begin to send a message that the historically perceived, and quite real, "glass ceiling" for women in the organization was finally being broken:

"And so, the fact that we have a female superintendent, we have two female Inspectors in our organization, and then we've got some female staff sergeants, this is starting to smash that glass ceiling that, I think, in policing often was felt to exist, and show our young female members that there really is no limit to where they could go in the organization."

Chief 9 felt that part of the importance of increased representation in police leadership was that it created role models for younger officers with leadership aspirations:

“You know, right now in [this province], again, in municipal policing we have two deputies that are females [and] that’s it. You know, we have some South Asian leaders that are very well thought of and regarded – and Chinese – but it’s still proportionately, I would say not representative of our demographics in the province. So, I think that has to part of any succession planning too because other young leaders look for [role] models, they look for people who have, you know, achieved and, you know, I think when they don’t see any strong leaders from their background, I think that is prohibitive.”

Speaking about his experience as the leader of a First Nations police service, Chief 13 expressed a similar perspective. As a Caucasian chief of a First Nations service and member of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, he stated that he had declined an invitation to become president because he believed it would send the wrong message to a First Nations police services and to First Nations communities. Rather, he felt that that the role should belong to a First Nations person, as First Nations Police chiefs should be the most visible representatives of First Nations policing:

“I was involved with the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, and I was the [redacted] on the executive, and I was that for several years. And they actually asked me to take a higher position, to become the president, and I declined because I said that’s not the proper picture that we should be displaying as an organization. You know, I looked at the other guys in the room that were, basically, all First Nations people and I said, “You guys are every bit as competent as I am. It just doesn’t make sense. I’m not the guy. I’ll support whoever’s there but it’s time that it be other people,” and that’s the case in First Nations policing.”

However, as police services strive to become more representative of the communities they police, it is important to be realistic about what representativeness might look like. Chief 15, one of two visible minority participants, felt that the fact that certain racialized and cultural/ethnic minority do not represent a significant percentage of the national or provincial populations made it unrealistic to believe that these groups would have significant representation in policing. His general point was that, based on demographic data, it is important to understand what representation ultimately can and will look like, and that it may mean that certain groups may not have a significant presence in policing and police leadership. As such, it was important to develop realistic

goals that are premised on the existing data and the socio-cultural community context in which a police service operates. He shared his experience with his previous jurisdiction as an example:

“The stats are going to be critical. For example, I’ll use [my former city] and the political arena. When you look at the diversity piece, speaking just of blacks, we’ve got one black city councillor, [which] certainly matches the demographics of the country. I think they’re only 3.5%. So yeah, we got that. He’s about six percent. We got three black MLAs, which make up 5%. So, what I’m saying is when we do that, we really need to have the stats behind it because I’ve often heard people say, “We’ve gotta be able to see ourselves.” Well, not necessarily. If we’re only 3.5% of the population, I’m gonna walk into a lot of boardrooms where I’m gonna be the only one of colour, so it’s about the reality behind it...So, if we look at the number of police chiefs and we look at the number of chiefs of colour, I really would like to have the real stats percentage-wise based on the population.”

Increasing Diversity While Avoiding the Tokenism Trap

While the current societal context was identified as a factor in increasing the urgency for police leaders to diversify the executive, most participants were quick to emphasize that there was a delicate balance in how this could be accomplished. The challenges in creating more diversity in police leadership by identifying and developing capable candidates while avoiding tokenism. Several participants raised this point, noting that while diversity and equity must factor into succession plans and promotional processes, they must not be the sole factors, as this could ultimately undermine the process. As Chief 1 cautioned:

“I think it has to be one your leading criteria based on the fact that boards...and probably Chiefs in terms of who we’ve developed and what we do...have shown the inability to create...have shown that we treat diversity almost as a form of tokenism.”

Chief 3 expressed a similar sentiment, stating that increasing diversity cannot be “about giving people a job because they tick a box,” but instead must involve “providing opportunity to a lot of different people within our organization.”

These concerns reflect Silverstri’s (2019) trepidation about relying on numbers of diverse officers as a measure of organizational success. A numeric focus on diversity, as well as assuming officers have transformative potential simply by virtue of their status in a particular group is a strategy that is unlikely to lead to meaningful equality of opportunity in policing (Silverstri, 2019). In the present study, Silverstri’s position is

perhaps best exemplified by the perspective of Chief 6, who felt that the need to create more diversity throughout an organization and, more specifically, within the leadership ranks, cannot be effectively accomplished through a blind focus on identity at the expense of leadership skills and abilities. Supporting Silvestri's (2019) findings, Chief 6 believed that such an approach could ultimately create new issues for the organization:

“And you really need to make sure when it comes to that when you're having any kind of diversity that you're actually moving forward the right people. And what I mean by that is people that seem to be organizational leaders because if you're just promoting to increase numbers and proportions and stuff like that it gets to be seen as tokenism and it creates new issues that you didn't have before.”

Chief 6's concern is supported by the literature. Wieslander (2019, as cited in Silvestri, 2019) discovered in her analysis of police diversity strategies in Sweden that an overt focus on individuals' minority identity and the wider promotion of diversity can create a backlash in which minority officers are viewed as being hired or promoted because of politically correct goals, rather than on their individual merits, leading some to question their competence, which, in turn, may undermine their legitimacy. Such an approach can also place an unnecessary burden on minority group members to be beacons and symbols of diversity, “bringing something not only ‘different’ to the job but a responsibility to bring something ‘better’” (Silvestri, 2019:” p. 110). Avoiding this outcome is at the core of Chief 15's perspective which highlighted the need to avoid tokenism through an approach he characterized as ‘diversity with merit’:

“Is it important to have that diversity piece? In my hiring, I can tell you that when I came to this province, they talked about the diversity piece and here's what I said to them: ‘I appreciate that's important to you, but I'm not gonna do that for the sake of tokenism. It's gonna be diversity with merit.’ And we started to really just do proper hiring and you know what? It has taken care of itself. It really is. So, we don't need to force it anymore because, I think, we have enough qualified people at those levels.”

The key for Chief 15 is that a merit-based approach that is fair and equitable will create diversity within the ranks, while not being achieved at the expense of capable and qualified leadership. Chief 12 echoed this point, stating that, “We need confident and competent individuals, not just because they hit a check mark either though.” As did Chief 2, who said, “It's not about giving a job because the tick a box. It's providing opportunity to a lot of people in our organization.” While there is considerable evidence that indicates that minority groups do bring improved outcomes, there is also evidence of

the opposite, namely, that women fail to bring difference or, in some cases, demonstrate less care and are more controlling than their male colleagues (Dick et al. 2014). There are also significant risks when individuals visibly associated with diversity and equality issues are ineffective or fail to fulfill their duties (Sanadjian, 2016). The research literature and the observations of the chiefs in the present study suggest that caution should be exercised in focusing solely on a person's identity.

Diversity of Thought and Experience

A related issue is that it can be easy for police chiefs and organizations with a diversity lens to fall into the trap of essentializing women, LGBTQ2+, and racial and ethnic groups into single categories, and therefore failing to acknowledge the diversity that exists between and amongst these groups and the individuals within them. In this sense, participants believed that the consideration of diversity in succession planning and leadership development should go beyond the more traditional meaning associated with the visible and embodied aspects of diversity, to a position that encourages a focus on introducing diversity of thought and perspective into the ranks of police leadership. Several participants emphasized that ensuring a leadership group – and succession candidates – that is diverse in thought, belief and experience is as important of a consideration as gender and cultural diversity. As Chief 4 noted: “I believe in diversity in thought, diversity in thinking.” That is, while representation is important, having an executive that looks different from each other, but think the same and have similar experiences and philosophies, is not conducive to strong leadership. Comments by Chiefs 6, 14, and 16 best represent this perspective:

“I wanna look and see what diversity there is in terms of thought and experience and that sort of thing to make it stronger. And so, I think people understood that when the picks were ultimately made that it wasn't necessarily about individuals or about them, it was about the team.” [Chief 6]

“So, making sure that we do have equity, diversity, inclusion; we've got different voices at the table; we've got, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, language diversity. But it's not just about ethnicity and gender but also diversity of thought [and] diversity of life experience. You know, you could have someone that presents as a white male but they're Russian or Czech or Jewish or whatever it is. Just having all these different perspectives outside of, you know, me who's just, sort of, this plain Jane white male. I wanna have a huge diversity of experience across the board... So yeah, I'm looking at diversity of experience; I'm looking at equity, diversity, and

inclusion components; I'm looking at different voices at the table." [Chief 14]

"I consider diversity of thought, not diversity of ethnicity. When I think of inclusion, that's a different discussion. It's very important that we hire police leaders that accept diversity of thought within their organization." [Chief 16]

Chief 7 contended that most discussions of diversity in policing tend to focus on race and gender; yet for him, a true focus on diversity means incorporating gender and racial diversity with diversity of thought and experience. In elucidating his point of view he recalled his previous agency's approach to increasing diversity and representation, explaining that simply increasing the numbers of a particular racial group within the agency (in this case Indigenous officers) did little to change the organization or its relationship with the community:

"So, diversity is usually going down to race and a lot of police services usually focus on race. A lot of them focus on gender. But race, gender and thought combined mean that blends real life experience with education, you know, with gender, with race and I think that's critical. So, I'm gonna give you an example. In [my previous service], a smaller police service – obviously a lot smaller [than here] – there was a high Indigenous population. We ran a program, and we actually became representative of our community. Forty-seven percent Indigenous I think was where we got to. It was only thirty-nine [percent] or something on the ground in the community. That didn't change anything." [Chief 7]

Herein lies the delicate, and potentially fraught, path that police leaders face in attempting incorporate diversity into leadership development and succession planning. Chiefs' responses here indicate that leaders believe that diversity should be a key component of succession planning processes; however, how it is incorporated into these processes is complex and requires a nuanced approach. Despite the complexities involved, communities expect police services – and their leaders – to become more representative, and there is ample evidence that women and ethnic minorities have the potential to bring improved outcomes.

Although police services remain under representative of communities they serve, policing is becoming a more diverse profession, and this should be reflected in the composition of police executives. As more women, LGBTQ2S+, and cultural and racial minorities enter policing there will be increased expectations that pathways into leadership will be inclusive and equitable. This does appear to be happening, particularly with women. Recent data on police personnel in Canada reveal that the proportion of

women serving as non-commissioned (e.g., sergeants and staff sergeants) and commissioned officers (e.g., inspectors, superintendents, deputy chiefs, and chiefs) is increasing. According to Statistics Canada, from 2019-2021 the number of female commissioned officers rose, with women accounting for 18% of all commissioned officers in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021). This represents the highest number of female commissioned officers since data on sex were first collected in 1986 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Although the interviews revealed that police leaders are prioritizing diversity as part of their leadership development and succession planning processes, and despite the progress being made with women, the reality is that police executive positions in Canada continue to be occupied primarily by white males. In the present study, participants attributed this to several reasons, with the primary barrier being police culture, as well as the ways in which police services traditionally approach leadership development and succession. Participants believed that the intersection of culture, policy, and process have created barriers to diversifying leadership, particularly as it relates to gender diversity.

Cultural and Structural Barriers to Diversification

The chiefs' belief that the police culture has hindered efforts at diversification is supported by research, which has found that, despite the growing proportion of women in policing, there remains an enduring hetero-sexist culture in the twenty-first century police services (Atkinson, 2017; Brough et al. 2016; Khanikar, 2016, Loftus, 2008). For example, Loftus (2008, as cited in Silvestri, 2019) has asserted that the traditional culture features including cynicism, suspicion, machismo, and a crime-fighting mindset remain central components of police culture. Similarly, Dick et al. (2013, as cited in Silvestri, 2019) has noted that negative of experiences of senior women officers employing transformative leadership styles are tied to neo-liberal practices that value quantifiable performance outcomes and are intolerant of processes that are viewed as soft or overly feminine. Loftus' (2008) position is best represented in the experience of Chief 12, who spoke about the negative response throughout the organization to her efforts to create increased leadership opportunities for women officers. She explained that it did impact some women officers' willingness to pursue opportunities, through an almost fear through association:

“So, there was a thought around the organization that “The Chief’s only promoting females because she is female.” I started a mentorship program here too for females and it was like, “You know why that’s happening.” You know, there was that old school, kind of, mentality and everything. And there’s some women that choose not to be part of that because they don’t want to be associated with the girls or just women. So, there’s still that culture here than needs to be addressed.”

Other chiefs suggested that the barriers existed in the systems of advancement within police organizations either disincentivized women from pursuing their leadership aspirations and/or created the conditions for overt and covert discrimination. Silvestri (2007, as cited in Silvestri, 2019) attributed this to the idea that attributes of so-called ‘competitive masculinity’, including the expectations that police leaders are expected to be tough, forceful, aggressive, competitive, and performance-driven, that are embedded in the promotion structures that determine career advancement. She adds it is in these structures “that dominant meanings about credibility, commitment, and competence that form the ‘ideal’ leader are enshrined” (Silvestri, 2019: p. 114). Chief 12, touched on this issue, noting that it was important for police services to examine the criteria they have established for qualifying for positions and to determine whether the criteria needed to be amended or updated:

“Like, the criteria associated with getting into some of those positions. Even when we look at the promotional system, what are we valuing? Like, as an organization, what are we putting down as a criteria? So, that’s one of the things we’re looking for in our systemic review. Are the criteria reflective of a modern organization now?”

In the present study, the responses of several chiefs were reflective of Turnball and Wass’ (2015) suggestion that, built into the archetype of the ideal police leader, is the concept of “doing time” in both every day and over the course of the police career. For example, Chief 1 spoke of how an experience with a woman officer that highlighted this issue:

“It is important, as I learned from a female, even at the sergeant level. You know, people think differently. And they look at things differently. I use this is a quick example. I had a female who I wanted to get on the path to promotion because she was really good. I had worked with her; she had worked with me, but she had never applied for a promotion. And I wanted to know why. So, I brought her in, and we went for a coffee, and I said to her, ‘Why aren’t you doing this?’ And she said, ‘My husband works, I work, and I still have the responsibility for the house. He doesn’t cook, he doesn’t clean, he doesn’t deal with the kids. And if I wanna be a sergeant, I have

to understand the extra commitments you want me to do because of this. Not that I think I can't do it.' She goes, 'It's just not a priority for me. My family is my priority.' She was like, 'I know you guys all think, that's it, my wife will take the kids to skating and dance and do all this.' She said, 'No, that's actually my responsibility.' So, I actually promoted her. But that was the first eye-opening discussion where I had to say, 'Yeah I kept looking at this from my perspective, which is, I can sacrifice everything cause don't worry my wife will take care of getting the kids to bed tonight.' She opened it up and I had to look at it differently."

The life circumstances of some policewomen create a situation where they are either compelled to prioritize family over career, split their time between family and career, or expend more effort than their male counterparts to fulfill their professional responsibilities. The inherently masculine or male-centric police culture has historically been unable (or unwilling) to recognize this reality, which has placed a limit on opportunities for women to advance or has discouraged women from seeking higher-level positions in police services. Several participants commented on this:

"Well recently, I think gender is a big one. We've been really actually trying to get more female leaders into the pipeline, and we've had a little bit of trouble doing it...Quite frankly, for some [women officers] they've got families and that sort of thing. There's good and valid reasons why they don't wanna step forward."

"I think the ability for some of the women in your organization to shine because, I mean, a lot of those people went part time, you know, they've raised a family and, not penalized, but they certainly haven't had the opportunities. I think that's a barrier." [Chief 7]

"So, for example, generally speaking the trajectory of a woman in policing is delayed always by about five years because generally during that time, they have children, which puts them into the maternity leave." [Chief 10].

"And when you come up through the ranks at every level there's another barrier in there. So, when you talk about women in policing, another barrier. Most senior folks in most organizations, most chiefs have gone through the investigative side of some sort. You know, there's lots of women that don't want to do that. They don't want to work surveillance. They've got family, they've got people at home. It's just not advantageous to them. So, you need to find a process that allows for that." [Chief 11]

"And it is quite challenging when you're raising children and we have a lot of single parents too that are trying to raise children and progress in their careers and everything. So, that can be quite challenging." [Chief 12]

"Lifestyle is a barrier. It's why it can be a challenge to promote women. Women want to have a family and then miss out on opportunities within the system to become a viable candidate. So, we need to make sure that these

system barriers are not in place. Our current systems are designed to exclude rather than include and we need to eliminate that in our succession planning.” [Chief 16]

These perspectives support the view that cultural prescriptions of police leadership are rooted in the expectation of a full time and uninterrupted career profile, even though there is nothing officially prohibiting leaders from having worked part-time or taken time off while rising through the ranks (Silvestri, 2019). This is because undertaking part-time or flexible working arrangements run counter to cultural ideas of the ideal police leader, with part-time officers risking being perceived as less professional and less committed to the agency (Silvestri, 2019).

The above comments highlight the irony that the very structural changes designed to improve equality, such as paid maternity leave as well as part-time and flexible working patterns, may have functioned to facilitate and obstruct women seeking promotion to leadership ranks. The prevailing expectation that executives dedicate excessive amounts of time to the job (Turnball and Wass, 2015) works against women because, due to the issues noted above, they are often unable to meet the demands of “doing time” within policing and, subsequently, are challenged to be perceived as authentic members of the leadership professional class (Dick, 2015, as cited in Silvestri, 2019). Chief 15 articulated this point in discussing barriers to leadership for women officers:

“Women, certainly, there’s a disparity. Women make up 52%, so we know that’s there. But I also...I was just talking with somebody about this this morning, when you look at the environment within policing, the number of hours we think someone at that level has to work, and I said very clearly to this woman, “You don’t have to do it the way guys have always done it.” We need to shift the culture, the expectations, the environment.”

Finally, Chief 9 described how having a woman in a leadership position can play an important role in helping other policewomen to navigate the barriers – both tangible and perceived – that they encounter in the promotion process. In addition to serving as an example or role-model, he credited the current deputy chief in his police service as being a sounding board and mentor for aspiring women leaders in the department, helping to assuage or ease some of the fears that are possibly keeping them from seeking promotion:

“So, I’m fortunate that I have deputy here and she has, you know, gone and spoken to different women who we know are very strong leaders and, kind of, been able to address some of their fears. You know, a lot of them have pressures of family and children and that burden weighs heavier on them sometimes than men. So, she is able to provide her experience, which I’m happy about. You know, I know she has a lot of people coming to her door, you know, asking her for advice. I think that’s really beneficial.”

The responses of the chiefs suggest that police leaders may be becoming more attuned to the cultural and structural barriers for women officers. However, the sentiment expressed by Chief 3 that, “Until I really heard it from a female Inspector that I promoted, you don’t fully grasp it,” and mentioned by several other participants suggests that there is much work to be done. The fact that participants had been largely unaware of these issues until they had become leaders and were able to promote women officers, is indicative of the perseverance of the features of police culture. Little is known of the impact of police culture and structure on the opportunities for advancement of LGBTQ2S+ and ethnic/cultural minority officers (Silvestri, 2019), although there are concerns about the presence of unconscious bias and other obstacles for officers aspiring to higher-level positions. Chief 10 noted, “there’s much work to be done on racialized [leadership] and the visibility of [racialized] police leaders” And Chief 13 offered:

“I don’t think we ever will be [in a better place] until we have a better understanding of what systemic racism is and these kinds of barriers that are in place that prevent people from succeeding. I mean, I’ll be the first to admit I don’t fully understand it. I don’t think anyone does.”

Yet, beyond creating barriers for diverse leadership candidates, organizational culture and existing structures of progression may also make it more difficult for cultivating and encouraging diversity of thought. This concern was expressed by Chief 7 who felt that the features of police culture often undermined the values of officers of diversity, including diverse life experiences, in part due to the imposition of police cultural values, but also through promotional processes that value a particular career path and particular set of experiences. Chief 7 believed that current processes invariably create ideological and experiential homogeneity, undermining the potential benefits that recruiting a diverse and representative workforce can bring:

“So, promotion is don’t promote everybody the same. Like, traditionally, police services, most of them go through the same promotional process and they look at their career and they spend so much time in public

complaints, you spend so much time in patrol, so much time in a major crime squad. Why? They're all gonna be the same. So, it's critical to success but only if you have a broad definition. Now the problem is, that's what we do in recruiting. What we gotta stop doing is de-programming them to being a cop. So, I think the problem isn't so much now on the recruiting side, but it's almost like we need to download their brains while what we're trying to do is take all that diversity away from them to be, kind of, just a good cop and we gotta start protecting against taking all that away."

The cultural and structural barriers that exist within contemporary policing, must be addressed by police leaders to create a more diverse pool of leadership candidates. This means that leaders must not only consider diversity as a component of their succession plans, but they must also make an active effort to eliminate (or develop creative solutions to) the inherent disadvantages that are present in current structures, as well as work to change a police culture that remains hetero-sexist and exclusionary to both women, LGBTQ2S+, and minority officers. As Chief 12 stated, this means looking inward in a systemic manner to identify and examine the specific issues within the organization that create barriers to advancement:

"As the policing industry right now is looking at systemic reviews and we are doing one here, and part of our systemic review isn't just reviewing policy, but it's what barriers to we have in place that are preventing people – whether they are visible minorities or sexually or gender diverse – do we have systems that are preventing them from moving forward, whether it be real or perceived?"

Although it is important that police services continue to make proactive efforts to recruit officers from diverse backgrounds, there is no guarantee that these efforts will produce a more diverse group of police leaders. Implementing a succession plan that fails to account for these cultural and structural barriers is likely to perpetuate the status quo in Canadian police leadership. How police leaders overcome these barriers will likely vary, but Chief 5 suggests leaders may need to "break a few eggs":

"So, we're just currently doing a big move that would allow us to move people around into positions considering succession for gender, considering succession for diversity and considering how we prepare people for the next level. It has to be very deliberate though and sometimes it breaks some eggs unfortunately."

Other chiefs suggested that police leaders need to make a concerted effort to "create opportunities" for officers from these historically underrepresented groups. As Chief 10 explained:

“... but it takes a lot of work to get there, and it takes a lot of development. So, what I realized was, you know, the succession piece was important for me cause I realized, for example, one of my deputies, she didn’t have the same opportunities. So, I had to reach in deep and provide opportunities for her... You know, the number that I look at is we have four female police leaders in Canada that are leading agencies and I think it’s an important part of what we [need to] do. So, it’s incumbent upon people like myself and [other major city] chiefs to open doors to the future because we actually have the authority and the power and the privilege... So, I think it has to be in the plan. Like, in any succession plan equity and inclusion must be a part of it and we must provide the same opportunities for all.” [Chief 10]

Similarly Chief 6 maintained that it in addition to providing opportunities, it is important to provide support and to create a supportive environment for people that have faced barriers, both real and perceived, so they can feel confidence in themselves as well as confidence that they will be treated fairly and equitably. Central to this approach is engaging with members of these groups and gaining insight into the challenges that they are dealing with and what they view as barriers to advancement. He stated that:

“So, just spending that time coaching and mentoring and encouraging and helping people see that we see them in that profile and that they should step forward and they can be supported, and that the environment would be supportive... So, I think it’s incumbent upon us to be talking to people about what are the barriers to actually keep you from having interest in moving forward, assuming you were. And for the females too, where it isn’t family related and sometimes its confidence related, it’s having those conversations about, so what would help to get you there? And sometimes it’s a bit more sponsorship than mentorship, and sometimes it’s more training. And whatever it is, to afford those opportunities to help increase confidence.”

In other cases, it may take a more radical or creative approach to develop more representation at the leadership level and the succession pipeline. This may involve looking externally to identify and hire people who could be potential successors, particularly if the organization has developed a diverse leadership pipeline and lacks representation in its internal candidate pool.

A more radical option, proposed by Chief 11, is to essentially circumvent current processes and develop a direct entry process, along the lines of the College of Policing’s program in the United Kingdom (College of Policing, 2021). This program allows external candidates to laterally enter policing at the executive ranks, typically inspector and superintendent positions. Chief 11 believed that, in the current context and based on current demographics in policing, it would take too long to increase representation in

police leadership through conventional recruiting and promotion. He argued that direct entry would be necessary to overcome this and accelerate the process:

“If you don’t have a direct entry process at multiple levels it’s gonna take generations to build diverse leadership cause it’s too slow to come up through the ranks...If you start it at inspector, they’ll have two years to build up and potentially become the chief one day. But there has to be other ways of doing that cause your pool has to be so large – if you do the math – at the front-end constable position – you’d have to hire strictly diverse people for the next ten years in order for them to get to superintendent if they work their way up.”

Chief 11’s position was an outlier among the chiefs. Most seemed to believe that as police services continued recruiting and hiring more diverse officers, eventually the leadership ranks would become more representative and would be more reflective of the growing diversity in frontline policing. While acknowledging that such a strategy requires patience, the underlying sentiment here is that if police services prioritize diversity in hiring at the front end (i.e., frontline patrol), diversity will invariably increase at the back end (i.e., the police executive). This perspective is evident in the following selected comments:

“The other thing is, we need to recruit people into our police departments from many of these communities including women. Because if you’ve only got a small, small, small percentage [of diverse officers], you know, not everyone’s gonna be interested in being promoted...It can’t happen overnight by the way. We gotta hire more people from those communities and then it takes them a while where they can even compete and then get promoted and move up the ranks. So, we need to be committed to the process and not think it has to happen overnight.” [Chief 4]

“That’s a really good question because it’s not like you step into a role, wipe the slate clean, fire ninety percent of people, and say, “Well okay, I’m gonna start filling it again.” But I think there’s a few fundamental things that we have to do as an organization. And one of the things is we have to put our attention on diversity for the organization. So, we’ve come up, we’ve, kind of, re-jigged our recruiting strategy to find ways to do more proactive outreach to, especially, marginalized, diverse communities in our policing world that we would like to see reflected in our hiring in our police service.” [Chief 8]

“Our recruits that we are seeing now are diverse in languages, religion and gender. It’s going to take a while before you see that filter throughout the whole organization, but that has been part of our strategy. So, we need to see diversity at all levels, and it just have to be on the sworn side...Do we need to do better? Yes, but it takes time for that to happen. I agree with

what you're saying in that "It's coming. It's coming. It's coming," but it's almost like you need a full generation for it to happen." [Chief 12]

"We started to really just do proper hiring and you know what? It has taken care of itself. It really is. So, we don't need to force it anymore because, I think, we have enough qualified people at those levels...Here's where I say there's enough people of colour and women who naturally are there now. They've been in the pipeline, they've developed. You watch what's gonna happen in the next year or two or three in policing. You're gonna see a lot more. So, we're there. We're definitely there." [Chief 15]

Although there was a lack of consensus among the chiefs on the best approach to increasing diversity, it is evident that they are vested with significant authority, power, and responsibility to shape the composition of police leadership now and into the future. The responsibility for creating a more representative class of leadership rests largely on the shoulders of the current generation of police leaders, which may be cause for concern given the relative homogeneity of that group. It will also require leaders to confront the very systems that likely enabled their ascension in first place.

As police leaders play a significant role in identifying potential chief candidates, the final decision rests with police boards and commissions who also bear some responsibility for the lack of diversity in police leadership across the country. If increasing representation in police leadership is truly a priority for police boards and commissions, they have the power to do so. Although the continued homogeneity of police leadership can certainly be attributed by failures of police services and chiefs to succession plan, many boards and commissions continue to hire leaders with similar demographics. In describing his experience with his previous police department, Chief 1 highlighted this issue, noting that in his jurisdiction the police board hired the internal, white male, succession candidate even though there were three external women candidates who, in his opinion, were more qualified:

"I'll give you a recent example. In the competition at one agency [in this jurisdiction], there were four finalists for the job. Three were female, one was male. Three females had degrees. Had proven resumes. On paper, in a blind test, all three of them would have scored higher on their resumes [than the male]. I know that from an inside source. The police board selected the white male. So, how does the system encourage people who are qualified to apply when boards aren't even willing to make a decision based on a true competition? And too often that is left to the [chief candidate] that, 'Well we want you, but you should hire a female as like a deputy or inspector.' And I just don't buy it."

The Role of Police Boards & Commissions in Succession Planning

A key theme that emerged from interviews was the role that police boards and commissions play in leadership succession and succession planning. Recall from Chapter 2, municipal police boards and commissions govern most municipal police services in Canada (Caul, 2009). “Empowered by a provincial police act, boards are typically responsible for directing policy, hiring the chief constable, and managing the budget, the largest operational expenditure of most cities” (Caul, 2009, p.1). Given that a core component of the broad mandate of police boards and commissions in Canada is hiring the chief of police and, in some cases, the deputy chief(s) (see Ontario) (Canadian Association of Police Boards, 2006, as cited in Caul, 2009) they are inextricably linked to the succession planning process. The selection of the chief constable is arguably the most important decision a board can make (LaLonde & Kean, 2003). While the expectation is that police boards and departments will work together to identify future police leaders, little is known about the role police boards play in succession planning across the country. A review of municipal police governance in British Columbia, (LaLonde and Kean, 2003) found that few boards devoted time to planning for the departure of the chief constable until the months immediately preceding the event.

In the present study, the findings from interviews with the chiefs revealed that, while police boards and commissions are becoming more attuned to the importance of succession planning, there remains considerable variability in the extent to which boards are involved in succession planning, their knowledge of succession planning, their knowledge of and ability to recognize the skills, attributes, and competencies of a strong police leader. In the view of the chiefs, board involvement is influenced by a myriad of factors including jurisdiction, board composition, the board’s relationship with the current chief constable, and how the board understands its mandate. This is further complicated by the complex political environment in which contemporary policing is situated. The inconsistency in board involvement in succession mirrors the general inconsistency in police services’ succession planning processes across the country.

Boards as Bystanders or Active Participants

All chiefs acknowledged that police boards and commissions have a role to play in succession planning, primarily since they are responsible for hiring the chief constable. That power alone means that boards are inextricably linked to succession and leader selection. Chief 10 noted that “the board fundamentally has to be a part of [succession planning],” while Chief 3 echoed this sentiment stating that, “It’s huge. They have a huge role in succession planning. You can’t avoid it.” However, there were divergent views as to the nature of that involvement and the degree to which boards are or should be involved in the succession process. For example, Chief 16 stated that while boards are “supposed to consider succession of the next Chief,” in practice they are not necessarily well-equipped to do this.

How the chiefs felt about the level of involvement that boards should have in succession planning was, in part, a microcosm of the ambiguity surrounding the scope of police boards’ mandate, and their role in policy development. The more traditional view (Sossin, as cited in Ellis, 2014: p. 3) would conceptualize boards as having a more “arm’s length” or oversight role in succession planning, while a more radical view would suggest that boards should play a more active role in succession planning.

Most chiefs in this study held a largely traditional view of police boards, suggesting that boards should play more of an oversight role in succession planning. The participants felt that succession planning should be a priority for police boards, but that their primary role was to monitor the tenure of the executive, to ensure that the chief was implementing a succession plan, to provide oversight of the development and implementation of the succession plan, and to hold the chief accountable for achieving the goals of that succession plan. This perspective is reflected in the comments of several of the chiefs:

“So, I think that’s, kind of, where the board’s responsibility is. To keep an eye on the tenure of the senior management team and, kind of, who’s available if there is a need...So, the board has to be aware of it and then start holding the chief accountable to the succession plan.” [Chief 2]

“I think that police boards do [have a role] because, ultimately, they still have overall governance over a police department, not just financial governance. They set the strategic direction through consultation with the

chief and staff. So, I think that the boards do have a role to play in this.” [Chief 4]

“What I can tell you my experience has been is my board, every year, do an evaluation of me and one of the things that they ask me to provide them an update on is succession planning. While they are only responsible for hiring and firing the chief of police, they have a real keen interest and, I think, force me to think about [succession planning]. So, knowing that, I’m going to get asked that question in the fall of every year, I think about it year-round, and it often permeates discussion that we have from a human resources standpoint. Even if, nothing else, it’s just something to be aware of going forward.” [Chief 8]

“They have a governance role. They don’t have an operational role, but their governance role is about providing adequate and effective police service, and to do that you need to have the leaders in the organization to lead. It’s a regular conversation. We usually provide, before we go into budgets, we always provide a human resource strategy update.” [Chief 12]

While this governance and oversight function of boards does provide an opportunity to participate in the succession planning process, there is no indication of the extent to which boards are aware of this role, functionally take on this role, or even consider leadership succession. According to Chief 15, boards are generally unaware of the scope of their role in that, “I think, most boards, when they get there, they think about the budget and finances. That’s what they see their role as.”

As previously noted, in their review of municipal police boards in BC, LaLonde & Kean, (2003) found that few boards reported taking the time to discuss or plan for the eventual departure of the chief, something that Chief 3 mentioned: “I don’t know if they recognized the need for succession planning until they’re actually in the midst of a chief search.” Consequently, if “a chief constable should for some reason depart suddenly, boards may find themselves scrambling to fill a void (LaLonde & Kean, 2003: p. 139). Such a situation was described by Chief 10 in which his board only became alive to the importance of succession planning when the previous chief departed abruptly, leaving them scrambling to find a successor:

“Our board got interested in succession planning because there was a sudden departure. Even though they didn’t really love the chief before me, they weren’t expecting him to quit. So, it put them into this, “Holy shit he quit!”.” [Chief 10]

Several chiefs noted that there appeared to be much variability both within provinces and across the country with respect to the level of board engagement in and

familiarity with succession planning. Some boards were aware of it and assume an oversight and monitoring role, while others, as LaLonde and Kean (2003) found, are largely disengaged. This variation is not surprising given that the provincial laws and government directives that outline the specific roles and responsibilities of police boards vary from province-to-province (Hayes, 2001). In jurisdictions where the board is not focussed on succession planning, and thus, not providing the necessary oversight and monitoring, they come to depend heavily on the chief, creating a situation where they must scramble for a successor if the out-going chief did not have a succession plan in place or rubber-stamping the successor selected by the out-going chief. Several of the chiefs expressed the opinion that boards can be too deferential to the chief and become beholden to whatever succession plan they have implemented. In this respect, Chief 1 was particularly critical of police boards stating, "Boards to me, I give them a failing grade. I think they defer too much to the chief. They don't even provide the perspective as to what it is they're looking for." Chief 15 echoed this sentiment, stating that "A lot of boards don't own their authority. They just rubber-stamp what the chief says."

The perspective of Chiefs 1 and 3 are illustrative of one of Knoll's (2005, as cited in Caul, 2009) categories of police boards, referred to as the "cops are tops" relationship. In relationships of this nature, boards tend to defer to the chief, which invariably leads to chiefs "leading their boards by their noses" (Griffin, 2006 p.21, as cited in Caul, 2009, p.43). An extension of this was described by Chief 5 who explained that, while boards "think about" succession, they have largely placed the responsibility on the chief to develop and implement succession planning. In his experience the boards have tended to keep themselves at a distance:

"My experience with police boards is they think about it. You know, I've always said [to the board] that one of my goals is to provide you with an internal [chief] candidate and you can look external as well. If I go to the table when the next chief is getting hired and we don't have an internal candidate, then I haven't done my job. I have said that from the start. So, the board support that but it isn't on their radar to develop that. Meaning it's left with me."

It does seem that police leaders have acknowledged this responsibility, as evidenced by the fact that all chiefs in this study believed that a key responsibility for them is to develop at least one viable succession candidate prior to their departure, with most participants agreeing that chiefs should be developing a cadre of future leadership

candidates. The prevailing sentiment among participants was that while boards ultimately decide who the next chief will be, it was up to the current chief to provide them with an option or options. Chief 8 summed this up, stating:

“I do think there is room, if you’re comfortable in doing it, in making a recommendation to the board. I do think that that would be healthy because you know the people, internally anyway, you know the people better than anyone. So, I would hope the board would take that into consideration. But I think I have control right now. So, let’s say I’m gonna be here another three years, four years. I can do work in the next four years that helps illustrate to the board who should be the next chief by giving them the opportunity to do presentations in front of the board; by highlighting work that they’re doing; by giving them projects and opportunities that basically, kind of, build the story and tell that story that when that chapter needs to get written, the board is in a position to write it having some strong knowledge about the skills and attributes of the people that they’re making a decision about.”

Chiefs noted that some boards are more involved in the succession process. However, even in these instances, the degree of engagement tended to remain limited to an oversight and policy guidance role, as opposed to providing input into the development of specific succession policies. For chiefs who characterized their board as being more engaged in succession, this involvement was cited as more the exception than the rule. That is, there was no sense from the chiefs that the level of engagement their boards displayed was similar in other jurisdictions or even the norm within their respective provinces:

“I can tell you here, my board here is very interested in that. And so, I have to – once a year, and usually around the time that we do performance evaluations and that sort of thing – we end up going through how we’re sitting in terms of succession planning for senior leadership. Both at the chief level as well as the deputy level. They tend not to go too far below that because things open up and would probably be okay, I would think. But they wanna know how I’m preparing the next generation of leaders. [Chief 6]

“What I can tell you my experience has been, is my board, every year, do an evaluation of me and one of the things that they ask me to provide them an update on is succession planning. While they only are responsible for hiring and firing the chief of police, they have a real keen interest and, I think, force me to think about that. So, knowing that I’m going to get asked that question in the fall of every year, I think about it year-round, and it often permeates discussion that we have from a human resources standpoint and, even if nothing else, it’s just something to be aware of going forward.” [Chief 2]

‘Yeah, I think it really is dependent upon the board. What I can tell you my board is pretty progressive that way. We have an HR specialist on the board who, unfortunately, is just leaving but she was very tuned in to wanting to know what our succession plan was, you know, at all ranks – from sergeant, staff sergeant, inspector, and deputy.’ [Chief 9]

“I can’t say that other boards have that expertise, so I was fortunate. And the board has been very supportive too. So, I was fortunate. I don’t know if other boards would have that expertise or knowledge to say, ‘Yeah, that is the right thing to do.’” [Chief 12]

Boards, Chiefs, and Succession Planning

One of the key benefits having a board that is engaged and prioritizes involvement in leadership succession is that it compels police services and executives to make succession planning a priority. Several chiefs felt that when a board prioritizes succession planning and provides clear direction on what they expect from the chief in implementing it, then police leaders must, at least, consider it. As Chief 2 noted above, the fact that his police board, as part of their yearly evaluation, requested an update on succession planning, has compelled him to devote time to it and make it part of the agency’s human resources strategy. In his First Nations police service, Chief 13 explained that the commission built a requirement into his employment contract that he would provide the proper mentoring, coaching, and training to maximize the likelihood that his successor would be Indigenous and that this would be tied to his performance evaluation. This ensured that he would develop and implement a comprehensive succession strategy.

Further, if both the chief and board are engaged in the succession planning process in more of a partnership, then the input of the chief in the selection of their successor may be quite significant, and their input may weigh heavily in the board’s ultimate hiring decision. A prime example of this process is highlighted by Chief 9. In his case he was hired externally as a deputy chief by the existing chief who informed the board that he was being hired as a potential successor. After a period as the deputy chief, in which he spent time becoming familiarized with both the agency and the board, Chief 9 was hired as the successor to the out-going chief. As he explained:

“So yeah, here I came to [this department]. As you know, it was, kind of pre-ordained...not pre-ordained, but I would be potentially the successor for the chief. That the chief would have the opportunity to mentor and train

me...The previous chief was very good that way. In this case, the board doesn't technically have oversight with the deputy and anyone below. They have oversight with the chief. So, because the chief recognized that I would be someone he'd mentor and put forward as a possible candidate to be chief, the board was very engaged."

While this can be seen as an example of a chief and an engaged board working collaboratively to identify a successor, it also illustrates the considerable level of influence that a chief can have on the board's decision-making process, particularly if the chief has a "friendly" relationship with the board, as Chief 16 suggested. Taken to the extreme, it can lead to a scenario in which the existing chief is, for all intents and purposes, anointing the next chief and the board is simply "rubber stamping" that selection, particularly if a board is more predisposed to selecting a leader based on comfort or familiarity rather than skillset, competencies, or organizational fit, as several participants believe. Consequently, if this is a common practice, then it means that boards are putting a significant degree of faith in police leaders to be able to identify capable, progressive future leaders. As Chief 1 cautioned, this raises some important questions about who chiefs are identifying as their successor:

"Even within a large agency, the identification of the next chief is probably being done by the current chief than it is by the police board or mayor. And maybe they're relying on his opinion, but more of it is coming from [the current chief]. And then the question is, are they looking to mirror themselves or to be completely different? Should the next one be someone who is, because of today's times, should be community focused, should be a female, should be this...And, if so, do they have that within their organization? So, I think you also have to identify what the organization needs at that moment and that time."

This dynamic ultimately places a tremendous amount of pressure on police boards and commissions to hire a chief that is aware of the importance of succession planning but will also develop a strong and capable group of successors. A point, Chief 6 raised in discussing his relationship with the board re succession planning:

"Certainly, I think it has a little bit to do as well though with the police chiefs that you hire because I've certainly understood...like, when I went to [my previous agency] I made that part of my job. I introduced that discussion to the commission and naturally they recognized that we should do that. So, I'm not sure if they would have brought it up, or if I just happened to bring it up first, but I think most police chiefs should see preparing the next generation as very much a key responsibility during their time there." [Chief 6]

This is particularly important in jurisdictions where the chief is responsible for hiring their deputies, and thus, has total influence over the hiring of their potential successor(s). If the chief is uninterested in succession planning, this can result in a situation described by Chief 10 in which the board finds itself having to scramble to find a replacement when a sudden departure occurs since the police service had no viable succession plan in place. Chief 6 added that if police boards hire a chief that is unconcerned with succession planning or hires/promotes poor leaders, then it can create significant inertia at the top, especially during times of leadership turnover and transition. In Chief's 6 opinion:

“Here, I hire my deputies and the contracts they have are with me. But if I am a leader who thinks that I'm the smartest person in the room, those people tend to actually hire weaker leaders below them because they actually feel like they don't need the support cause 'they got this.' So, what you'll, kind of, see is a cycle where you'll have a strong, charismatic leader and then that person will leave the organization and then the organization tends to flounder for a while because they weren't set up...I think commissions have to hire mature leaders who know that that's part of their role is actually prepare folks for the next generation, and for me that's either inside or outside of the organization.”

Although most chiefs acknowledged that implementing an executive succession plan should be top of mind for every in-coming chief, they indicated that this is not always the case. This situation is exacerbated by boards failing to provide the requisite direction and accountability. As such, a few chiefs stated that it was incumbent upon the chief to make the boards aware of their role and alert them to the importance of succession planning, as something they needed to be engaged in:

“I emphasized the importance of succession planning right from day one. Right from day one with the board because, I kind of intimated, that's not their area of expertise. They have a governance role. They don't have an operational role, but their governance role is about providing adequate and effective police service, and to do that you need to have the leaders in the organization to lead. It's a regular conversation. We usually provide, before we go into budgets, we always provide a human resource strategy update. We've provided the board training on a number of things. So, it's an ongoing thing.” [Chief 12]

“So, that process starts from day one. Actually, with the board, in my board interview to get the job, that was one of my things. Like, there's a series of interviews that you go through, and you end up getting short-listed and you end up having a final interview with the full board and the mayor. You have to do like a two [to] three-hour interview, and it includes a presentation

where you go through a PowerPoint that you prepare and, you know, talk about your vision and what are your priorities gonna be and what do you see for the future of the department, that kinda thing. So, I had, like, ten things that I went over at the time. These were my ten priorities that we need to focus on and one of them was succession planning. So, it was something that I brought up right away. The board still, like every year, they still hit me up every year and ask, "What are you doing with succession planning? Where are we at? What's the progress we've made?" So, I looked at it right from the first get go." [Chief 14]

These responses are illustrative of the perspective that police services, and by extension, police chiefs, are the gatekeepers of operational knowledge, and thus, as Caul (2009) argues, "Whereas the board may possess the legal responsibility for the performance of the organization, it is the organizations' management that possesses the infrastructure, knowledge, time, and the willingness to bear this responsibility" (p. 43).

However, Chief 15 noted that, given the complexity and demand of policing operations, it can be easy for police leaders to ignore the more administrative side of policing, including succession planning. He believed that an engaged board could assist police leaders in not falling behind on succession planning by making it a clear priority that they will be holding the chief accountable for implementing:

"As I said, it's the board responsibility to say, 'You know what? Two months from now we wanna see the strategic plan; we wanna see the succession plan,' and I think chiefs will get engaged. This is where the board can actually help the chief cause as busy as the operations will get, if I know that the board is asking me to account for this, you know what? We're actually gonna find some time to make sure it gets done. But if nobody's actually managing and asking, you know, it's not gonna get done."

The responses of the chiefs reveal that they are aware of the need for boards to play a role in succession planning, although there appears to be variability in how this role is operationalized. Some spoke about the requirement that chiefs work more collaboratively with boards in succession planning and have taken the initiative to increase the involvement of the board in human resource issues, including succession planning. For example, Chief 4 stated that his board has a sub-committee that works with him specifically on human resource issues:

"We have a human resources committee. So, it's called and HR committee of the board. So, it's a smaller group. We have an HR Chair, and we meet monthly as just the HR committee. And we're regularly briefing them on staffing issues; on injuries; on any HR issues...who we're hiring, what are

some of the challenges we're having. And so, we do talk about succession planning and collaboratively work with them and tell them, 'Here's what we're doing on the succession plan'."

In addition, Chief 9 explained that he has sought to involve his board in the hiring process for deputy chiefs because it is the position that is likely to produce a potential successor. He felt it was important to involve the board in the interview process to increase their engagement, as well as to provide an external, non-policing perspective in the process:

"For example, when we did our interviews for deputy chief, I asked that a board member be in on the interview for the deputy chiefs because, I think, for me what was important, and you've alluded to it, but you sometimes need that different voice...So, having an independent objective voice who is completely separate from the department in a way [is important]. So, in both of our most recent deputy hiring's, a police board member was part of it. Ultimately, I had the final say but I certainly relied heavily on their, you know, information that they provided."

Chief 7 spoke about what he viewed as an historical gap between boards and police leaders with chiefs either deliberately keeping their boards at a distance or boards deliberately keeping themselves at a distance. The result is that succession planning is often uncertain and predicated on whether the board likes the out-going chief. In recognizing this, he and the board have sought to bridge that gap and create more opportunities for enhanced collaboration in strategic planning, including on the issue of succession:

"So, what traditionally has been done a lot of times in police services, you tap one person on the shoulder and say, 'This is my succession plan.' Well, if they don't like you and they don't like me, they're not gonna like my succession plan. So, you need to give them options and you need to keep them posted along the way on what you're seeing on some of your development and get more people in front of them. We got them into our strategic planning process [and] they brought us into their strategic planning process. There's a novel idea. Why wouldn't you? I mean, although you come at it from different angles sometimes, you're still trying to get to the same place, which is the safety and well-being of the community."

Chief 7 described what Chief 15 referred to as the need for police boards and chiefs to have a "symbiotic relationship" in which both parties have common goals and a common understanding of what needs to be done to accomplish those goals. If the board does not take an active role in succession planning, this invariably decreases the

potential for police services to develop a strong executive succession plan and a strong pool of future leaders that are available when leadership change occurs. The relationships that the chiefs are describing mirror the recommendations that Justice Morden (2012, as cited in Ellis, 2014) made in his review of the Toronto Police Service's (TPS) actions during the 2010 G20 Summit. Considering the relationship between the TPS and the Toronto Police Services Board, Morden highlighted the need for a mechanism for information exchange between the board and chief on all subject matters (2012). He went on to note that the police service and the board need to "engage with one another as true partners in the delivery of policing services" (Morden, 2012: p. 100, as cited in Ellis, 2014, p. 8). This statement is very much in keeping with perspectives of Chiefs 7 and 15.

Despite the progress that has been made in some jurisdictions with respect to board involvement in succession planning, chiefs believed that the overall situation is mixed. Chief 3 cited the failure of police boards to appreciate the importance of their role regarding leadership succession while Chief 15 attributed boards' lack of engagement in succession planning to an inability to fully understand or realize their role, both in general and vis-à-vis leadership succession. Chief 15 felt that boards were not involved in succession planning due to a lack of understanding of their role and because they don't know that they need to:

"You know, I spoke to the CAPG [Canadian Association of Police Governance] two or three weeks ago and what I shared with them is what I'm saying to you. You need to understand your role and then you need to own it. And, succession planning, you should be asking the chief that question. I'm like, "that's your job." But a lot of boards don't know their roles and responsibilities because we haven't prepared them to actually do it."

These comments hit on a key theme that emerged in the interviews. Namely, that boards may lack the necessary knowledge and operational understanding of policing to be involved in substantive manner in leadership succession

The (In) Competence of Police Boards

As several chiefs suggested above, to effectively carry out their role, the board, and the chief work together as partners. A key question is whether boards have the necessary competence to communicate with the chief as a true partner and properly

execute their responsibility (Ellis, 2014). One major structural barrier to the effectiveness of boards in the private sector is that, even though boards have legal responsibility for the performance of an agency, they often operate at a knowledge or experiential deficit vis-à-vis the agency's management (Schepker, et al., 2018; LaLonde & Kean, 2003). Given some boards' somewhat rudimentary grasp of operational policing, it is difficult for them to identify and articulate the requisite competencies and skillsets required in a strong leadership candidate. Participants felt that while board members may have a good understanding of the characteristics of good leader in a general sense, they often lack the professional policing expertise – including understanding culture, business, and operations – to understand leadership in a policing context. Chiefs 5, 6, and 12 best articulated this sentiment:

“I don't think [boards] know what they're looking for. And, quite frankly, police boards are [not policing professionals or experts] and don't have the opportunities to spend the hundreds of hours that we do as police officers in the environment, understanding what's important and what isn't.” [Chief 5]

“So, the commission generally understands what leadership looks like and that sort of thing, but it's still hard unless you understand the police service and the internal culture and the business, which most people wouldn't because they're not from policing. You're still gonna have a gap there. So, they definitely understand what leadership looks like generally but whether or not they're enough in tune to figure out, you know, what it needs to look like in a police environment and, probably more importantly, what it needs to look like in a police environment right now...So, they don't have the experience of being able to look at what is important and what they think is important.” [Chief 6]

“We live it and are immersed in our culture and our industry; whereas, the boards, most are executive type individuals or representing the community, but they're not immersed in the police service like our vice chair, who became our chair, was.” [Chief 12]

Chiefs talked about the importance of board competence and the need for board members to have corporate and policing knowledge to be effective partners in succession planning and selecting effective police leaders. Chief 15, felt that police boards have largely shown that they lack the corporate and policing knowledge necessary to be able to foresee emerging future trends and challenges. His sense was that boards do not have the vision to recognize societal shifts, and thus, are not able to identify leaders that are best equipped to navigate those shifts or that meet the needs of

the organization and the community both now and moving forward, particularly in complex and challenging context policing currently finds itself in. For him:

“No. I really believe at this place and time...and again, it's very difficult for them as an entity to have that. They're coming from different backgrounds. Some have been there longer, others not. They really don't understand where society itself is going. I think, most boards when they get there, they think about the budget and the finances. That what they see their role as. That's why I'm saying the symbiotic nature of the relationship that we need to have, that you need to help this organization be the best it can be to the citizens and the chief as the leader. I don't think most boards are attuned to where we need to shift to make sure that we have that leader who is going to take police services and communities there. And again, this is not maligning them. I just don't think they've had the opportunity to actually sit down and, you know, kinda wrestle with some of these thoughts in a real supportive environment, because right now this massive shift is required.”

The chiefs identified several barriers that they felt impacted board competence, including jurisdiction size, selection criteria and appointment process, the political context, the presence and quality of training/education, and the quality of the relationship with the chief and executive. They believed that the presence and influence of these factors varies province to province and invariably creates variations in board competence, such as whether they understand the importance of succession planning and accept their role in working with chiefs to implement succession plans.

“So, it would be fair to say that there's different levels of proficiency in those commissions. And so, the reality of it is I don't think there's really standardized training for commissions and this type of thing. So, the reality of it is you're going to have differences in capacities.” [Chief 6]

“It varies. I would say [this one] had a way better understanding than I've ever encountered. I think, partially, they really went out to the community. They really did a lot of analysis. Even before they went down a path of posting the chief of police, they did a lot of work on what they wanted to get out of a new leader of a police service. So, I gotta give them credit for that. I don't think that's always the case.” [Chief 8]

“Yeah, no, I really don't believe...again, part of the system, which is quite broken is you have a board, but the board has no real accountability. Who's the board accountable to? I mean, any system like that where you can make decisions...and again, the poor board members are brought in and are not well-trained about, “Okay, here's what your role actually is. Here's what governance means.” There needs to be oversight of the boards to make sure there is real, effective, on-going, meaningful training to make sure they know what their roles are...I can tell you in my instance, I was the first chief in the city's history to sit on another board and, initially, I was

excited about it. Like, 'Bring on the board.' I can tell you, again, some of the board members understood what their roles were, but some just plainly didn't. So, I think we really need to, when you're bringing someone on the board, train them properly, help them to fully understand. So, I'm all for the board if we're doing the proper job of actually educating to understand what their role is. Right now, we don't." [Chief 15]

With respect to the competence of board members, the chiefs pointed to the lack of standardized selection criteria and training for board members across the country and the issues of political influence on the boards. This contributes to a lack of uniformity in the competencies of board members across the jurisdictions.

Several chiefs believed that the degree of board competence was heavily dependent upon board composition. If board members are not provided training in preparation for their role, they may not have the requisite skillset to effectively perform within it. Watson (2004, as cited in Caul, 2009) characterized this as the need for governments to select the "right people" to serve on boards of governance. Watson defined these persons as "having the competencies and personal attributes to effectively drive corporate performance and ensure integrity and accountability" (2004: p.1, as cited in Caul, 2019, p. 36).

For a few of the chiefs, the "right people" were persons with a professional experience in either the public or private sector, including physicians, lawyers, businesspersons, and corporate executives. Chiefs also noted the benefit of having a board member or members with experience in human resources, which was viewed as particularly helpful for succession planning. As quotes from Chiefs 2 and 12 demonstrate:

"I think they are prepared and well positioned to [play a role in succession planning] because they're all professionals in the community. So, from their own experience, they're professionals, they all have some professional designation. They're not just people off the street. They're literally selected for a skillset, and they come to the table with business acumen that will serve them well as a board member." [Chief 2]

"That's a tough one. So, I'm very fortunate. The chair of the board, currently, has ministry experience, has worked at an executive level – as a civilian – in a large police service before she came to the board. She's no longer with the ministry, she's no longer with a large police service, but she had significant experience behind her that was very helpful in supporting our HR strategy. She just had a lot of skills, knowledge, and ability. So, she knew processes for selection. I can't say that other boards have that

expertise, so I was fortunate. And the board has been very supportive too. So, I was fortunate. I don't know if other boards would have that expertise or knowledge to say, "Yeah, that is the right thing to do." [Chief 12]

In situations where the board does lack knowledge, the chief becomes the de-facto policing advisor to the board and, according to many of the chiefs, this extended to areas beyond operations, including succession planning and leader selection. Caul (2009) argued that this dynamic between boards and chiefs was common owing to the "significant gap in expertise between the board and its chief," which means that "boards are inherently reliant on the Chief" (p. 43). Nor is this phenomenon new to Canadian police governance, as Stenning (1981, as cited in Sheard, 2016) observed that the part-time and short-term tenure of police board members resulted in their having to depend on the chief for the resources and expertise necessary for policy development and oversight. This issue was highlighted by Chief 14 who explained that board turnover creates a knowledge vacuum that must often be filled by the chief, who may be required to educate the board on basic policing issues as well as more complex areas of oversight and policy:

"Even, like, in our board it changes over time. I've been through two mayors now and right at the end of the previous Mayor's term when he decided he wasn't gonna run again, our board was very senior. We have a nine-member board, and we had a lot of senior board members on there. They really knew the department well. They knew all of us well. They knew the policing business well... Then you'll have turnover, and you'll have a bunch of new members come on and then you get into an education process and it's like, okay, I had a board that understood this and now I've got the board asking me really basic policing [questions] like a criminology 101 class that you would teach. They're smart people, but it's just out of their frame of reference."

A further consequence of the lack of board expertise is that they may come to increasingly rely on familiarity and comfort in identifying a successor to the out-going chief. That is, their decision is based more on whether they have a personal level of comfort with the candidate (or the outgoing chief) – either in the interview phase or if they have developed a relationship with that person over time, and thus, feel that they will be easy to work with. Chief 1 argued that comfort and familiarity often trump other considerations in the selecting a successor to the out-going chief:

"Otherwise, I think they sit around, and police boards are making decisions based on familiarity and comfort versus skillsets. 'Oh, we like this person. We seem them at the board meeting every month. They're really nice. The

chief says they've been here for 35 years. They deserve the opportunity. Okay. It'll be good'."

A key concern here is that the selection is based on a rather surface level process that lacks the necessary rigour required to identify the most suitable candidates. Chiefs 5, 11, 12, and 16 noted the potential of boards to be dazzled by style over substance, as it were:

"Often, how someone looks on paper, how they present themselves with their oration skills, how they are able to articulate – in great detail sometimes – events that others would, you know, provide with very minimal detail but because they provide the great detail people think they're amazing." [Chief 5].

"The piece that's missing is the true character of the individual that you're interviewing. You'll get an individual that stands up there and is a good yapper as I call it. They'll say anything cause they know what you wanna hear and they can schmooze the police services board. Why? Because they don't do this every day. This is unique to them and, yes, they have a consultant on board, but the consultant doesn't have the final say and so on. So, that's where the true difference between a person with the skillset of a true visionary leader and someone that's focused on themselves. Because in the interview they ask you to talk about yourself, and when you're talking about yourself, you're talking in first person all the time. "I did this. I did that. I arranged that." Ninety percent [of the time] when someone says that it's someone else doing that work for them. They're not doing it themselves. I don't care what anybody says." [Chief 11]

"You know, we all know that some people can talk a beautiful game, but they can't do the job. Like, are you pulling the wool over their eyes? We live it and are immersed in our culture and our industry; whereas, the boards, most are executive type individuals or representing the community, but they're not immersed in the police service." [Chief 12]

"Very often a police commission will be easily wooed by a candidate because they come from a big city department or because they had a career that looks really good on paper. It's very much style over substance." [Chief 16]

Where boards are more apt to rely on comfort and familiarity, it may be more likely for the selection process to be influenced by the various politics and personalities of the moment. That is, boards may be subject to influence from various internal and external political factors, which could lead them to identifying a successor that is seen as politically safe rather than one that possesses the necessary competencies or has the best leadership profile. Chief 10 cited this as a key issue in certain cases, including his own selection:

“I’ll be very candid. In [this city] I was, politically, a safe decision for them. One, I had knowledge of the organization. Number two, they had knowledge of me. Number three is the board chair and the regional chair – who would have been the regional mayor – had intimate knowledge of who I was and felt that they could work with me and saw me as an ally. So, over the other candidates I already had a political edge because I, you know, was familiar. It doesn’t mean I was the most competent, Josh.”

Chief 11 went even further, arguing that, in his experience, the selection process is such that it fails to maximize the potential for boards to select strong leaders. The failure of boards to know what to look for and the inability to ask relevant questions, has created a context in which leadership candidates are able to navigate the process in a way that my obscure their deficiencies and emphasize their strengths. He believed that:

“The conventional way of interviewing chiefs is not the way. You have to look at things like...if you go in the military and you have a team in Iraq and this team is kicking in doors and they’re doing life and death situations every day, how would you find the best leader there? You’d ask the people that they work with every day. You’d ask them. How can you do that in the interview process for a chief? It’s very hard to do that. I betcha within [my previous agency] there’s ten people that moved on and became chiefs of police somewhere. Not one call did I get as the commissioner to ask me what that person’s all about. Because what you do is you give references and unless you’re a complete moron, you’re never gonna give a reference that tells the truth about you. You’re gonna give a reference that it’s all about how good you are. That’s not a true depiction. You want people to say, ‘He’s good at this,’ [or] ‘She’s terrible at that, but she’s gonna make a good leader because of that.’ That honesty is missing in the whole process.”

The chiefs’ responses highlight a key consequence of police boards’ leadership knowledge gap: the increasingly prominent role of executive search firms or “head-hunters” in identifying leadership candidates, particularly when seeking external succession candidates. This is consistent with the research of LaLonde and Kean (2003) who found there was a heavy reliance on external consultants by police boards to guide their leadership searches. In the present study, chiefs spoke about the fact that it is common for boards to employ search firms to essentially conduct the search for a successor on their behalf. Boards are apt to turn to external consultants because they are seen as being more well positioned to both articulate the desired knowledge, skills, and competencies of police chiefs and accurately identify a pool of candidates that meets those criteria. The prominence of external consultants in the selection of leadership candidates is exemplified by the fact that several chiefs mentioned their

presence. As Chief 9 mentioned, “You know, most everyone does now use an executive firm to go and hire that person and there’s a lot of reach out.” Other chiefs also cited the role of consultants including Chiefs 5 and 11:

“No. No, they certainly don’t know what makes a good police leader. You know, sometimes with a strong executive search firm they’re guided in a manner that helps them. They can help guide the board in, sort of, looking for what they have seen to be important for police chiefs. That doesn’t mean that the board might not have some different criteria, but I don’t think they know what they’re looking for.” [Chief 5]

“There’s a huge gap there because they only know what they know. So, what they’ll do is they’ll get an outside consulting company to come in [and] do the preliminary assessment. You know, I could write those reports in two seconds of exactly what they’re gonna say, they’re gonna do. It’s very, very basic from that perspective.” [Chief 11]

Given what participants have described regarding the deficiencies in boards’ policing knowledge and the possible flaws of the current interview process, boards’ having full control over the selection of the chief presents some inherent risk. Clearly some form of balance needs to be struck – the “symbiosis” that Chief 15 refers to – in which chiefs and boards can work collaboratively in the succession planning and leadership selection process. A key role of police leaders is leadership development and succession planning, their role in the process is inescapable; however, history suggests that, at least in some jurisdictions, boards have ceded too much control or influence to chiefs in this sphere, due to the failure to understand their role in succession planning and/or gaps in knowledge of operational policing and police leadership competencies. Police boards need to recognize that they have an important role to play in succession planning, but they also must be equipped with the tools to properly carry out their role. Similarly, chiefs must recognize the need to work collaboratively with boards, to educate them on their role if necessary, and to make them an active part of the process rather than simply controlling the process and having their boards act as bystanders to leadership change.

Summary

This section included a discussion of three of the key themes that emerged from interviews with Canadian police chiefs. First, police chiefs discussed what they viewed as the necessary competencies for police leaders and the potential need for a national

competency framework. Some chiefs discussed the work of the Police Sector Council in developing competencies, while others discussed the need to think about additional competencies. Many of the competencies that the chiefs did identify tend to be reflected in existing competency frameworks and appear to be largely tactical in nature. However, an interesting finding was that many chiefs felt contemporary police leaders required more interpersonal skills and the ability to connect with their personnel in a more meaningful way. However, the shifting focus to more interpersonal competencies does not yet appear to include a more health-oriented approach to leadership. As police services continue to struggle with mental health and wellness issues, it is likely that contemporary and future police leaders will need to develop this skillset and be far more attuned to the mental health needs of their sworn and civilian personnel.

In addition to leadership competencies, the chiefs discussed the challenges and opportunities of incorporating diversity into succession planning. There was almost unanimous agreement that it was critical that police leadership needs to diversity, and the chiefs spoke about making efforts to increase the diversity of the executive within their organizations. A considerable amount of their focus seemed to be on gender diversity, working to develop a larger cadre of women police leaders. The chiefs spoke about how police organizational culture and structure has historically served as an impediment for some women and acknowledged the need to address this.

While women seem to be a priority and the statistics indicate that progress is being made in that area, the chiefs also discussed the importance of creating more cultural and racial diversity in leadership. However, they were careful to note that increasing diversity cannot be made at the expense of developing capable and qualified leaders, and that it cannot become an exercise in tokenism. Beyond that, the chiefs felt that any discussions of diversity must also include developing leaders that had diversity of thought and experience also, a challenge because current leadership development and promotional practices in policing tend to create a homogenous ideological group.

Lastly, given what participants have described regarding the deficiencies in boards' policing knowledge and the possible flaws of the current interview process, boards' having full control over the selection of the chief presents some inherent risk. Clearly some form of balance needs to be struck – the “symbiosis” that Chief 15 refers to – in which chiefs and boards can work collaboratively in the succession planning and

leadership selection process. A key role of police leaders is leadership development and succession planning, their role in the process is inescapable; however, history suggests that, at least in some jurisdictions, boards have ceded too much control or influence on chiefs in this sphere, due to the failure to understand their role in succession planning and/or gaps in knowledge of operational policing and police leadership competencies. Police boards need to recognize that they have an important role to play in succession planning, but they also must be equipped with the tools to properly carry out their role. Similarly, chiefs need to recognize the need to work collaboratively with boards, to educate them on their role if necessary, and to make them an active part of the process rather than simply controlling the process and having their boards act as bystanders to leadership change.

Chapter 6 will conclude this dissertation. The focus of Chapter 6 will be a discussion of the key takeaways and implications of the research, opportunities for future research, and a final note on limitations.

Chapter 6. Implications and Future Research Opportunities

This exploratory research was conducted using a qualitative framework, relying on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with sixteen current and former Canadian police leaders. Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation included a presentation of the key research findings, as well as a detailed discussion of those findings and how they are situated within the existing body of knowledge of police leadership and succession planning. Chapter 6 will focus on discussing the primary takeaways from the research findings, including implications, directions for future research, and limitations. As this research was exploratory, the findings cannot be used to draw any broad conclusions about leadership succession in Canadian policing. Nor can they be used to develop specific policy proposals; however, they do contribute to the limited body of knowledge that currently exist and can be used as a jumping-off point for future research on succession planning and leadership development.

Implications

Succession Planning Within Silos of Excellence

A favourite saying of a prominent Canadian policing scholar is that a key factor in improving Canadian policing is getting everyone “out of their silos of excellence” (personal communication). Interviews with police chiefs in this study suggest that this is an apt statement regarding the current landscape of leadership succession in Canada. The small nature of the study sample precludes any broad conclusions being drawn; however, the experiences of the chiefs indicate that there is little consistency in the way that police services are succession planning, and what is being done seems to be happening in isolation. Police services appear to be charting their own course, and the degree to which succession planning is being implemented depends on the current leadership, level of interest and competence of police boards, and the organizational context. Moreover, it does not appear that there are mechanisms for leaders to collaborate and to share experiences about what is working and what is not, other than perhaps through provincial and national committees and associations of chiefs of police.

Left to their own devices and without a significant evidence-base from which to operate, chiefs seem to be taking a variety of approaches in what could be characterized as a trial-and-error approach. Or, if one was being less generous, a throw everything and the wall and see what sticks approach. The discussion in Chapter 4 highlighted several different ideas for succession planning including implementing formal mentorship programs, modifying promotional processes, and bringing in officers from other organizations to develop as potential successors. The issue here, is that none of these strategies or approaches have been evaluated or assessed to determine if they lead to effective succession and, more importantly, produce good leaders. Perhaps the most important takeaway from the interviews with the chiefs is that the only real measure of success with their succession plan is if they can produce one or multiple internal leadership candidates that they can present to the police board as possible successors.

The issue with this perspective is that bringing an external successor is not necessarily proof of the absence of a succession plan. There is a difference between not having a succession plan and having no one available to fill the position. That is, an agency may have made every attempt to develop leaders internally but may not have had much to work with, lacking leadership talent. For some agencies, it may take more than the duration of a chief's tenure to create a viable succession pipeline and develop the requisite "bench strength" as it were. Finally, simply developing an internal successor or collection of leadership candidates says nothing about whether the person selected is a good leader or will be a good leader. Can a succession plan that produces a poor successor – even if they are an internal one – really be considered a success?

In the absence of evaluation frameworks for succession planning, it will be difficult for police services and police leaders to implement evidence-based succession planning systems. Perhaps the recent effort of the CPKN to produce an updated national leadership competency framework will be a step in that direction. Police services may be able to adopt this framework to develop measurable standards in which to base their promotional practices and developmental systems. However, as Brown (2021) has argued, if these systems continue to value technical skill over all else, then police services may continue to face challenges in producing capable leaders.

Advanced Education, but for What Reason?

The police chiefs within this study were successful in being promoted to their positions due, largely, to the training and experiences they had received within the policing field. It could be argued that the policing field must have done something right to prepare and develop them for leadership. However, most of the chiefs suggested that the changing policing environment (in both demand and complexity) required police leaders to seek out and obtain some form of advanced education and training outside of the police sector. Most participants in this study had an undergraduate degree and many were pursuing or had obtained advanced degrees. In doing so, they are reflective of a trend in policing in which those in executive positions are more educated than their predecessors (Murray, 2019). It is also likely that the next generation of police leaders will have higher education levels than the current one. That is, postsecondary education is common among those entering policing in 2022, and thus given their prominence among police personnel, those who will replace the current generation of police executives will be more educated, in part, because the pool of officers is starting off with a higher level of education (Abela, 2012). However, they are also likely to be more educated, because, as most chiefs stated, advanced education is quickly becoming seen as a key requirement for executive leadership. The chiefs also explained that advanced education was becoming an important component of their approach to leadership development and succession planning.

That advanced education is playing a larger role in police leadership is not a new or unique finding, as the work of Murray (2019), Huey et al., (2019), and Huey, et al., (2018) demonstrates. Yet, the question remains, for what purpose? That is, does advanced education make for better leaders? The literature would suggest that higher education is beneficial to policing, as it can lead to increased professionalism (Roberg & Bonn, 2004, as cited in Abela, 2012) and improved performance (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Speaking at the Oppal inquiry in BC in the early 1990's, Justice Oppal opined that the need for police chiefs to have a university degree was, "obvious in a career that demands skills ranging from problem-solving, communication, diversity training, social work, problem analyses, to understanding criminal law" (Oppal, 1994, p. E56-57, as cited in Abela, 2012, p. 118). Further Huey et al., (2018) have argued that university education is an important component for making police leaders more evidence-based decision-makers. In the present study, chiefs seemed to feel that advanced education

helped to improve strategic and critical thinking; improve their ability to understand and utilize research and data; and prepare them for some of the non-policing aspects of leadership, including human resources, budgeting, and policy-development. They also felt that it helped expose people to new ideas, new perspectives, and new ways of thinking outside of the traditional policing-sphere, thus broadening their minds, and challenging their views.

All the above cited benefits – both in the literature and in the interviews – are important and worthwhile. However, it is not clear whether advanced education ultimately improves the performance of police leaders, as it relates to their ability to lead people and build healthy organizational cultures. Certainly, this is not to say that advanced education should not be a part of the leadership profile, it is simply to caution that just because leaders are more educated, does not mean that they will necessarily be better at leading their people. Many of the participants in this study spoke positively about the role of advanced education in preparing them for leadership. Unsurprisingly, it was mainly the chiefs with advanced education who espoused this perspective. Though they may subjectively feel that advanced education has made them better leaders, it would be interesting to see how those within their organization(s) would assess their respective leadership abilities. Ultimately, this is an area that could benefit from further exploration, particularly examining the relative effectiveness of police leaders with advanced education.

The Dilemma of Leadership Training

Like education, it is evident that police leadership development programs and training continue to be considered – by many police leaders – as an important way to prepare future leaders. As with education, the chiefs cited a variety of benefits including skill and knowledge acquisition, exposure to different styles of leadership, exposure to other police leaders, and networking. However, it is uncertain if any of these leadership programs or academies ultimately have any appreciable impact on leadership quality. For example, Huey et al. (2019) found that some leadership programs focus entirely on developing business skills rather than actual leadership skills for managing people, including the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which have been deemed critical to effective leadership. As noted in Chapter 4's discussion of leadership development, there is little empirical data on the effectiveness of leadership

development programs (Schafer, 2019). Schafer raises an interesting point, in that while some of these programs might obtain feedback from participants, they cannot validate whether the people that the graduate works with notice any difference. That is, the participant might feel like the program helped them, but it's unclear how the officers they are responsible for leading feel. Though it may be the case that these programs have had some positive effects on police leaders, "but which efforts produce what benefits for which type of leaders remain shrouded in mystery" (Schafer, 2019, p. 248). Without understanding if and how these programs impact leadership quality, it is perhaps best to view them simply as a line on a resume.

The other point to touch on here is the supposed networking benefits of these programs. Chiefs felt that participation in these programs provided exposure to other police leaders and facilitated the building of relationship networks. It is an opportunity to learn from other leaders and discuss various leadership challenges, experiences, and philosophies. Nonetheless, very little is known about whether these relationship networks result in better police leaders. What is the value of meeting and networking with other police leaders, if those leaders are ineffective? Leaders that attend these programs may very well be popular with other leaders; however, this does not mean that they are particularly well-liked within their own organizations. So, the relationship-building and networking that accompany these programs may be perceived as beneficial by the officers that attend them, but it is impossible to know whether it makes them objectively better leaders.

A further concern lies in the type of police leadership programs that Canadian police organizations are sending their current and future leaders to, specifically, the continued prominence of the US-based FBI National Academy and the Police Executive Research Forum. It is difficult to determine the value that American leadership programs have for Canadian police leaders, given the considerable differences between US and Canadian policing contexts. Though they do share some similarities, Canada is a unique policing environment with its own set of issues and challenges. To what degree can American training prepare Canadian police leaders to face these challenges? Further, given the well-documented challenges facing American policing, it begs the question of whether Canadian police organizations and their leaders should be looking to the US for education and training? Recall that Chief 6 identified this as a concern in the discussion of police leadership development in Chapter 4. Certainly, these programs are well-

respected in the policing sector; however, it is difficult to state if they are providing tangible value to Canadian police leaders.

Police Leaders as HR Specialists

One of the most interesting findings from this research is the acknowledgement by the chiefs that they are largely responsible for succession management within their organizations. Though the responsibility for hiring police leaders' rests with police boards and commissions, most of the heavy lifting falls on the chiefs to identify, mentor, and train their successors. Such a responsibility arguably places police chiefs in the role of HR specialists. Many of the activities that chiefs spoke about being involved in regarding succession planning, can be characterized as human resource management. While police leaders certainly have a role to play in the management of human resources, they are not trained HR professionals, leading one to question whether they should be empowered with this responsibility.

Outram et al. (2014) argue that succession management and, more specifically, the development of leaders, is a key role of police leaders and should not be transferred to HR departments. Underpinning this argument is the belief that police leaders are subject matter experts and are best positioned to implement and oversee succession management processes within their organizations. They have been immersed in the police sector and have the requisite recipe knowledge and understanding of the competencies needed to lead in policing. Civilian HR professionals lack the policing expertise to be entrusted with overseeing succession management. One can draw a parallel from this to the discussion of police boards in Chapter 5, in which one of the reasons for why boards do not play a more active role in succession is because they lack policing knowledge and expertise. While it is a valid point that police officers have important experiential policing knowledge, it is also true that they have little knowledge and experience with HR, a specialized field. Further, it is not clear that police are particularly effective at performing this function.

This is not to say that HR is solely a police responsibility. As part of the ever-expanding process of civilianization within policing (Griffiths, 2020), many police services employ civilian HR staff and HR managers. However, it is also the case that in many police services, sworn police personnel continue to play a considerable role in HR. Recall that in speaking about his pursuit of supplementary education, Chief 4 detailed

his experience of being appointed to supervise his department's HR section, a task he admittedly knew little about, and thus, required him to pursue external training and education. It seems to make little intuitive sense to have police personnel with no background or understanding of HR management responsible for overseeing their organization's human resources, a field requiring specialized knowledge and expertise. Further, while larger agencies may be likely to have specific HR sections, staffed with civilian professionals, this may not be the case in smaller agencies. The experience of Chief 13 is a prime example, in that, as the leader of his small First Nations police service, he occupied a central role in succession management. He was a primary figure in the selection, training, and development (including the promotional process) of his officers.

When discussing the succession management process within his police service, Chief 13 described how he brought in external consultants to carry out the promotional process, to create a level of independence, and distance himself from the process. He recognized some of the risks of having police so heavily involved in HR functions. Chief 12 also noted that her police service employed a civilian HR manager. Thus, it is not necessarily the case that police are unwilling to rely on civilians for HR. However, it is clear from much of the discussion with the chiefs that they feel that police need to have role to play in this area.

A key theme in 21st century policing is the increased scope and mandate of police due to downloading of responsibilities from other sectors (Griffiths, 2020). A common refrain is that police are not doctors, social workers, and mental health professionals, and yet, they are frequently tasked with performing those functions. The concern is that police lack the necessary training and expertise to deal with these situations, and thus, should be de-tasked from these areas where possible (Friedman, 2021). It can be argued that the same can be said of the police HR function. Police officers are not HR professionals nor are they HR specialists. But they are largely expected to fill that role. Just as there are questions about the ability of police to effectively perform those other functions, so too should there be questions about the ability of police to perform this one. It may be that police leaders and police personnel are in the best position to develop succession planning systems, but they may not be. If there is a dearth of attractive leadership candidates in Canadian policing as Taylor et al. (2022) argue, then this may be indicative of the flaws in how police services are currently

approaching human resource management. Certainly, this is a topic that is worthy of further inquiry and exploration.

Future Research Directions

This research was meant to be an exploratory study of leadership succession in Canadian policing, and thus, there are number of areas that it was unable to cover that do merit further inquiry and exploration. The research also raised several additional questions that should be addressed with future research. The following provides a brief discussion of several of these possible future research directions.

The Role of Promotional Systems

A major gap in this study was that more attention was not given to the role of promotional systems in succession planning. Though several chiefs referred to promotion, it was not a main source of inquiry, and thus, there was a lack of data on the topic. Yet, this is a critical component of succession planning, as it is the key process in which leaders ascend the organization and through which organizations can prepare for the future.

Future research needs to examine the promotional systems within policing and how they work to encourage or impede the growth and rise of leadership talent. Brown (2021) has stated promotional systems are flawed, based on outdated standards, and overly prioritize technical skill. Further, this research should focus on how these systems are perceived by officers within the organization and whether they are viewed as transparent, fair, and equitable – attributes that are embedded within the concept of organizational justice or fairness (Chase, 2018). That is, “how employees perceive concepts of justice and fairness within organizations are increasingly seen as barometers of organizational climate and organizational culture (Schneider et al., 2013, as cited in Chase, 2018, p. 8). The relationship between organizational justice and succession planning in general warrants further attention.

The Internal Politics of Succession Planning

Another possible area of study is the internal organizational dynamics of succession planning. Certainly, the role of organizational culture is something that needs to be examined. In the present study, culture was cited as a key player in the discussion

of diversity in succession planning, and how organizational culture can impede the development and promotion of diverse leadership candidates, including women. Yet, beyond culture, it would be useful to look at additional organizational dynamics, including the internal politics of succession. Though not a prominent point of discussion in interviews, several chiefs did allude the impact of organizational politics on succession planning and leadership development. They spoke about the potential for competing “camps” to emerge, particularly in situations where the likely successor candidates have been clearly established. How this influences leaders’ decision-making, and the behaviour of successor candidates is a potentially interesting area of inquiry. It may also be useful to examine how these political issues manifest in larger organizations where there may naturally be a larger pool of leadership candidates and in smaller agencies where there is may be more intimacy and familiarity.

A couple of the chiefs also touched on the politically fraught nature of leadership succession within an organization. They noted that who a leader chooses to promote to the executive can be viewed within the department as being a political exercise, with certain appointments being viewed because of favouritism, friendship, or “to tick a box.” The jockeying that may or may not occur prior to (or in the middle of) a promotional round is also a phenomenon that is not particularly well-understood, specifically the ways in which it impacts leadership selection, as well as leadership quality.

The Impact of the Failure to Succession Plan

Police leadership is regarded as being integral to the well-being and perceived safety of the communities they serve (Brown, 2021). It has also been argued that leadership is essential to organizational success (Alvesson et al., 2017). Given the importance of leadership to both police services and the communities they police, then the failure of a police service to effectively succession plan has potential to significantly impact police and civilian personnel and community members alike. As such, it is important that future research aims to address key questions, including: what are the impacts of the lack of succession planning on the effectiveness of the police service; external relationships with communities, including communities of diversity; and the dynamics in the police organization itself? It is critical to understand the impact on both the internal and external contexts in which police services operate.

Such an examination may begin by expanding the area of inquiry to include interviews and focus groups with sworn and civilian police personnel to understand the organizational effects of succession planning or the failure to succession plan, including how it impacts organizational health and employee mental health and well-being. Just as police personnel should be consulted, so too should community members, including representatives from key stakeholder groups and communities of diversity. Specifically, it is important to explore whether they community feels that they should have a greater role in the selection of police leaders, as well as the qualities in a police leader that they view as being most important.

Police Boards and Succession Planning

A key theme of this dissertation is the role of police boards and commissions in leadership succession. They are responsible for hiring the chief, and thus they occupy a critical place in leadership succession. Beyond that, however, their role is murky. The chiefs in this study seem to agree that the police services are responsible for implementing succession planning, with the boards playing an oversight or accountability role. This may include ensuring that the chief and police service prioritize succession planning and holding them accountable for implementing it. However, most of the chiefs felt that, in general, police boards and commissions may not fully understand this role, may not be aware of the need for succession planning, and thus, may not be adequately holding police services accountable for doing so. They also seemed to feel that board members lacked necessary policing knowledge and did not have a clear understanding of what to look for in a police leader. One potential consequence is that police leaders have considerable influence in determining who is hired as their successor.

The perspective of police boards and their role in succession planning presented here is through the lens of police leaders and is, therefore, incomplete. To gain a more complete understanding of leadership succession, moving forward it will be important to explore how police boards and commissions see their role in leadership succession planning. Future research should consider conducting interviews and/or focus groups with police board members on this topic. To this point, the perspectives of board members on policing matters has been largely absent in the Canadian policing literature (Sheard, 2016), and this would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Police Associations/Unions and Succession Planning

Another important perspective missing from the current research is that of police associations or unions. The role of police associations in succession planning and leadership development was largely absent in this research, which is a significant gap. To be sure, police associations certainly have a role to play, something most chiefs did acknowledge in interviews. Several chiefs noted that the union environment can constrain or limit succession planning and leadership development because it can create challenges around promotional processes, particularly for middle-management positions. They felt that they needed to be conscious of who they promoted and how to not draw the ire of the associations or be seen to be doing anything that was not above board. Chief 7 went so far as to state that he had proactively sought opportunities to involve them in strategic planning, including succession management.

Given their role in employee advocacy and collective bargaining, police associations have considerable interactions with police leaders and may be able to provide a unique perspective on police leadership. They also represent the perspective of the frontline membership and may be able to provide insight on police officers' views of succession planning. Finally, by virtue of their role, associations may have insight into organizational dynamics that are not evident to outsiders and could shed light on the organizational impact of succession planning. Consequently, it would be useful to involve police associations in future research on leadership succession, perhaps by interviewing association presidents in much the same way that police chiefs have been interviewed in the present study.

Moreover, a few of the Chiefs had also had active and prominent roles in associations during their respective careers and felt that to varying degrees, that experience had a positive impact on their leadership abilities. They believed that it prepared them better for dealing with labor relations issues, made them more attuned to the needs and concerns of their officers, and provided some degree of credibility and legitimacy from their officers. It may be worthwhile to explore the possible relationship between association participation and leadership. It may be that future police leaders would be well-served to take an active role in their associations during their careers

Limitations

This research was conducted between February 2021 and January 2022 and relied upon the opinions of a small sample of subject matter experts, namely, current, and former chiefs of independent municipal police services from across Canada – as well as one former chief from a First Nations police service, and one former commissioner or a provincial police service. This exploratory research, though including a multijurisdictional sample, focused largely on municipal police leaders, it did not include the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or representatives of other provincial police forces. This, combined with the small size of the sample, means that the findings of this study are extremely limited in their generalizability. That is, they cannot speak to the state of leadership succession planning across Canadian policing. It is also impossible to draw any broad conclusions about the state of succession planning in Canadian policing or make any meaningful policy recommendations. Additional, multi-methodological research, with a wider research focus and greater sample size will be necessary to do this. This research should be treated as a qualitative snapshot of leadership succession in Canadian policing. It is an, admittedly, small step toward developing a baseline understanding of what police services are doing to plan for executive succession.

Conclusion

In sum, although there is still much work to be done to develop a comprehensive understanding of leadership succession planning in Canadian policing, this exploratory study was able to lay the groundwork for future research and provide some insight into how police leaders view succession planning and leadership development. The findings of this study highlight the complexity of police leadership and the challenges that police organizations face in preparing the next generation of leaders. It is important that more is done to determine the degree to which succession planning is being done and to assess the effectiveness of police organizations' succession management processes, including approaches to leadership development. The findings of this study indicate that succession planning is currently being done haphazardly and based on little evidence. Hopefully, this study serves as a step towards improving this situation.

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Appendix A.

Study Description

Application for Ethics Review: Study Details

Murphy Joshua, Doctoral Student

School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University

Project Title: Taking the Reins: An Exploratory Study of Executive Leadership Succession and Succession Planning in Canadian Policing

Principal Investigator: Curt Taylor Griffiths, Ph.D.; Professor, School of Criminology

Student Lead: Joshua Murphy, Doctoral Student in the School of Criminology

Study Background and Purpose

Executive leadership remains a critical yet understudied component of Canadian policing. Police leaders must ensure that they can maintain order and enforce the law, model and preserve ethics and values, establish a strong culture and organizational ethos, address community issues, develop relationships with key stakeholders, improve relations with communities of diversity and racialized populations, develop an organization that can provide professional and quality law enforcement services, while providing leadership to members that perform a complex and challenging job (Griffiths, 2020). In spite of the complex nature of the position and the impact of police leaders on the police organization and operations, little attention has been given to the executive level. There is a relative dearth of literature on leadership preparation, selection and succession in policing.

The absence of study has hindered an understanding of how police services prepare and identify future leaders, the nature and extent of leadership succession planning and the impact of leadership succession on police services in the near and long terms. While there is a growing body of literature aimed at identifying the qualities necessary for successful leaders in the public and private sectors, thus far a specific focus on the attributes required for leadership success in policing is absent. The proposed study aims to address this dearth of knowledge in the sphere of police

leadership and leadership succession and succession planning through interviews with current and former Canadian police leaders.

The proposed study is designed to examine the issue of leadership succession in Canadian policing. It will involve in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with current and former Canadian police leaders. The research questions for this study include:

- What provisions are in place for the identification of police leaders in police services?
- What are the issues that surround leadership succession?
- What impact does leadership succession have on the culture, organizational policies, and operations of a police service?
- What are the challenges that confront police leaders who replace a previous leader?
- Are there differences in these challenges between police leaders who are hired from the outside versus internal successors?
- What are the challenges that police leaders encounter in attempting to implement their philosophy of policing compared to those of their predecessor?
- What are the dynamics that surround the transition from once police leader to another?
- What are the challenges of continuity of policy and operations?
- What are the roles of police governance structures such as municipal police services boards and commissions in succession planning and leadership selection?
- What strategies do new police leaders need to employ to gain the trust and confidence of members?

- Are there any best practices in leadership succession? If not, would it be possible to develop and implement best practices?

The research questions for this study will include the questions set out above, as well as questions that emerge from additional consultations with the literature. The research will focus on the perceptions and experiences of current and former Canadian police leaders. The objective will be to document the experiences and perspectives of these individuals with respect to leadership succession and succession planning within their agency and within the field of Canadian policing in general. These materials will provide insights into the dynamics of leadership succession. This study would be conducted, pending ethics approval, during a 2-4-month time period in 2021.

Participant Role and Research Procedures

Participant Characteristics

All participants in the proposed study will be adults, 19 years of age or older.

Participants for this project will be current or former police leaders (Chief Constables) from jurisdictions across Canada. It is important to note that permission to conduct interviews at the aforementioned agencies has not been granted. Participants will be told that approval from their respective organizations/departments has not been obtained. The participants will be recruited and approached independently. The Student Lead will compensate for this by using pseudonyms and further, by not including the names of their police departments and cities in the study. Essentially, all identifying information will be removed from the study. Furthermore, this information will be clearly outlined in the informed consent handout.

By interviewing individuals who are directly involved in the field of policing and who have first-hand experience as police executives, the Student Lead hopes to gain a balanced understanding of the impact and role of succession and succession planning in Canadian Policing. Access to these individuals will be primarily gained through both the Primary Investigator, Dr. Curt T. Griffiths, who, as a key Canadian policing researcher, has connections with numerous interested individuals willing to participate in the study, and through the connections of the Student Lead, Josh Murphy, who has also developed connections with police leaders through his experience in policing research.

Recruitment and Research Method

The research sample for this project will be obtained through a purposive, criterion-based sampling procedure, as the participants in this study are being chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study.

Participants will be recruited by the Primary Investigator, Dr. Curt T. Griffiths and/or the Student Lead, Josh Murphy. These individuals will contact potential participants via email and will ask whether or not they are interested in participating in the study. The recruitment script will instruct participants to contact the Student Lead if they wish to participate in the study. The Student Lead's contact information will be provided in the introductory email.

Approximately twenty current or former Canadian police leaders will be interviewed for this project. Participants for this project will have leadership experience in a variety of policing contexts including with large and mid-size urban municipal police services, smaller, rural police services, regional police services, and provincial police services.

After the project has received ethics approval, the prospective interviewees will be contacted via e-mail by the Student Lead and will be provided with a detailed consent document. Once the prospective participants have had the opportunity to read the form and agree to participate, an interview will be scheduled. There will be no offer made for financial compensation or reimbursement for participation in the study. Prior to the beginning of the interview, the Student Lead will go through the informed consent document with each participant, as part of a verbal consent procedure. The Student Lead will document verbal consent.

The Student Lead will conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews that are expected to last between sixty to ninety minutes. Semi-structured interviews have been selected as the primary data-gathering tool for two primary reasons. According to Barriball & White (1994: 330), "semi-structured interviews are well suited for the exploration of perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of

answers. Secondly, the opportunities to change the words but not the meaning of questions provided by a semi-structured interview schedule acknowledges that not every word has the same meaning to every interviewee and that the vocabulary is not standard for all interviewees (Barriball & White, 1994).

Due to the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, interviews will be conducted via telephone or videoconferencing software (Zoom or MS Teams) and will be audio recorded with participants' permission. Interviews will be conducted from the Student Lead's private residence in a section of the residence that has maximum privacy. Participants will be advised to conduct the interview within their personal residence or private office. Interviews will audio-recorded only. There will be no video recording and while Zoom and MS Teams each has a feature that allows videoconferences to be saved, this feature will not be utilized in this case.

Each interviewee will be assured that, while the interviews will be recorded, the recordings themselves will be confidential. Interviews will be audio-recorded with the participants' consent (see section on informed consent below). Additionally, written notes may be taken in a research notebook throughout the interview. It is critical to mention that these notes will only be taken with the consent of the participants.

Open-ended questions will be posed in order to gain a general understanding of the participants' experience with, and understanding of, police leadership, leadership succession, and succession planning, as well as the internal and external factors that impact succession planning at the executive level. Conducting a semi-structured interview leaves room for probing questions to be asked if a participant discusses something that the Student Lead would like to explore more in-depth. The interview protocol document is included as an attachment with this application.

Informed Consent

For the purpose of the proposed project, the Student Lead intends to obtain verbal informed consent from the participants. Because the study will be qualitative in nature, verbal informed consent has been elected over written informed consent. In order to avoid a situation with an unnecessary emphasis on legality, and further, in order to secure and uphold trust and rapport with the participants, the Student Lead will opt to avoid obtaining written informed consent. Additionally, receiving signed consent

jeopardizes confidentiality through the creation of a written record of the participants' names. However, participants will be sent a detailed consent form and prior to the interview, the Student Lead will go over this form with each participant. Verbal consent will be documented by the Student Lead within the verbal consent document.

While the study cannot guarantee full anonymity due to the fact that the interviews will be recorded, and are, as such, considered identifiable by the REB, the Student Lead will ensure that any identifiable information included in the recordings by the interviewee be struck from the record. In order to do this, the Student Lead will provide each participant with a pseudonym and any identifiable information recorded in the interview process will be altered or removed from transcripts.

If Zoom is being used to facilitate the interview, prior to initiating the interview, participants will be made aware that the interview is hosted by Zoom, a US company, and as such, is subject to the USA Patriot Act and CLOUD Act. These laws allow government authorities to access the records of host services and internet service providers. By choosing to participate, participants will be asked if they understand that their participation in this study may become known to US federal agencies. If participants wish to participate in the interview, but do not wish to do so via Zoom, a telephone interview or video interview via MS teams will be conducted instead.

Furthermore, although the interviews will be audio recorded and stored before they are transcribed, each interview will be labeled with a unique pseudonym that will be used throughout the study. Prior to the interview starting, the Student Lead will inform the interviewee that once the recording process has started, neither parties involved will refer to the interviewee directly by name. The intent here is to avoid any instances of the interviewee's name being included in the recording. Should this occur by accident, the Student Lead will ensure, as previously noted, that identifying information in the recording be replaced with a pseudonym in the transcript. The act of avoiding reference to the interviewee's name during the interview process is simply an extra precaution and should ensure that the interviewee feels as confident about the process as is possible. For further information on the maintenance of confidentiality within this study please refer to the Confidentiality Section.

Consent will be premised on the fact that the participants are told clearly that the purpose of the study is to satisfy the requirements of the Student Lead's Doctoral Dissertation. In order to provide informed consent, respondents must have adequate reasoning faculties and be in possession of all relevant facts at the time consent is given. This is not a given, and thus, the Primary Investigator will consider this issue at the point when the participants' informed consent is requested. This will be done by going through the informed consent document with each participant and asking them if they have any questions about what they are reading. They will also be asked if they are satisfied that they have a complete understanding of the relevant details. If the Student Lead deems that the person is not competent to participate in the interview, then he will voice this concern explicitly to the individual, emphasizing that he does not feel comfortable that the person is fully competent to provide consent and to proceed with the interview. This will be done as such:

"I'm sorry, but based on your response to my question, I do not feel that you have a complete understanding of relevant details of this project. As such, I don't feel that you are able to fully consent to this interview. I am sorry, but I do not feel comfortable proceeding with this interview and your participation in the project is concluded. Thank you very much for your time."

If a participant is unable to provide fully informed consent, the interview will be cancelled, they will no longer be included as a prospective participant, their contact information will not be retained. They will effectively be removed from further consideration for the study.

Participants will be provided with the consent form. Oral informed consent will be achieved after allowing the prospective participants to read the consent form. At the beginning of the interview session, the Student Lead will confirm that the participant has the consent form in front of them, will ask the participant if he or she has read the consent form and if any questions about the research have presented themselves to the participant. Finally, participants will be asked directly if they consent to take part in the study. This will come in the form of a consent statement in the verbal consent document that is reviewed with each participant as part of the verbal consent process. The Student Lead will record the time and date on his version of the consent form to document the consent date. The Student Lead will also document the participant by using a code for identification purposes on his version of the consent form; and will also include his own

signature as the person who is obtaining the oral consent. The identification code for each participant will be documented in the code breaking file that links each participant name and pseudonym. This code breaking file will be stored in with a unique file code in a designated folder in SFU Vault for enhanced security.

During the oral consent process, the key points from the consent form that will be emphasized are:

- • The Student Lead is a Doctoral student, and the Primary Investigator is Dr. Curt Griffiths, his senior supervisor on this project.
- • The topic of the study and what the purpose is of the Doctoral dissertation.
- • Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of any negative impact from the Student Lead and Primary Investigator.
- • In the event that the participant chooses to withdraw from the study, all information (recordings, transcripts, etc.) relating to them will be immediately destroyed.
- • The interview is expected to last between 60 and 90 minutes, with the possibility of a follow-up interview if necessary.
- • If a follow-up interview is requested, they have the right to say no, and are not required to say yes.
- • Confidentiality and preferences related to anonymity and indirect identifiers.
- • Consent regarding audio-recording the interview and transcription of audio-recordings.
- • The interviews will be used for the Student Lead's Doctoral dissertation and any related journal articles or book publications.
- • The project has been approved (assumed by this point) by the SFU Research Ethics Board. This Board aims to protect the rights of human research participants.
- • Questions can be directed to the Primary Investigator, Dr. Curt Griffiths, or the Student Lead, Josh Murphy.
- • Concerns or complaints regarding any part of the research process can be directed to the Director of the Office of Research Ethics, Dr. Jeff Toward.
- • Upon completion, the final Doctoral dissertation will be sent to all participants.

As part of the verbal consent process, participants will be asked if they consent to their interview being recorded. If participants provide consent, a recording device will begin recording as soon as the interview starts. Participants will be made aware of this in the consent form. This is to ensure that when the Student Lead asks if they consent to take part in the study, there will be a record that consent has been given.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The identities of all individuals involved in the study will be kept confidential. The individuals taking part in the study will be notified that their identity will be safeguarded, and further, that a pseudonym will be used if direct quotes appear in text. It is important to note that direct quotes, even though they are coded, will only be used with the consent of the participant. There will be a consent statement pertaining to the use of direct quotations included within the verbal consent process. Because preserving a professional and trusting relationship with the interviewees is important to the Primary Investigator and Student Lead, and because it is possible that the interviewees would not participate if their identity were not kept confidential, utmost confidentiality will be maintained.

For data safety and security purposes the code breaking file that links each pseudonym to the participant's identity will be stored in with a unique file code in a designated folder in SFU Vault for enhanced security. Only the Student Lead will have access to this information. This file will be retained up to successful completion and defense of the Student Lead's dissertation, at which point the file will be destroyed.

Indirect identifiers such as the city where they live, which police force they are employed by will be removed from the transcript of the interview unless otherwise indicated during the consent conversation. However, the region of Canada in which the participants work or have worked in the past will remain known. To safeguard third parties, names mentioned by the participant during the interview will be changed or removed from the transcripts and notes.

If participants give permission to be recorded, interviews will be recorded using a digital audio-recording device. The interviewee will be informed that, while the interviews will be recorded, the recordings themselves will be confidential. The recordings and transcriptions will be stored with a unique file code in a designated folder in SFU Vault

rather than storing data locally or to a USB device. Interview recordings and transcripts and will not be labeled with any identifying information. Immediately after each separate interview is complete, the audio recording will be saved as an audio file in a designated folder in SFU Vault. The recording will then be deleted from the recording device. SFU Vault will be installed by the Student Lead and he will be the only person with access to the audio recordings and interview transcripts.

Within four weeks of the interview itself, the recordings will be transcribed. During this transcription process the data will be anonymized. Once the recordings have been transcribed by the Student Lead, and the Primary Investigator, Dr. Curt Griffiths has verified the transcriptions, the audio recordings will be destroyed. The Student Lead will be the only person with access to the original audio recordings prior to their destruction.

All interview transcripts will be anonymized and will be retained by the Student Lead after the research project has ended, provided that consent to retain the interview transcripts has been granted by participants. Consent to retain the transcripts will be sought as part of the verbal consent process. If a participant does not consent, then their interview transcript will be destroyed upon completion of the Doctoral Dissertation. If the participant does consent, transcripts will be stored in a designated folder in SFU Vault for a period of three years (36 months) after the completion of the Dissertation. This is to allow opportunity for the data to be revisited should follow-up research be conducted in this field, including future projects and studies with the data.

Data Management and Storage

As this research will be working with human data, it is important to ensure that there are measures in place for secure data storage and management. To this end a number of procedures will be put in place to maximize the safety and security of the data that is gathered in this project.

The majority of the forms and data associated to this project will be digital. However, there will still be some hard copy items – specifically, the Student Lead's written field notes from interviews and hard copies of the documented oral consent. These items will be stored in a secure document case that will be placed in a secure, locked cabinet in the personal residence of the Student' Lead's private residence. The only person with access to these documents will be the Student Lead.

The majority of the research data for this study will be digital. Research data will be stored in Simon Fraser University's "Vault" cloud storage service, which is available to faculty, staff, and students who have an active SFU Computing ID. According to the University, "All SFU files uploaded into the system will be protected under the [BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (FIPPA), which alleviates any risk of storing sensitive information within US-based cloud storage providers such as Dropbox, Google Drive, etc." As such, this method of storage has been deemed superior to the use of a secure USB drive or external hard drive.

As an SFU graduate student, the Student Lead, Josh Murphy, will download and install SFU Vault software on his personal computer. Access to the Student Lead's personal computer is password protected, as well as through fingerprint scan. The Student Lead will set up the account using his SFU computing ID and create a unique password. Access to the SFU Vault will be password protected and will require the use of an authentication code, which is uniquely generated using "LastPass" authenticator. The only person that will have access the files in the cloud storage system will be the Student Lead. If the typewritten transcripts of the interviews need to be shared with the Principal Investigator, they will be compressed and encrypted prior to being transferred.

If participants give permission to be recorded, interviews will be recorded using a digital audio-recording device. The interviewee will be informed that, while the interviews will be recorded, the recordings themselves will be confidential. The recordings and transcriptions will be stored with a unique file code in a designated folder in SFU Vault rather than storing data locally or to a USB device. Interview recordings and transcripts and will not be labeled with any identifying information. Immediately after each separate interview is complete, the audio recording will be saved as an audio file in a designated folder in SFU Vault. The recording will then be deleted from the recording device.

Within four weeks of the interview itself, the recordings will be transcribed. During this transcription process the data will be anonymized. Once the recordings have been transcribed by the Student Lead, and the Primary Investigator, Dr. Curt Griffiths has verified the transcriptions, the audio recordings will be destroyed. The Student Lead will be the only person with access to the original audio recordings prior to their destruction.

The computer used for analysis is configured to “lock out” after fifteen minutes of inactivity. This reduces the risk of theft or unauthorized use of data when working with confidential data. Given the movement current restrictions related to COVID-19, it is unlikely that the Student Lead will be doing any data analysis outside his private residence; however, this lockout function will still be enabled.

For data safety and security purposes the code breaking file that links each pseudonym to the participant’s identity will be stored in with a unique file code in a designated folder separate from any other data in SFU Vault for enhanced security. Only the Student Lead will have access to this information. This file will be retained up to successful completion and defense of the Student Lead’s dissertation, at which point the file will be destroyed.

Analytical Technique

As this is a qualitative research project, the Student Lead will not be imposing pre-set categories on the data. The analysis will involve letting themes and patterns emerge from the data in an inductive manner.

All audio-recorded interviews will be transcribed verbatim by the Student Lead. Interview data will then be coded using a grounded theory approach and analyzed in an inductive manner. Moreover, the responses of the participants will be analysed in relation to the available literature in order to determine whether the responses were consistent with what is known thus far and to link the emergent themes to the broader context. Moreover, throughout the transcription and analytic phase, it will be important to remain reflexive and to be mindful of any biases that I may have that could impact the analysis.

Dissemination of Results

Participants will be given the option of receiving a copy of the completed Doctoral Dissertation. During the verbal consent process, participants will be asked if they wish to receive a copy of the completed Dissertation. If they accept this, a copy of the Dissertation will be distributed to them via email.

Risk/Benefit Analysis

Potential Risks

Risk to participants is minimal. As stated in the Confidentiality section, the individuals participating in the study will be guaranteed full confidentiality. Due to the fact that the information the participants provide the Student Lead will not pertain to illegal activity, they will be faced with little or no risk as a result of their involvement.

Furthermore, the interviewees will be routinely asked whether or not they wish to take a break and the Student Lead will respect their decisions not to answer certain questions. Additional safeguards, including restricting the age of participation to 19 years or older, will be put into place.

Demographic information including race, gender, and geographic location such as region or province, and vocation will be documented by the Student Lead. As participants in this study are public figures, this information is publicly accessible via police service websites and will be obtained prior to the interview. It will not be gathered during interviews. This information will be used for descriptive purposes and to track sample variation. The reason for tracking geographic information will be to see if there are differences in experiences by location.

There will be no risk to third parties, as specific references to names of people will be removed from the transcripts during the transcription process.

There will be no risk to the Student Lead. Interviews will be conducted via telephone or videoconference software from a private, and secure location of the Student Lead's residence.

Based on the aforementioned considerations, this project can be classified as minimal-risk due to the fact that the possible harms to the participants are no greater than what this group of participants are likely to experience in their everyday life, in accordance with SFU's ethics policy R 20.01. Any potential risks will be mitigated by the procedures set out above.

Potential Benefits

Participants in this study have the opportunity to provide their unique insights and experiences into police leadership and succession planning. They can discuss their personal philosophy on leadership and leadership succession, while also describing any unique or innovative strategies that they have developed to improve succession planning with the agencies that they have worked for or are currently working for. In doing so, they can contribute to and hopefully the existing body of knowledge on leadership and succession planning in Canadian policing.

Furthermore, participation in this research may also police leaders to be exposed to new ideas that they may ultimately wish to adopt moving forward. This project may also compel leaders to reflect upon the way in which their agency has addressed succession planning and to identify any gaps that exist or potential opportunities for improvement.

Finally, participants have a chance to provide their unique and important insights that have been developed from years spent in policing in the hopes of ultimately improving the profession for the better.

References Cited

- Barriball, K.L., & White, A. (1994). Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: A discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 19, 328-335.
- Griffiths, C.T. (2020). *Canadian Police Work* (5th ed.). Toronto: Nelson.

Appendix B

Introductory Recruitment Email



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
School of Criminology

Introductory Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is Joshua Murphy, and I am a Doctoral student in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University and Criminology instructor at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. I am currently working to complete my dissertation research on executive succession in Canadian policing. I am reaching out because I believe that you would be an excellent resource for this project.

This research is an exploratory study of police leaders' perceptions and experiences with executive leadership succession and succession planning. It is a topic that has largely been underexplored in Canada and, as such, I am trying to understand what executive succession currently looks like. That is, what systems are in place, what challenges exist, and what improvements need to be made. My hope is that by interviewing current and former Chief Constables, it will provide a clearer picture of what leadership succession looks like in Canadian policing in 2021 and needs to be done to improve succession planning moving forward. I hope to interview a sample of Chiefs and former Chiefs from across the country.

You have been sought out to participate in this research study because you are an adult over the age of 19 and are currently the Chief of a Canadian police service or have held that position in the past. Given your experience as a police leader in this country, I feel that you would be able to bring valuable insights to this research. To provide a more detailed description of this study, including the research process, research protocols and participant anonymity and confidentiality, I have attached the informed consent document to this email. If, after reading this email and the attached consent form – which provides a description about all relevant study details, as well as outlining processes for

maintaining confidentiality – you are interested in participating in this project, please feel free to send me an email or call me at.

I realize that you are obviously very busy in your current role, and any time you could carve out for an interview would be greatly appreciated should you choose to participate. It is expected that the interview will last between sixty to ninety minutes, but I would be more than willing to conduct a shorter interview if necessary. You, and your agency will be anonymous and anything that you say will remain confidential.

Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews will be conducted using teleconferencing platform Zoom or telephone (whichever you prefer). If you are interested in participating in this research, you can reach out and I will work to set up a date and time at your convenience. If you have further questions or concerns about the study, feel free to direct them to me or to my senior supervisor, Dr. Curt T. Griffiths.

Thank you so much for your time,

Josh Murphy

Appendix C

Informed Oral Consent Document



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
School of Criminology

Informed Oral Consent Script

**Project Title: Taking the Reins: An Exploratory Study of Executive Leadership
Succession and Succession Planning in Canadian Policing**

Hello, my name is Joshua Murphy, and I am a PhD student in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University. The purpose of this research is to explore how police services train, educate, identify, and select candidates for executive leadership positions. In particular, I will be focusing on executive leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian policing. The information collected in this interview will be presented in my Doctoral Dissertation, and potentially in other publications or conference presentations.

Prior to starting the interview, I am going to go through the verbal consent process with you. Please have the consent form that I emailed to you in front of you and we will go through the form together. If you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to ask.

I am now going to read through a series of consent statements with you. Please indicate whether you consent (or refuse consent) with a verbal declaration in the affirmative or negative.

Do you understand the information I have just outlined?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do you have any questions?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do I have your consent to conduct the interview?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do I have your consent to audio-record the interview?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do I have your consent to take detailed notes during the interview?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do I have your consent to use direct quotations (under a pseudonym) from this interview in the final report?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do I have your consent to keep the transcript and notes from this interview for a period of two years (24 months) after the completion of this project?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do you wish to receive a completed copy of the final Doctoral Dissertation?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do you consent to the researcher retaining your contact details in order to contact you in the future for participation in additional research?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do you consent to being re-contacted for follow-up purposes?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Do you consent to being contacted in the future for participation in future research?

_____ *Respondent says yes*

_____ *Respondent says no*

Consent Given By: _____

Consent Obtained By: _____

Time of Consent: _____

Date of Consent: _____

Appendix D

Interview Guide



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
School of Criminology

Interview Guide

Taking the Reins: An Exploratory Study of Executive Leadership Succession and Succession Planning in Canadian Policing

Introduction:

Thank you for your consent to participate in this research project about leadership succession and succession planning in Canadian policing. Before we begin, I want to provide you with a general outline of how the interview will take place. The interview will begin with several open and closed ended questions about your experience in policing and your journey to become a police leader. This will be followed by some general questions about leadership, succession, and succession planning. Next, I will ask a series of more specific questions, that focus on your experiences upon being promoted/hired to the position of Chief – the challenges and opportunities that you faced upon entering your position. I will then ask you to discuss the current leadership development opportunities that are available for aspiring police leaders. Finally, I will conclude with a series of forward-looking questions, looking to identify next steps and areas or opportunities for improvement. At any point during the interview, you are free to decline to answer any question. Further, if you are unable to answer a question or do not feel comfortable answering a question for any reason, please let me know and I will move on.

I want to remind you that everything you say here will remain confidential. In the interests of confidentiality, once the interview begins, neither of us will refer to you directly by name. If your name is mentioned by accident, I will ensure that any identifying information will be replaced with a pseudonym in the transcript and your name will not be mentioned in the research notes.

Do you have any questions? Do you feel that you have a complete and total understanding of the details of this project and the processes surrounding confidentiality and anonymity?

[If the participant answers no or if the researcher is not satisfied with the answer to the previous question]:

“I am sorry, but based on your response to my question, I do not feel that you have a complete understanding of relevant details of this project. As such, I don’t feel that you are able to fully consent to this interview. I am sorry, but I do not feel comfortable proceeding with this interview and your participation in the project is concluded. Thank you very much for your time.”

[If the researcher is comfortable and feels that the participant is competent to proceed, then the interview will proceed].

Great, then let’s begin the interview.

General questions about participants:

- Tell me a little about your career in policing. How long have you been in policing? How long were you Chief at your previous agency? How long have you been Chief with your current agency?
- When did your aspirations to become a policing executive come from? Was this something you’d always aspired to?
- How did you get into the leadership pipeline? Where were there any specific opportunities provided to you? Or any specific training/education you received while in service?

General questions about succession:

- Describe your understanding of sustainable leadership in policing?
- What role does succession play in leadership?
- Describe your understanding of succession planning?
- How would you assess the use of executive succession planning in municipal policing in the province?

- What role do police boards play in succession planning; (since they select chiefs); do you think that police boards consider succession planning as part of their decision-making processes?
- Discuss your current agency's strengths regarding succession planning and sustainable leadership. What about your previous one?
- What is the climate for succession planning in your agency?
- What is your agency's capacity for implementing succession planning?
- Identify the challenges or barriers to implementing executive succession planning?
- What are some of the internal and external factors that you believe influence executive succession planning in policing?
- What advice would you offer to other police leaders to address succession planning and sustainable leadership?

Specific/experiential questions about succession:

- Were you promoted/hired to your current position from within the organization or did you come from another organization?
- If multiple Chief jobs, compare contrast the experience as an internal and external hire.
- Can you reflect on the benefits/challenges of being promoted to Chief from within the organization to coming in as an outsider?
- What are the challenges/opportunities in assuming the position after another Chief had left?

Questions regarding education and continuous learning opportunities:

- How would you assess the importance of educational opportunities/programs to executive succession planning?
- Describe the current opportunities for education and continuous learning that exist for those who are on the executive leadership "track" or are hoping to get into executive positions? How would you assess their effectiveness or relevance?
- Did you have the opportunity to obtain additional education and training related to leadership as you progressed through the organization? Was this helpful? How so?
- What do you believe are the "core competencies" that are required for police executives?

- What type of training do you feel is most relevant to executive succession? What type of training programs/opportunities would you like to see being implemented?
- Do you believe that having an advanced degree is necessary for executive candidates?

Forward-looking questions:

- Moving forward, how can the issues you've identified here be addressed?
- Do you think that there should be a standardized template of competencies for selecting Chiefs? What about a standardized succession process/guide for police boards/commissions?
- The need for diversity in policing is a subject that has been prevalent for some time now. And while, policing has seemingly made more of an effort and creating a more diverse workforce than other CJS agencies, the prevailing sentiment is that more needs to be done, particularly at executive levels. In your mind, how does, diversity factor into succession planning (if at all)?
- What role is diversity playing in succession planning and the next generation of police leaders? How do you balance creating a diverse executive with making sure to select the best candidates for the job?

Concluding words

That is all of my questions. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we did not cover, or is there anything that you feel I should have asked, but did not?

I want to sincerely thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. I know your time is valuable and I appreciate it immensely. If you have any further comments, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me personally, or to reach out to Dr. Griffiths. Both mine and Dr. Griffiths' contact information is included in the consent form that you were given prior to the interview.

Take care and thank you.