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The Application of Kahneman's Concepts to Marketing Police in Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Marketing concepts are rarely applied to policing, although for most modern societies it is an essential function and part of the social contract between governments at all levels and the publics they serve. In this paper, we look specifically at how marketing concepts apply to policing in Ontario, Canada. We frame our examination with concepts like the halo effect, the availability effect, and other ideas outlined by Kahneman (2013).

INTRODUCTION: MARKETING IN POLICING

Policing is a service provided under societal consent to the members of public, derived from Social Contract Theory. Social Contract Theory professes that the citizens in the society have given up some freedoms individually for a collective protection of rights in the society (D'Agostino, Gaus, & Thrasher, 2019). The state, in the broad sense of government, appoints policing organizations to uphold the said social contract. Policing is essential under both Hobbesian and Rousseau views of social organization. Both rely on personal property and common property, and on the enforcement of rules of law. Not every form of social order requires policing, but the dominant forms in the world do require it (Graeber and Wengrow, 2021).

Most modern societies require organized policing. Regardless of the individual views of the organizations that carry out this function, policing remains an essential government service. Policing includes matters ranging from providing protection and safety, investigating violent crimes, investigating serious property crimes, preventing crimes, enforcing laws and regulations, and assisting the community as required. For this relationship to take place, it is essential that a good relationship and reputation be built by the police. We examine how the behavioral economics as explained in Kahneman (2013) can be applied to develop these within Canadian police organizations in Ontario. Fundamentally, these findings can be used to implement marketing strategies and tactics in Ontario policing.

Policing is rarely viewed through the lens of marketing, but that is the primary way that this work contributes to the academic literature. It looks as policing through traditional lenses associated with marketing strategy, with the 4Ps, and with market reputation. In the traditional marketing sense, these include manageable concepts and techniques that can alter the reputation of an industry or of a specific brand. This work underscores the importance of word-of-mouth (WOM) for promoting policing and maintaining a positive reputation with the public and decision-making officials. Policing as an industry has not been studied extensively in relation to marketing and the effects of marketing strategies on police organizations are not well understood. Nevertheless, enormous potential exists in application of marketing tactics and strategies to policing to improve the reputations of police forces. .

We start with the market structures of policing, but then proceed to examine how policing looks under the conceptual structures offered by Ansoff, Borden, and Kahneman. The results seem revelatory. This paper focuses on policing in Canada, but Canadian policing serves primarily as an example for policing other countries.

POLICING IN CANADA

Policing as an industry grows primarily through increase in number of police officers, which is regulated usually with a concept of ‘pop-to-cop ratio or population to police officer ratio’. This ratio determines the minimum required number of police officers needed to serve a given population. Therefore, an increase in the general population would result in an increased number of police officers. In Canada, Police organizations employed approximately 70,000 personnel and cost approximately \$15.7 billion in 2019 (Conor, Carrière, Amey, Marcellu, & Sauvé, 2020)

Market Structure in Policing

Policing lacks traditional services or goods to sell in open markets, so it cannot be classified under a single structure. Policing can be termed as a state monopoly in the sense that the government or state assigns one organization responsible for policing services, and the public cannot shop around for a different supplier. At the same time, policing can be a variant of an oligopoly, where the State has multiple authorized organizations offering policing services. This can be the source of jurisdictional disputes that often appear in popular police shows. In this case the segments such as offenders, complainants, and victims are considered subgroups of one larger segment – the public--policing can also be considered a monopsony.

The 4Ps in Policing

Product/Service. In policing, product/service differentiation occurs through the state sanctioned responsibilities. Law enforcement organizations provide differing services such as correctional systems, border security, specialized substance enforcement and administration, rural policing, highway policing, municipal policing, and other specializations in each category. Although the consumer in this industry is the public, the public lacks the ability to readily switch to another service provider. Instead, the public is represented by administrative and legislative government bodies. In these scenarios, the public influences these public choices, but does not make them.

Promotions. Police organizations are constantly under pressure to gain and keep public approval of their performance. In the past, discontentment with the Police has resulted in rioting and significant loss of property and injuries (Poon & Patino, 2020). These circumstances can inspire negative WOM, so WOM is a key variable in marketing the reputations of police departments and policing in general. It impacts the level of satisfaction, contentment, and perceived quality of the service in the minds of the public. We address this in detail in a later section. Many policing organizations, especially large ones, also have public relations professionals and public relations programs. Too often, these organizations end up battling negative WOM that was derived from highly publicized encounters between police and members of the public.

Key Organizations in Canada

In Canada, majority of policing takes place through contract. Governments at a provincial and a municipal level contract the policing of a jurisdiction to an existing police service. Three Provinces have a provincial police force – Sûreté du Québec (SQ) in Quebec, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in Ontario, and Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is the federal policing agency and acts as the provincial police force in eight provinces and two territories.

Most of the sizeable municipalities, cities and towns employ a municipal police force. Furthermore, there are first nations jurisdictions have their own First Nations police services. As of 2019, Canada had 137 municipal police services and 36 First Nations police services (Canada, 2019). RCMP remained the biggest policing organization, followed by the OPP and municipal police services.

MARKETING STRATEGIES IN POLICING: FRAMING VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Incorporating typical business strategies makes little sense for policing since they usually operate without routine competition (Ormanidhi & Stringa, 2008). However, Ansoff's Matrix offers some insights into how policing organizations might frame and use the 4Ps of marketing. Policing and other social services vie for taxpayer funds under scrutiny. Increasing services while keeping taxes in check is at the forefront of this industry. Policing organizations differentiate services on an individual level, rather than differentiating it for a segment. For instance, a law enforcement officer deals with a complainant or a person in the need of assistance according to individual needs and circumstances surrounding the incident. At the end of contractual plans with the municipal governments, OPP portrays cost leadership by providing more policing with less taxes, and differentiation by providing law enforcement abilities specific to the municipality i.e., use of drones for large rural communities (Bureau, 2013).

The 4Ps in Marketing Police. Each of the 4Ps applies to the police. For product, policing has its core services, plus those that do not necessarily come to mind among citizens. Police organizations can increase enforcement with expansion of existing services in the existing jurisdiction, a form of market penetration in Ansoff's terms. Police can introduce new technology such as Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and Geographic Information System (GIS) in fighting crime in an existing jurisdiction, a form of product development (Herchenrader & Myhill-Jones, 2015). Police Organizations can expand their jurisdiction by

adding new municipal contracts and altering policing according to specific municipality concerns, a form of market development, on that would depend on some form of promotion (Shaw, 2012).

We will discuss that part of promotions in greater detail in the section on applying behavioral economics concepts to marketing policing. Police organizations usually maintain some form of both public relations and social media presence, but both of those become more critical when the media focuses on specific police behavior.

Pricing. Pricing plays a role in opening new markets for police organizations. The primary driver behind expansion of a police service into a newer jurisdiction is the cost-benefit analysis by the government. Police executives may persuade a municipality on eliminating the existing police agency either through severance, absorption, or amalgamation, usually by promising better policing for less taxes. Police services target municipal police boards responsible for appointing a police service.

In the recent times, two mid-sized Ontario towns switched municipal police service providers. First, the town of Amherstburg with a population of 22,000 switched to the neighboring Windsor Police Service in 2019, citing a cost saving of approx. \$570,000 per year (Hill, 2019). Second, the town of Orangeville with a population of 29,000 switched to Ontario Provincial Police in 2020, achieving cost savings of \$58 million over the next 16 years (Halliday, 2020). The combined ideas of better or more services for the same or less money suggest that policing most often uses value-based pricing. This aims to create psychological value among the decision-makers and the public.

THREE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN MARKETING ONTARIO POLICE

Kahneman (2013), in *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, identified many psychological factors that affect efficient decision making and the thought processes driving behavior and action in policing. Many of these also have implications for marketing policing, particularly how the public judges service quality and how the police perceive and react to specific situations. In this work, we address four of these concepts: two systems, framing, the halo effect, and the availability effect. These each have implications for the behavior of individuals police officers in the field and for the management of public expectations.

Two Systems and Operating mind of a Patrol Officer

Kahneman (2013) describes two ways of brain functioning: System 1 with quick, effortless, and automatic operation, and System 2 with complicated, effortful, calculated responses. A Police Officer on patrol employs System 1 to make decisions such as driving, answering radio and phone, and routine tasks at the Police Station. Police Officer utilizes System 2 in investigations, report writing and making tactical decisions.

Problems arise in these arenas when System 1 takes over in a situation that calls for System 2. The quality of police behavior is more important to reputation as a trusted entity than instrumentality, the enforcement of laws. Relationships and expressive behaviors are much more likely to lead to trust. Clark et al. (2017), in an extensive global study, identified what they called

the genetic code of trust in policing. It consists of six characteristics of trust: 1) trust is fragile; 2) trust is reciprocal; 3) trust cannot be aggregated; 4) trust is derived from policing by consent of the policed; 5) trust demands validation; and 6) trust demands accountability. These six characteristics have marketing implications for policing. The idea that trust cannot be aggregated in this industry is an important one. It means that each individual interaction between police officers and the public can have more general implications for trust in the police. Also, negative individual encounters are likely to draw media attention and damage the reputation of the wider force, enveloping police officers and police forces that had nothing to do with the encounters

In a US study, Rivera-Cuadrado (2021) found that police understand their collective reputations through the lens of faulty reputations, an expectation that most negative reputations are “unearned--rooted in hearsay, prejudice, and misunderstandings about policing practices” (Rivera-Cuadrado, 2021, p. 1). He maintains that the Faulty Reputations Paradigm should lead to strategies that help to structure reputation management, particularly community-based policing. He found that US police officers have conflicting attitudes toward community based policing, something that interferes with adopting long-term reforms and restructuring (Rivera-Cuadrado, 2021). Canadian policing seems to suffer considerably less from these issues, in part because of the foundation of the system.

Framing and Loss Aversion application in undesirable public interactions

Kahneman (2013) explains framing as a concept of presentation of a situation in different ways. Although the situation remains unchanged, subject’s viewpoint can be entirely different, either positive or negative, depending on how the situation is presented. Positive framing of a situation will lead to acceptance and focusing on the negative will likely cause rejection. He also argues that people respond more strongly to losses than to gains and will take more risk and put more effort to avoid loss even when the chances of loss are marginal compared to achieving gains in the same situation.

Both of these cognitive constructs can be used in daily policing. For example, police traffic unit officers in traffic enforcement use these ideas regularly. Police officers issue citations to speeding motorists or motorists in contravention of traffic laws. This situation is undesirable to the motorist. Police officers usually frame the situation into a more acceptable one by bringing up another contravention or positives despite the motorist receiving the fine. Police officer will remind the motorist of an expired plate tag, expired vehicle document or other offences that occur along with the speeding and warn for multiple offences while issuing a citation for only one offence. Police officers will frame this as a positive as the motorist could have been in a much worse situation by receiving citations for more than one contravention. Police officers will also bring motorist’s attention to their prior clean driving record and advise that the citation will not affect the motorist’s insurance premiums. These encounters would seem to have reputational implications based on the earlier discussions, and consequently, marketing implications.

Officers in Ontario also have the discretion to enter a lower speed on a citation as opposed to the actual speed observed, providing the motorists with some relief. However, upon using such discretion, officers remind the motorist that in case the motorist chooses to take the matter to Court trial and loses, the original speed will be entered as a conviction. This greatly reduces

motorists challenging the speeding tickets in court, as they do not want to risk being charged an increased fine. This exemplifies the officer's understanding of loss aversion in the motorist.

Availability, Emotions, and Risk and Their effects on Public Perception of Police Investigations Kahneman (2013) wrote of the availability heuristic, which is defined as reliance on readily available information to make a judgement. However, the information is readily available because of repetition or an experience, but the information is usually not accurate or reliable. Kahneman cites public perception of causes of death as distant from the reality despite the statistics on various causes. For example, death by accidents was judged to be more than 300 times more likely than death by diabetes, but the true ratio is 1:4. This can occur due to experiencing a narrative or repetition from media or news. This is also reflected in the way the public perceives the police based on news coverage of negative events. It also shows up in the public's expectations about police performance.

Policing must often deal with the 'CSI Effect'. The CSI effect refers to influence on public's perception of forensic evidence in investigations and trials. Affected members of public expect a higher standard of evidence, increased police capabilities and employment of forensic investigation techniques routinely even for property crimes of lesser value. Public perception of fingerprint investigation is informed by TV shows such as CSI, where an investigator employs fingerprint identification technology for every case and receives results within seconds. However, techniques such as matching fingerprints can take upwards of few weeks, and in most jurisdictions is not allowed in cases other than bodily harm, death, or massive financial loss (Cole, 2015).

The CSI effect exemplifies the availability effect. Television depictions have given the public false impressions of forensic science in practice. Consequently, what comes to the public consciousness in perceiving real forensic science is a fictional version of the discipline.

Conclusions and Call for Further Research

Policing needs marketing, although the activities that we associate with marketing might be called by other names. When trust between the police and the public meet all the criteria described in Clark et al. (2017), then policing as an industry will have an easier time 'selling itself' to the public and to elected officials. Reputation should be viewed as the outcome of the marketing of policing. While Clark et al. (2017) examined the "DNA" of good reputations, further research might pursue the "DNA" of bad reputations. These might also have policy and marketing implications that would be useful to the industry. Finally, the relationships between the public, parts of the public, and police forces will remain fluid. That means constant monitoring and continued research.

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