International Centre for Criminal Law
Reform and Criminal Justice Policy

Police Relationships with Visible Minorities

A Review of the Impact of the 20-Year Effort by Police in British Columbia and Canada to Improve Visible Minorities' Assessments of Police Services

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August 2022

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Summary

Strained police relations with visible minorities are reflected in the fact that these minorities are much less likely than other citizens to view the police as legitimate, fair, or trustworthy, or to report crime to the police. Police in and outside of Canada have long understood the importance of improving their relationship with minorities, and in this regard, they have undertaken multiple initiatives intended to improve minority-police relations. Considerable resources and energy were devoted to trying to enhance police relationships with various visible minority groups. These efforts have included extensive outreach initiatives, force-wide sensitivity training for police officers, substantial recruitment and promotion of minorities, and policy changes relating to police practices. Have those efforts made any significant difference in how visible minorities view the police?

This study was undertaken as a step toward understanding how the relationship between police services and their host communities has evolved over the years. It examined the extent to which police efforts aimed at improving police-minority relations over the past 20 years have improved perceptions of the police among visible minority groups in Canada (with special attention to British Columbia). More specifically, the study examined the degree to which attitudes of visible minorities over that 20-year period between 1999 and 2019 can be distinguished from those of the overall population in Canada and British Columbia – with special attention to the matter of crime victims' contacts with police. The core analysis for this study involved a comparison of data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) panels on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) conducted in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019.

The findings of the analysis tell a simple story. The GSS national data collected over a period of twenty years do not show significant improvements in how visible minorities in British Columbia and in Canada perceive the police. Visible minorities

hold more negative views of police behaviour than non-minorities. Minorities are less likely than non-minorities to agree that police treat people fairly or do a good job in approaching people. Since the turn of the century, minorities' views of police behaviour and fairness have generally worsened. Notably, by 2019 those views had become more negative than at any time in the previous twenty years. By then, survey results indicated that less than half of visible minorities agreed that police treat people fairly and do a good job in the way they approach people.

While it is true that a similar deterioration of views of the police was also observed among Canadians in general, the persistent gap between minority and non-minority views in British Columbia is an ongoing concern. That gap can be interpreted as an indication that the efforts of police organizations to improve their relationships with visible minorities did not bare the expected results or worse, that minorities are still reacting to what they perceive or experience as discrimination. That situation is not unique to Canada. The much poorer perception of the police by visible minorities as compared to non-minorities is also apparent to one extent or another in the United States, the UK, Australia, and throughout Europe.

Evidently, much remains to be learned about the process by which relationships between the police and visible minority groups can be improved. Beyond training, improved communication strategies, better relationship with the media, or consultations with visible minority leaders, or even new technologies, police organizations need to be looking for new approaches to improve their relationships with visible minorities. Improved police governance, transparency, and accountability, with greater participation of members of visible minorities, are likely to be key to the implementation of a broader vision of procedural justice.

Police leaders need to set a higher bar in terms of what they expect of their organizations and officers in terms of community-police relations, including and especially during daily interactions between the police and members of visible minorities.

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Introduction

For the past 20 years, as part of their community relations efforts, law enforcement agencies throughout the Western world have devoted considerable resources and energy to try to enhance their relationships with various visible minority groups (e.g., Toronto Police Service, 2003; Ungerleider and McGregor, 1993; Bhugowandeen, 2013; Johnson, 2015; Vancouver Police Department, 2020 and 2022). These efforts have included extensive outreach initiatives, force-wide sensitivity training for police officers, substantial recruitment and promotion of minorities, and policy changes relating to police practices. They have also been accompanied by highly publicized calls for, and commitments to, championing diversity and fairness in and outside individual police departments (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Vancouver Police Department, 2020 and 2022). While these efforts are important for reasons other than the impact that they may have on improving relationships between police and visible minorities, their primary goal has been to improve police-minority relations.

Have those efforts made any significant difference in how visible minorities feel about the police? At first glance, the answer would have to be a resounding "no", given the highly publicized reactions and sometimes protests of visible minorities in response to various incidents of police misconduct, discrimination and abuse of power in some jurisdictions (Zimmy, 2015; Egharevba, 2018; Gilberstadt, 2020; Dodd, 2020). Currently, police throughout the Western world are accused of racial discrimination (Ekins, 2016; Dodd, 2020; Stelkia, 2020; Weber, 2020; Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 2022). It also seems that, in many jurisdictions, public confidence in the police has not improved over the years, not only among visible minorities but also among the population as a whole (Jones, 2021; European Union

Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2021). This lack of improvement in public attitudes toward police persisted despite a significant and on-going decline in overall crime rates over the past two decades across the Western world.[1] In short, there is reason to suspect that the relationships between police and visible minorities has tended to worsen rather than improve, despite police attempts to improve them.

With that in mind, this study did not assume that attitudes of minorities toward police might have worsened over time, nor that these attitudes were more negative than those of non-minorities. However, it was reasoned that one could get a better sense of the impact of police efforts to improve its relationships with visible minorities in Canada and especially in British Columbia by examining the data from five iteration of Statistics Canada General Social Survey over the past twenty years. Specifically, it was hypothesized that police efforts had had a positive impact on the views of visible minorities in Canada and that one should expect this outcome to be reflected in increasingly positive views of the police among visible minorities survey respondents over time.

To the extent that such a longitudinal comparison reveals a lack of improvement in the attitudes of visible minorities towards the police, it underscores the need for police to implement different strategies to improve their relationships with visible minorities. This is especially critical given Canada's evolving demographics; over the next decade the percentage of visible minorities nationally and specifically in British Columbia is expected to increase dramatically.[2] Current indications are that, should current rates of immigration and countries of origin remain constant, the visible minority population is likely to increase by as much as 50% in British Columbia where it could constitute to up at least 33% of the population.[3] Should it prove to be the

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[1] Declines in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom are very good examples. See Roeder, Eisen, Bowling, Clarke, and Chettiar (2015), Brown (2015), Redgrave (2018), and Moreau (2021).

[2] Statistics Canada (2017). "Population by visible minority group, place of residence and projection scenario, Canada, 2011 and 2036: 2036 - Projected according to the reference scenario." Also see: Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (2020). *2020 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

[3] Statistics Canada (2017) "Population by visible minority group, place of residence and projection scenario, Canada, 2011 and 2036: 2036 - Projected according to the reference scenario.". Also see: Dion, P., Caron-Malenfant, É., Grondin, C., & Grenier, D. (2015). "Long-Term Contribution of

case that nothing changes in terms of police approaches to the issue, it is to be feared that police relationships with visible minority may deteriorate.

Notwithstanding other important social and human rights considerations, from a public safety perspective the issue deserves attention because research has demonstrated that police effectiveness in dealing with crime is positively related to the public's confidence in police services (Bolger, Lytle, and Bolger, 2021). For example, we know that public support for the police is related to the public's willingness to report crime to the police and to cooperate with them (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019). We also know that public support for funding of police services as well as recent calls for "de-funding" the police are strongly associated with the public's views of the police (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019; Dodd, 2020; Bolger, Lytle, and Bolger, 2021).

The present study was undertaken as a step toward understanding how the relationship between police services and their host communities has evolved over the years. It proposed to examine the extent to which police efforts aimed at improving police-minority relations over the past 20 years have changed perceptions of the police among members of visible minority groups. Specifically, the study pursued the following three main goals:

1. To provide a picture of temporal changes in attitudes toward police services in Canada (with specific attention to British Columbia) over the 20-year period 1999-2019. More specifically, the study aimed to provide a picture of the degree to which attitudes of visible minorities over that 20-year period can be distinguished from those of the overall population in Canada and British Columbia – with special attention to the matter of crime victims' contacts with police.

2. To compare what we know about temporal patterns in attitudes toward police in British Columbia with what is known about attitudes toward police

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Immigration to Population Renewal in Canada: A Simulation." *Population and Development Review*, 41(1), 109–126.

in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and throughout the European Union.

3. To suggest how the police could re-evaluate the value and impacts of their current efforts to strengthen relationships with visible minorities and consider more effective change strategies.

Method

The core analysis for this study involved a comparison of Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) panels on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) that were conducted in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019.[4] The panels consist of telephone interviews of respondents aged 15 years and older. Interviews were conducted with over 30,000 randomly selected Canadians with responses being stratified by province and other significant geographical locations. While the number of responses varies by panel, the number of respondents in British Columbia tended to be approximately 3,500 per survey. Respondents were selected at random with the sample varying across the panels.

Two files of the GSS are made available by Statistics Canada: a main analytical file and an incident file. The core analysis for this study was based on the main analytical file which provides information on the characteristics of the respondents. The selected data related to information on minority status, whether a respondent had been a victim of a crime, whether they lived in British Columbia, and how respondents answered two questions they were asked during the surveys about their perception of the police. Those survey questions were: "Do police do a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to?" and "Do police do a good job of treating people fairly?"[5] While the data analysis considered all possible responses to these

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[4] Except for panel data from the Statistics Canada 2019 survey, the data used in this analysis were obtained through Statistics Canada's Data Liberation Initiative: specifically, ODESI – the Ontario Data Documentation, Extraction Service and Infrastructure Initiative. Data from the 2019 Statistics Canada survey were not available through ODESI at the time of our analysis. However, some data from the 2019 survey were available as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019" (D. Ibrahim, 2020).

[5] Statistics Canada asks Canadians four other questions relating to their attitudes regarding how good a job police are doing, including: 1) "Do police do a good job of enforcing the law?" 2) "Do police do a good job of responding to calls?" 3) "Do police do a good job of supplying information?" 4) "Do police do

two questions, including "good job", "average job", and "poor job", its main focus was on the percentage of respondents who stated that the police do a "good job". It was in that response category that responses most clearly differentiated among the groups considered (i.e., minorities/non-minorities, victims/non-victims, Canada/British Columbia).

Although some iterations of the survey included questions about confidence in the police, the varying formulation of the questions and the response choices made it difficult to identify trends over time. [6] The data relating to confidence in the police were therefore not included in the present analysis.

The available GSS data proved to have some limitations for our temporal analysis. Specifically, the question of whether respondents interacted with police as a victim was not included in the 2014 data. Further, the question whether police do a good job of treating people fairly was not included in the 1999 data. As well, the question about how much confidence respondents have in police was not asked until the 2009 panel survey. Finally, as explained in Footnote #4 above, the Statistic Canada panel for 2019 had to be accessed through a November 2020 *Juristat* report. Despite these limitations, the data still made possible to examine how the views of minorities toward police generally compare to non-minorities in Canada over time.

In addition to the core analysis, a review of available data from other countries was conducted based largely on national surveys conducted or research reports available in selected countries. As will be discussed later, this review also presented some challenges but nevertheless made it possible to develop a picture of the differences observed internationally between minority and non-minority views of the police.

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a good job of ensuring public safety?". For of each question, respondents can either reply "Good job", "Average job", or "Poor job".

[6] This implication of these changing scales are discussed by Maslov (2016) "Measuring the Performance of the Police", Research Report 2015-RO34, Public Safety Canada.

Before presenting the results of the study's core analysis, it may be helpful to consider recent surveys relating to differences in perceptions of the police between minorities and non-minorities in Canada.

Differences in reported perceptions of police among minorities and non-minorities in Canada.

Ibrahim's (2020) report on *Public Perceptions of the Police in Canada's Provinces* contains a telling analysis of differences between minorities and non-minorities in Canada. Drawing on data taken from the 2019 General Social Science Survey (GSS) on Victimization, the report allows for a comparison between minorities and non-minorities with respect to a host of questions asked about attitudes toward police. Table 1 below, which displays the findings regarding three important questions asked, reveals a very disturbing picture. To begin with, less than half of Canadians have high praise for police on some important issues. Specifically, only 42% of all respondents say, "police do a good of treating people fairly"[7], only 49% of all respondents say, "police do a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to"[8], and only 41% of all respondents say that they have a "great deal of confidence in police."[9]

Then when comparing minorities to non-minorities, the picture is even more disturbing (Table 1). Specifically,

- While 45% of non-minorities say police do a good job of treating people fairly, only 41% of visible minorities overall, 37% of First Nations, 36% of established immigrants, 37% of South Asians, 37% of Latin Americans, 32% of Black people, 28% of Chinese, 25% of South-East Asian, 38% of Lesbians, and 36% of Bisexual Canadians, say the same.

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[7] Alternatively, respondents had the choice of answering "average", "poor", or "don't know".

[8] Alternatively, respondents had the choice of answering "average", "poor", or "don't know".

[9] Alternatively, respondents had the choice of answering "some confidence", "not very much", and "no confidence".

- While 53% of non-minorities say police do a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to, only 40% of visible minorities overall, 41% of First Nations, 45% of established immigrants, 46% of South Asians, 40% of Latin Americans, 43% of Black people, 32% of Chinese, 40% of South-East Asians, 47% of Lesbian, and 34% of Bisexual Canadians, say the same.

- While 44% of non-minorities say they have a great deal of confidence in the police, only 35% of visible minorities overall, 27% of First Nations, 39% of established immigrants, 36% of Latin Americans, 38% of Black people, 26% of Chinese, 25% of South-East Asians, 31% of Lesbians, and 25% of Bisexual Canadians, offered this rating.

In short, the 2019 GSS on Victimization report is one indicator that minorities in Canada are less likely than non-minorities to give high ratings to police with respect to how much confidence they award them, how they believe police treat people, and how easy they believe police are to interact with.

Table 1

Canadians' Perceptions of the Police in Canada in 2019*

Respondents being considered	% who say "police do a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to" **	% who say police do a good job of treating people fairly**	% who have a "great deal of confidence in police"***
Canadians overall	49	42	41
Non-minority	53	45	44
Visible minority	40	34	35
Non-Indigenous	49	42	42
Indigenous	44	41	30
First Nations	41		27
Non-immigrant	50	43	41
Immigrant	46	38	41
Recent Immigrant	50	48	46
Established immigrant	45	36	39
Filipino	48	45	39
Arab	46	38	37
Latin American	40	37	36
South Asian	46	37	44
Black	43	32	38
Chinese	32	28	26
South-East Asian	40	25	25
Lesbian or gay	47	38	31
Bisexual person	34	36	25
Had positive police contact in last twelve months	58	46	44
Had negative police contact in last twelve months	17	16	10

* Results taken from Statistics Canada survey data as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019", D. Ibrahim, *Juristat*, November 2020.
**Response categories are "good", "average", and "poor".
***Response categories are "a great deal of confidence", "some confidence", "not very much", and "no confidence".

Another recent Canadian public opinion survey, conducted by the Angus Reid Institute and reported by Korzinki (2020), reported significant difference in perceptions of the police between minorities and non-minorities. As Table 2 shows, the survey revealed that while 21% of Caucasians said that their interactions with police were "more negative than positive" or "totally negative", that percentage climbed to 25% for visible minorities and 29% for Indigenous people surveyed. Similarly, while 20% of Caucasians reported viewing their local police "unfavourably" or "very unfavourably", 24% of visible minorities and 25% of Indigenous people held this view. Further, while 14% of Caucasians reported feeling "less secure when personally seeing a police officer", 23% of visible minorities and 24% of Indigenous people felt this way. In sum, these are results which tell us again that minorities in Canada have a more negative view of police than do non-minorities.

Table 2
Negative Opinions of the Police in Canada in 2020*

Respondents being considered	% who report feeling "less secure when personally seeing a police officer"	% who report viewing police in their community "unfavorably" or "very unfavorably"	% who, in thinking about the way they were treated, viewed their interactions with police over the last five years as "more negative than positive" or "totally negative"
Caucasian	14	20	21
Visible minority	23	24	25
Indigenous	24	25	29

*Results taken from a 2020 Angus Reid Institute survey as reported in "Policing in Canada: Major study reveals four mindsets driving current opinions and future policy", D. Korzinki, Angus Reid Institute, October 2020.

While the findings of these two surveys are troubling, perhaps equally troubling is the picture presented when the attitudes of minorities are compared to those of non-minorities over time. That picture is presented next, based on an analysis of the GSS panels conducted in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019.

Attitudes of minorities and non-minorities towards the police: Change over time

The GSS panel data indicate that the views of visible minorities toward police in Canada have stayed consistently less favourable than those of non-minorities since the turn of the century. Specifically, as Table 3 shows, in each iteration of the survey from 1999 onward respondents were asked whether the local police do a "good, average, or poor" job in "being approachable and easy to talk to". In every instance minorities were less likely than non-minorities to respond that the police do a "good job". As Table 3 also shows, the percentages were far worse in 2019, than they were 20 years earlier. Interestingly, there was a slight uptick in 2014 from a slight decline from 1999 to 2009, but the drop in 2019 for both non-minorities and minorities is dramatic.

Table 3
Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in Canada who State that Police are Approachable and Easy to Talk to: 1999 – 2019*

Year of GSS Panel	% Non-minority respondents stating that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to	% Minority respondents stating that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to
1999	77	67
2004	74	66
2009	72	63
2014	73	70
2019	53	41

*Results from years 1999 to 2014 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2. Results from 2019, based on Statistics Canada Panel data, but taken from Statistics Canada survey data as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019", D. Ibrahim, *Juristat*, November 2020.

The same pattern is observed when comparing how minorities and non-minorities responded to the question about the extent to which they felt police treated people fairly. As Table 4 shows, for each year that citizens were asked whether local police do a "good", "average", or "poor" job in treating people fairly, fewer minorities stated

that police do a "good job". Once again, while fewer minorities (as compared to non-minorities) stated that police do a "good" job in 2014, there was an encouraging uptick in that year with respect to minorities and non-minorities. However, the results from the 2019 Statistics Canada survey panel show that the percentage of respondents stating that police do a good job in treating people fairly dropped to an all-time low – again, with minorities being far less likely than non-minorities to state that police do a good job in treating people fairly.

Looking at Table 5, it can be seen that the pattern also holds true when considering whether the respondent was a victim in each of the survey panel years 1999 to 2009. Specifically, in every panel year minority respondents who reported being a victim of crime were less likely than non-minorities who reported being a victim to state that police do a good job in being approachable and easy to talk to. However, it is also interesting to note that while the percentage of both non-minorities victims and victims who stated that police do a good job in being approachable and easy to talk to declined steadily over the 1999 to 2009 period, the decline was not as steady in the case of minorities.

Table 4

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in Canada Who State that the Police Treat People Fairly: 2004 – 2019*

Year of GSS Panel	% Non-minority respondents stating that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly	% Minority respondents stating that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly
2004	67	57
2009	65	55
2014	69	66
2019	45	34

*Results from years 2014 to 2014 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2. Results from 2019, based on Statistics Canada Panel data, but taken from Statistics Canada survey data as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019", D. Ibrahim, *Juristat*, November 2020.

Table 5

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in Canada Who State that the Police Are Approachable and Easy to Talk to: 1999-2009*
(Victims vs. Non-victims)

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to and reported victimization		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to and reported victimization	
	Victims only	Non-victims only	Victims only	Non-victims only
1999	69	78	57	69
2004	69	75	67	66
2009	66	73	61	63

*Results from years 1999 to 2009 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2.

On the matter of how victims and non-victims rate the police in terms of the extent to which they treat people fairly, data was only available for a 2004 – 2009 comparison, However, as Table 6 shows, the pattern is still apparent. Specifically, both minorities who have been victims and those who have not, were less likely than non-minority victims and non-victims to state that police do a good job in treating people fairly. Further, the results are more negative in 2009 than in 2004 – and disproportionately more negative for minorities as compared to non-minorities.

Table 6

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in Canada Who State that the Police Treat People Fairly by Reported Victimization: 2004-2009*

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly and reported victimization		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly and reported victimization	
	Victims only	Non-victims only	Victims only	Non-victims only
2004	69	75	67	66
2009	66	73	61	63

*Results from years 2004 to 2009 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2.

Although the GSS panels did not all yield the necessary information for a complete analysis of changes in citizen attitudes toward police in Canada over time, four conclusions can be drawn from the data. First, since 1999 minorities, as compared to non-minorities, have generally given lower ratings of police both with respect to how good a job police are seen to be doing in terms of being approachable and easy to talk to, and with respect to how good a job police are seen to be doing in terms of treating people fairly. Second other than an uptick in 2014, the ratings have not improved over time. Third, the 2019 GSS survey data make it clear that minority views of police in recent times are more negative than is the case with respect to non-minorities, and for both groups the views are more negative than they have ever been since 1999. Four, the pattern of more negative views of police among minorities (as compared to non-minorities) holds true when considering respondents who have been victims of crime.

The next part of the analysis provides a comparison of these national results to those for British Columbia.

Canada vs. British Columbia

For the 1999 and 2014 period, the differences between British Columbia and Canada overall are unremarkable. For instances, as Table 7 shows, British Columbia and Canada overall are similar with respect to the percentages of non-minorities who state that the police are approachable and easy to talk to. They are also similar with respect to the percentages of minorities who state police are approachable and easy to talk to. Further, in both British Columbia and Canada overall, minorities are fare less likely to state that police do a good job in terms of being approachable and easy to talk to. Moreover, both jurisdictions show a decline from 1999 to 2009, and uptick in 2014. At the same time though, it can be seen from Table 7 that the percentage between non-minorities and minorities who state that police are doing a good job in being approachable and easy to talk to is consistently greater among respondents in British Columbia. In short, the gap between non-minority and

minority views is relatively wider in each panel year in British Columbia than it is nationally (see bracketed percentages in Table 7).

Table 7

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities Who State that the Police Are Approachable and Easy to Talk to – Nationally vs British Columbia: 1999-2019*

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to	
	Nationally	British Columbia	Nationally	British Columbia
1999	77	77	67 (-10)**	65 (-12)
2004	74	76	66 (-8)	62 (-14)
2009	62	71	63 (-9)	59 (-12)
2014	73	75	70 (-3)	70 (-5)
2019	53	46	49 (-4)	No data

* Results from years 1999 to 2014 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2. Results from 2019, based on Statistics Canada Panel data, but taken from Statistics Canada survey data as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019", D. Ibrahim, *Juristat*, November 2020.
**These bracketed figures represent the percentage difference between non-minorities and minorities, with respect to how many respondents in each group stated that police are approachable and easy to talk to.

Unfortunately, data on minority respondents in British Columbia were not available for the 2019 panel year. However, as Table 7 also shows, it is notable that in 2019 non-minorities in British Columbia were less likely than non-minorities nationally to state that police are approachable and easy to talk to – and the percentages are at all-time lows for both British Columbia and Canada overall. Given these lows, and the pattern of data over the 1999 to 2014 period comparing non-minorities to minorities (and the dramatic drop in percentages in 2019 respecting non-minorities), it is likely that had 2019 data been available one would have observed an all-time low in British Columbia with respect to the percentage of minorities stating that police are approachable and easy to talk to. In that regard, one may consider that, at the national level, only 49% of minorities stated that police are approachable and easy to talk to – an all-time low (see Table 7).

Table 8

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities Who State that the Police Treat People Fairly – Nationally vs British Columbia: 2004-2019*

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly	
	Nationally	British Columbia	Nationally	British Columbia
2004	67	62	57	52
2009	65	61	55	49
2014	69	66	66	69
2019	42	40	40	No data

* Results from years 2004 to 2014 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2. Results from 2019, based on Statistics Canada Panel data, taken from Statistics Canada survey data as reported in "Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019", D. Ibrahim, *Juristat*, November 2020.

With respect to the question of how respondents viewed the matter of whether police treat people fairly, it can be seen from Table 8 that minorities in British Columbia in 2004 and 2009 were less likely than non-minorities to state that police treat people fairly. Minorities in British Columbia in 2004 and 2009 were also less likely than minorities in Canada overall to state that police treat people fairly. However, there was an uptick in 2014 where minorities in British Columbia we in fact more likely than non-minorities to state that police treat people fairly. Unfortunately, no data was available on minorities in British Columbia for 2019. Nevertheless, given the dramatic decrease in 2019 over previous panel years in the percentage of non-minorities in both Canada and British Columbia, and equally dramatic drop in 2019 over previous years with respect to minorities nationally, we can speculate that, had the 2019 survey asked that same question in 2019, the percentage of minorities stating that police treat people fairly would likely have reached an all-time low (Table 8).

Table 9

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in British Columbia Who State that the Police Are Approachable and Easy to Talk to, and reported victimization: 1999-2009*

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to and reported victimization		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in being approachable and easy to talk to and reported victimization	
	Victims only	Non-victims only	Victims only	Non-victims only
1999	72	79	49	68
2004	72	76	71	61
2009	57	72	53	59

*Results from years 1999 to 2009 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2.

Differences between non-minorities and minorities in British Columbia are even more apparent when the views of both victims and non-victims are compared. Specifically, as Table 9 shows, minority victims (as opposed to non-victims) are less likely to state that police are approachable and easy to talk to. That said, the same goes with respect to non-minorities – victims (as opposed to non-victims) in British Columbia are less likely to state that police are approachable and easy to talk to. In any case, as Table 9 also shows, there was an uptick in 2004 (from 1999) with respect to the percentage of victims who state that police are approachable and easy to talk to, but by the time of the 2009, the percentage had dropped again.

Table 10 provides yet another indication that victims are less likely to rate police higher than non-victims, and this appears to be true for both non-minorities and minorities. Specifically, as the table shows, victims as compared to non-victims in both 2004 and 2009 were less likely to state that the police treat people fairly. In British Columbia and for both GSS panel years, among respondents who did *not* respond a recent victimization minorities were less likely than non-minorities to state that the police treat people fairly (Table 10).

Table 10

Percentage of Minorities and Non-minorities in British Columbia Who State that the Police Treat People Fairly, and Reported Victimization: 2004-2009*

Year of GSS panel	Percent non-minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly and reported victimization		Percent minority respondents who state that police do a "good job" in treating people fairly and reported victimization	
	Victims only	Non-victims only	Victims only	Non-victims only
2004	60	62	46	52
2009	52	62	39	49

*Results from years 2004 to 2009 taken directly from an analysis of Statistics Canada Panel data as per footnote #2.

Despite the fact that data are only available for two of the five GSS panels, one may advance three tentative conclusions. First, views of police among British Columbians are somewhat more negative than those of Canadians overall. Second, as it is with Canadians overall, the views of British Columbians (at least with respect to the issues considered) are similar with respect to differences between minorities and non-minorities – with minorities generally being less likely to state that the police are approachable and easy to talk to, and less likely to say that the police treat people fairly. Third, the same patterns held true in British Columbia when considering whether respondents reported a victimization experience. Specifically, minorities who reported a victimization experience were generally less likely than minorities who did not report such an experience to view the police as approachable and easy to talk to or to state that the police treat people fairly.

Finally, whether considering the views of Canadians overall or those of British Columbians, minorities consistently held more negative views of police than have non-minorities. With the exception of an apparent improvement from 2009 to 2014, the views of minorities have not improved over time – especially when considering, for example, the results of the 2019 survey with respect to the question of whether police are doing a good job at being approachable and easy to talk to. As noted in

Table 1, only 40% of minorities (as compared to 53% of non-minorities) stated that the police were doing a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to. Moreover, as shown in Table 1, only 34% of minorities (as compared to 45% of non-minorities) were prepared to state that the police were doing a good job in treating people fairly. Those percentages are substantially lower in 2019 than those for any of the previous GSS panels since 1999.

Differences in attitudes between minorities and non-minorities in other countries

It is exceedingly difficult to make direct comparisons of attitudes toward the police across countries. The surveys conducted in other countries tend to be similar but rarely exactly the same, and the scales provided to answer questions vary considerably. For example, in asking about how much confidence respondents have in police, with respect to the positive side of a five-point scale, one country will use choices of "a great deal" and "fair amount", another will use "a great deal" and "quite a lot" or add on "some confidence" on the positive side of the scale, and yet another will use "strongly agree" and "agree" but put trust and confidence together in the same question.[10] Further, in some countries citizens have been surveyed using a global/single-item question about confidence in the police, while in other countries the question is a composite one. Pass, Madon, Murphy, and Sargeant (2020), illustrate the numerous problems of using a global or single item question in measuring trust in police, as opposed to multiple measures.[11]

Another difficulty in making cross-country comparisons resides in the fact that attitudes toward the police are influenced by multiple factors, most of which are difficult to measure for the purpose of a methodologically sound cross-jurisdictional

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[10] This use of scales problem is covered off quite nicely in Maslov (2016) "Measuring the Performance of the Police". Also, for a discussion of mixing confidence and confidence (and satisfaction) in assessments of police, see Cao (2015) "Differentiating confidence in the police, and satisfaction with the police".

[11] See Pass, Madon, Murphy, and Sargeant (2020) "To trust or distrust: Unpacking ethnic minority immigrants trust in police", Maslov (2016), and Morrell, Bradford, and Javid (2020) "What does it mean when we ask the public if they are 'confident' in policing? The trust, fairness, presence model of "public confidence'.

comparison. For example, national surveys tend to be conducted at different points in time and in different contexts. It is difficult to judge whether the results in any one of the national surveys considered were influenced by local events or the "news of the day." In short, valid international comparisons of people's attitudes toward the police are always difficult to achieve.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, our purpose here is not to conduct a strict comparison of public attitudes towards the police across jurisdictions but rather to compare some observed patterns in Canada to those seen in other countries. With this in mind, we examined survey results from the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union (with its 27 member nations), and Australia. The comparison revealed that minorities in Canada were not alone in holding less favorable opinions of the police than those of non-minorities.

United States

There is an extensive body of research showing that minorities in the United States have more negative views of police than those of non-minorities. As Murphy noted in citing studies from the turn of the century, in the United States "it has consistently been found that that racial minorities provide less favorable assessments of police and police conduct than White citizens" (Murphy, 2009: 160). While making the same observation, Morris (2011) called attention to nine research studies conducted prior to the turn of the century. Likewise, Cao cited numerous studies from the 1980s and noted that "African Americans and Hispanics appear to evaluate law enforcement less favorably than do Whites" (Cao, 2011: 2). More recently, Bolger and colleagues cited several studies conducted between 2005 and 2009 which found "that Black citizens hold less favorable views of police compared to White citizens" (Bolger, Lytle and Bolger, 2021: 2). The results of a 2002 US Department of Justice survey offer a glimpse of just how less favorably Black people and Hispanics viewed police as compared to Caucasians two decades ago (see selected views in Table 11). Overall, the results show that both Black people and Hispanics are far more likely than Whites to report perceived police prejudice and discrimination.

Table 11

Visible Minority Views of Local Police in the United States Twenty Years Ago (2002) *

Issues considered	Caucasian	Hispanic	Black
Percent "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the police department in their city	86	80	73
Percent report having been "stopped by the police on the street without good reason"	7	16	20
Percent who feel police in their city treat Black people worse than White people	24	54	75
Percent who feel police in their city treat Hispanic people worse than White people	22	53	74
Percent who feel police in their city treat Black people worse than Hispanic people	6	14	22
Percent who feel that racial or ethnic prejudice is "common" or "very common" about police officers who work in their city	40	64	84
Percent who feel that they have ever been treated unfairly by the police specifically because of their race in their city, but outside their neighborhood	3	20	27

*Results taken from a 2002 survey of residents in U.S. metropolitan areas as reported in "Rethinking Minority Attitudes Toward Police", R. Weitzer and S. Touch, Final Technical Report submitted to National Institute of Justice, US Department of Justice, June 2004.

More recent research shows that Black people and Hispanics in the United States continue to hold significantly more negative views of police than those of Whites. For instance, a Pew Research Centre 2020 survey found that while 84% of Caucasians reported having "a great deal" or "fair amount" of confidence in the police to "act in the interest of the public", just 74% of Hispanics and 56% of Black people report this level of confidence (see Table 12). A year later, a Gallup 2021 survey found that while 56% of Caucasians report having "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police, only 49% of Hispanics and 27% of Black people reported this level of confidence (again see Table 12).

Table 12 Visible Minority Views of Local Police in the United States in Recent Times*			
Issues considered	Caucasian	Hispanic	Black
Percent who have a "very favorable" or "somewhat favorable" opinion of police in 2016*/**	68	59	40
Percent who report being highly satisfied with their personal encounters with police in 2016*	70	66	50
Percent who report knowing someone who has been mistreated by police in 2016*	18	27	39
Percent who give police high marks for courtesy in 2016*	62	49	43
Percent who give police high marks for honesty in 2016*	62	51	36
Percent who report having "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police in 2021***	56	49	27
Percent who report having "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in police to act in the interests of the public in 2020****	84	74	56
Percent who rate the ethical standards of police as "high" or "very high" in 2020" ****	78	66	52

*Results taken from the 2016 CATO INSTITUTE criminal justice survey as reported in "Policing in America: Understanding Public Attitudes Toward the Police. Results from a National Survey", E. Ekins, Cato Institute, 2016.
** Also note that in 1970 the percentage was 67% for Caucasians and 43% for Black people. See "Policing in America: Understanding Public Attitudes Toward the Police. Results from a National Survey", E. Ekins, Cato Institute, 2016.
***Results taken from July 2021 Gallup survey as reported in "In U.S., Black Confidence in Police Recovers From 2020 Low", J. Jones, Gallup, 2021.
****Results taken from 2020 Pew Research Centre survey as reported in "A month before George Floyd's death, Black and white Americans differed sharply in confidence in the police", Hannah Gilberstadt, Pew Research Centre, 2020.

Using Gallup survey results as a guide, it is also worth noting that the percentage of Black people and Whites reporting to have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police was at its highest in the 2000-2009 period when it averaged 63% for Whites and 37% for Black people (Jones, 2021). Further, in 2020 after

George Floyd was killed by the police, confidence in police among Whites only dropped 4% from the 60% 2014-2019 period average, but among Black people it dropped 11% to just 19% from its 2014-2019 period average of 30% (Jones, 2021). In sum, as is also the case in Canada and going back twenty years, minorities in the United States have held more negative views of police than non-minorities, and today those views are more negative than ever.

Europe

A 2017 report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)s on the findings of the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey offers some interesting insights into how minorities in Europe perceive the police. The report is based on a 2015/16 survey of 25,515 respondents from various ethnic minorities and immigration backgrounds having residence within the UK or European Union's 27 member states. The survey revealed that a significant percentage of minority groups in Europe do not have a high level of trust in the police. Specifically, they feel that they are discriminated against by police and are not respected by the police. Since the survey did not involve non-minorities, the report did not provide an opportunity to compare ethnic minority responses to those of non-minorities. Nonetheless, as Table 13 shows, the findings of the survey are troubling. For example, while members of the Sub-Saharan African community living in Finland, Malta, and Germany gave reasonably high ratings of trust in police, those living in Italy and Austria give significantly lower ratings. In the case of members of the Romani community (i.e., one of Europe's largest ethnic groups), trust in police is relatively low regardless of the country considered. It is lower than the average of 6.3 given overall by ethnic minorities across Europe, and it is generally lower than it is for members of the Sub-Saharan African community (see Table 13).

Another finding of this 2015/16 EU survey is that only 59% of ethnic minorities who reported having been stopped by police within the five years prior to being surveyed, felt they had been treated respectfully (FRA, 2017). As well, 95% of respondents who were the victim of hate-motivated harassment did not report the incident to the police. Moreover, more than 70% of victims of a most recent incident of hate-

motivated violence did not report it to police. Tellingly, 41% of these victims did not report the incident because they felt nothing would happen or be changed by reporting the incident. A further 11% of these victims specifically stated that the reason they did not report because they did not trust police, or they were afraid of them (FRA, 2017).

Table 13	
Minority Group Ratings of Trust in Police in Europe in 2015/16*	
Selected countries of residence for immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa surveyed*	**Rating of trust in police on a 10-point scale***
Finland	8.2
Malta	7.3
Germany	7.2
Ireland	6.6
UK, Sweden, Luxembourg	6.4
France	6.0
Italy	5.6
Austria	3.6
Average rating among members of the Sub-Saharan African community across all EU member states who have been stopped by police within five years of being surveyed	4.8
Selected countries of residence for Romani people surveyed	**Rating of trust in police on 10-point scale**
Greece	5.7
Romania	5.2
Hungary	5.0
Bulgaria	4.6
Portugal, Czech Republic	4.2
Slovenia	4.1
Spain	3.7
Average rating among Romani people across all EU member states who have been stopped by police within five years of being surveyed***	2.8

*Results taken from EU-MIDIS II survey involving 25,515 respondents across the European Union's 27 member states (and the UK) as reported in "Second European Union and Discrimination Survey: Main results", European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017.
** Scale: 1 = No trust at all, 10 = Trust completely.

Yet another relevant finding of the 2015/16 EU survey is that significant percentages of ethnic minorities who reported being stopped by police (within five years of being surveyed) believed they were racially profiled. As Table 14 shows, 66% of the Sub-Saharan African community living in Malta, 60% living in Italy, 56% living in Austria, and 51% living in Sweden believed they were racially profiled by police. With respect to Romani people, the situation was similar – 86% of them living in the Netherlands, 84% of them living in Portugal, 63% living in Greece, and 57% living in the Czech Republic believed they were racially profiled. Overall, 26% of all ethic minorities reported being stopped by police within the past five years of being surveyed, and 33% of those felt that the most recent stop was because their ethnicity (FRA, 2017). Among those stopped by police within the last year of being surveyed, 40% felt the stop was related to their ethnicity (FRA, 2017).

References to the Sub-Saharan African community and Romani community, and to selected countries here are only offered as examples. Significant percentages of other ethnicities also report having been racially profiled, and there are wide differences across countries throughout Europe, and wide differences across ethnicities (FRA, 2017). The point here is that the rate of perceived racial profiling is high, and varies across ethnicities within member states, resulting in some ethnicities having more negative views of police than others (at least on the perception that police might be prejudiced against them). Notably, the EU report points out that the findings "overall" regarding ethnic minority perceptions of racial profiling is consistent with the findings of the FRA survey (EU-MIDIS I) done eight years earlier in 2008 (FRA, 2017).

Table 14	
Minorities Stopped by Police in Europe Between 2010 and 2015: Percentage Who Believe Most Recent Stop Was Due to Minority Background*	
Selected countries of residence for immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa surveyed**	Percentage who believe stop was due to minority background

Malta	66%
Italy	60%
Austria	56%
Sweden	51%
Germany	42%,
Denmark	42%
France	42%
Luxembourg	40%
UK	38%
Ireland	28%
Finland	27%
Selected countries of residence for Romani people surveyed	**Percentage who believe stop was due to minority background**
Netherlands	86%
Portugal	84%
Greece	63%
Czech Republic	57%
Romania	50%
Spain	46%
Hungary	27%
Slovakia	35%
Bulgaria	19%

*Results taken from EU-MIDIS II survey involving 25,515 respondents across the European Union's 27 member states (and the UK) as reported in "Second European Union and Discrimination Survey: Main results", European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights FRA, 2017.
**See FRA report for results on other countries and minorities as well.

A more recent report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is even more helpful in that it allows for direct comparisons between non-minorities and minorities. That report is based on a sample included 32,537 residents surveyed

in 2019 across 27 countries within the EU, the UK, and Northern Macedonia. The findings show that it is not just ethic groups who hold more negative views of police. For example, as Table 15 indicates, people who suffer with a severe disability, people who are not heterosexual, and people who are Muslim, are all less likely to say that police treat people with respect. The findings also reveal that these groups were more likely than their non-minority counterparts to have been stopped by police in the twelve months prior to being interviewed (FRA,2017).

Table 15

Percentage of Europeans in 2018 Who Said that the Police "Frequently" or "Always" Treat people with Respect*

Sub-group of overall population considered	Percent saying "frequently" or "always" **	Corresponding sub-group of overall population considered	Percentsaying "frequently" or "always" **
Respondents with no limited ability to do what people normally do	66	Respondents with severe limitations	58
Respondents who are heterosexual	66	Respondents who are not heterosexual	58
Respondents who do not identify as an ethic minority	67	Respondents who identify as ethic minority	52
Respondents whose religion is Christian	68	Respondents whose religion is Muslim	49
General population of 32,537 respondents across 27 countries within the European Union	65	General population of 32,537 respondents across 27 countries within the European Union	65

*Results taken from 2019 Fundamental Rights Survey as reported in Your rights matter: Police Stops, Fundamental Rights Survey, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2021. Overall sample included 32,537 residents across 27 countries within the EU, the UK, and Northern Macedonia.
** Respondents could also have chosen "Sometimes", "Rarely or never", and "Don't know or prefer not to answer".

Table 16

Percentage of Minorities Surveyed in Selected European Union Countries in 2019 Who Say That They Were Treated Respectfully when Most Recently Stopped by the Police*

Country of Residence for immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa surveyed**	Percentage of general population who say that they were treated "very respectfully" or "fairly respectfully" ***	Percentage of Sub-Saharan African community who say that they were treated "very respectfully" or "fairly respectfully" ***
Finland	85	65
France	74	64
Luxemburg	70	62
Sweden	84	60
UK	71	59
Germany	73	55
Italy	86	51
Portugal	92	47
Austria	76	28
Country of residence for Romani people surveyed	Percentage of general population who say that they were "very respectfully" or "fairly respectfully" ***	Percentage of Romani community who say that they were "very respectfully" or "fairly respectfully" ***
Hungary	79	73
Ireland	79	71
Belgium	77	67
Bulgaria	90	65
Croatia	81	60
Greece	77	46
Romania	72	46
Slovakia	77	39
Portugal	92	10

*Results taken from 2019 Fundamental Rights Survey findings as reported in Your rights matter: Police Stops, Fundamental Rights Survey, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2021.
** Survey involved a sample of 18,197 respondents from the UK and the 27 member states within the European Union who said that they had been stopped by police within the last 12 months.
***The scale also included "neither respectful or disrespectful", "fairly disrespectful", "very disrespectful", and "Don't know, refused, doesn't understand the question".

Findings of the survey also show that immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa residing in each of nine European countries were less likely than members of the general population to say that police treat them with respect (Table 16). Similarly, Romani people residing in each of nine different European countries are less likely than members of the general population to say that police treat people with respect (Table 16).

The data reported above, focused primarily on the Sub-Saharan African community and the Romani people, are only examples of the minorities' perceptions of the police. The same patterns are found to varying degrees with respect to other ethnic minorities across Europe. That said, there are major differences across countries, and across different minority communities. Still, at least on the issues considered here, there are strong indications that minorities across Europe hold less favourable opinions of the police than do non-minorities in most of Europe.

United Kingdom

Interestingly, a different picture emerges from survey data out of the United Kingdom (UK). Specifically, a report on "Ethnicity facts and figures: Confidence in the local police" (GOV UK, 2021) includes survey results for each of the seven fiscal years between 2013-14 and 2019-20 on the percentage of minorities and non-minorities "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" to a question about how much confidence they had in the police when "taking everything into account." The results are summarized in Table 17 below. They show that while a significantly lower percentage of Black people than Whites consistently reported having confidence in the police since the 13/14 fiscal year, the same was not true for Asian and other ethnic minority respondents. Rather, they were consistently more likely than Whites to report having confidence in the police. The differences are not substantively significant, but it is noteworthy that they are consistently not less likely than Whites to have confidence in the police. At the same time, while the decline in the percentage of Whites, Asians, and other ethnicities agreeing over the seven-year window that they have confidence in the police is slight, the same cannot be said for

Black people. In their case, as Table 18 shows, 70% agreed in both the 13/14 and 18/19 fiscal years, but that percentage dropped sharply to 64% in the 19/20 fiscal year.

Table 17

Percentage of Whites, Asians, Black people, and Other Ethnic Groups in the UK Who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that They Have Confidence in the Police "When Taking Everything into Account" *

Group	2013-14 Percent agreeing	2014-15 Percent agreeing	2015-16 Percent agreeing	2016-17 Percent agreeing	2017-18 Percent agreeing	2018-19 Percent agreeing	2010-20 Percent agreeing
Asian**	79	78	79	80	80	78	77
Other Ethnicities***	77	77	81	76	82	77	75
White	76	76	79	79	78	75	74
Black****	70	71	73	71	76	70	64

*U.K. National Crime Survey (Office for National Crime Statistics, U.K., 2020). Survey question "Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police" follows five other questions including "The police can be relied upon when needed", "The police would treat you with respect", "The police would treat you fairly", "The police understand local concerns", and "The police deal with local concerns". The response categories were "Strongly agree", "Agree", Neither Agree or Disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't know".
**Includes Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and other Asians.
***Includes Arab and any other ethnicity, except mixed ethnicity.
****Includes Black African, Black Caribbean, and other Black people.

Those results are reinforced by the afore mentioned surveys undertaken by the European Union which surveyed UK citizens. Specifically, the EU-MIDIS II survey undertaken in 2015-16 found that 38% of the Sub-Saharan African community in the UK believed that their most recently being stopped by police was due to their minority background (see Table 14). Further, the EU's FRA 2019 survey found that while 71% of the general population in the UK say police treated them respectfully in their most recent stop by police, only 59% of the Sub-Saharan African community in the UK say the police treated them respectfully in that stop (see Table 16).

Notably, the general results out of the UK are consistent with the findings of another assessment based on British Crime Survey (BCS) data from an even earlier time. Sindall and Sturgis (2013) found in the BCS data from the fiscal years 2006-07 and

2007-08 that ethic minority groups in the UK were more confident in police than were Whites. In noting that finding, they also called attention to Jackson, Bradford, Hohl, and Farrall (2009) who reported the same finding in their work.

It is also worth noting a couple of other surveys in the UK which illustrate how the views of ethnic minorities toward police differ on the heels of a significant event – not unlike what occurred in the US in 2020 after the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis. One of those surveys, conducted by Ipsos-MORI for the Sun newspaper in 1999, coincided with the release of a report on the London Metropolitan Police investigation of the 1993 racially motivated killing of Stephan Lawrence, a Black teenager (Ipsos-MORI, 1999). The survey involved telephone interviews with a sample of 802 intended to be representative of the British population. Additionally, the sample was boosted to include 100 Black and Asian people, to allow for a comparison between Black/Asian responses, Sun reader responses, and UK citizens in general. The results of the survey, as summarized by Table 18 below, showed that Black people and Asians at the time had far more negative views of the police on several issues than did British citizens overall.

Table 18

Asian and Black Respondents' Opinions of the Police in the UK in 1999*

Selected issue considered	All respondents	Black and Asian respondents
Percentage who are "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" with the way their area is policed**	69	70
Percentage who "agree" or "tend to agree" that they can trust the police***	74	54
Percentage who "agree" or "tend to agree" that police are prejudiced against Black and Asian people***	21	52
Percentage who say police are racist****	15	40
Percentage who say police are honest****	76	59
Percentage who say police are lazy****	14	22

Percentage who say police are sexist****	19	25
Percentage who "agree" or "tend to agree" that the Stephan Lawrence case has made them less favourable towards the police***	34	59
Percentage who say that they have heard "a great deal" or "a fair amount" about the Stephan Lawrence case*****	70	78

*Results taken from Ipsos-MORI survey as reported in "Attitudes Towards Policing", Ipsos-MORI, 1999.
** Scale used also included "Neither/nor", "Fairly dissatisfied", "Very dissatisfied", and "Don't Know".
***Scale used also included "Neither/nor", "Tend to disagree", "Strongly disagree", and "Don't Know".
****Response option was either "They are" or "They are not".
*****Response options also included "just a little" or "nothing at all".

More recently, another poll of 1000 UK citizens was conducted by the charity organization *Hope Not Hate* on the heels of the George Floyd killing in the US and the Black Lives Matters protests across the UK (Dodd, 2020). The survey found that 65% of ethnic minorities agreed that "police are biased against people from my background." Among Black respondents, 80% agreed with that statement. The survey also found that 54% of ethnic minorities supported "defunding" the police. Among all respondents, only 52% indicated that they would be proud if a family member joined the police. Among Black respondents, the percentage was just 47% (Dodd, 2020). Again, this survey, like the one undertaken while the Stephan Lawrence case was being highlighted in the news, emphasize how quickly attitudes among minorities toward the police can change on the heels of perceived unacceptable police behaviour. At the same time, it is also the case that such quick negative and significant changes appear to be very short-lived (Jones/Gallup, 2021; Calgary Police Commission, 2020[12]).

Australia

In Australia, opinion of the police appears to have improved substantially in recent times. National survey results covering the six years from 2009-10 through 2014-15

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[12] The Calgary Police Commission report prepared by Illumina Research Partners was based on a citizen satisfaction survey conducted by Illumina Research Partners. The survey was conducted, giving specific attention to the time of the George Floyd killing, to facilitate an analysis of its potential impact on citizens' views of the Calgary Police Service. During further consultations with both Black and Indigenous participants reported witnessing and experiencing differential treatment based on skin colour. They felt they are unfairly targeted, subjected to over-surveillance, and victimized. Both perceive that white citizens receive preferential treatment (Calgary Police Commission, 2021).

revealed that while just 66% of Australians reported being "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with police in 2009/10, that percentage climbed to 78% by 2014-15 (Productivity Commission, Australian Government, 2016). Similarly, while the percentage of Australians "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" in 2009-10 that police treat people fairly and equally was just 68%, that percentage had climbed to 78% by 2014-15. There were also gains over the six-year window with respect to satisfaction with police contact and agreement about police professionalism (again see Productivity Commission, Australian Government, 2016).[13]

However, one recent Australian study makes it clear that those overall improvements in public opinion of police did not erase the difference in attitudes that exist between the opinions of minorities and non-minorities. Rather, the survey results used as the basis for the study revealed that minorities were more far more critical of police than were non-minorities (Oliveira and Murphy, 2015). Specifically, minorities "were less likely to see police as being procedurally fair or distributively fair, were less likely to experience procedural justice during a personal encounter with police and were less likely to see police as legitimate" (Oliveira and Murphy, 2015, pg.13).

Furthermore, an earlier study, based on surveys of university students in New South Wales, Australia in 2003, 2004, and 2005 revealed that differences in opinions of police between minorities and non-minorities were present a decade earlier (Silasubramaniam and Goodman-Delahunty, 2008). Specifically, those surveys found that while Caucasian respondents believed that police discriminated against them 7% of the time, among minorities the percentage averaged 21% of the time (see Table 9). Further, as Table 19 shows, for some ethnic minorities the percentage is substantially higher than that average. Silasubramaniam and Goodman-Delahunty (2008) observed also that their findings were consistent with other research conducted with Australian populations in the 1990s.

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[13] Results taken from National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (various years) as reported in "Report on Government Services", Productivity Commission, Australian Government, 2016.

Table 19	
How often police are prejudiced in the opinion of minorities and non-minorities in Australia*	
Ethnic Group	**Percentage of time police are prejudice - in the assessment of respondent group***
Caucasian	7%
Eastern/Southern	14%
Eurasian	16%
Indian	23%
Asians	31%
Arabic/Middle Eastern	37%
Average among ethnic minorities	21%

* Based on survey data reported by Silasubramaniam and Goodman-Delahunty, 2008.
** Percentages rounded.

In sum, opinions of police among of minorities in Australia are generally as they are in Canada, the United States, and in countries across Europe. That is, while there are differences across ethic minority groups on at least some aspects, most ethic groups hold more negative opinions of police than do Caucasians, and the differences have existed for many years.

Summary

Overall, four major conclusions can be drawn from the cited studies. First, while minorities in Canada have more negative opinions of police than do non-minorities, the same is generally true between minorities and non-minorities in the United States, Australia, throughout most of Europe, and to some degree, in the UK. Secondly, it is generally the case, that while that gap between minority and non-minority opinions in Canada has persisted since the turn of the century, the same gap has existed in the United States, Australia, most of Europe, and again to some degree in the UK. Third, the fact that the gap in opinions between minorities and non-minorities has not narrowed in the United States, Australia, most of Europe, Canada, and in the UK (with respect to at least some minorities), would suggest that police need to do more than whatever they have been doing to improve the situation. Fourth, some recent surveys in the United States, Canada, and the UK indicate the

that public views of the police can change quickly in the face of significant events or news. Those quick changes, and a consideration of the driving force behind them provide a good clue as to why a difference between minorities and non-minorities exists in the first place.

Explaining the differences between minorities and non-minorities attitudes towards the police

Contacts with Police

A study by Frank, Smith, and Novak (2005) is helpful in showing why differences exist in attitudes toward police between minorities and non-minorities. It was based on a citizen telephone survey conducted in Cincinnati.[14] The study sought to examine differences between general and specific attitudes toward police and their relationship to general satisfaction with police. The American study also provided an opportunity to examine response differences between Whites and African Americans.

When the entire sample of respondents was asked about general satisfaction with police, 13% of Whites and 35% of African Americans said they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied". However, in analyzing the responses of only those who had contact with police in the previous six months, the researchers found that the percentages increased to where 24% of Whites and 37% of African Americans said they were either somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied". Significantly, an analysis of the reasons why respondents gave whatever rating they assigned, revealed that the majority of the sample referred to such matters as police response time (19%), general job features (18%), crime and neighbourhood safety issues (16%), and police visibility (11%). Only 10% referred to officer attributes, and only 11% mentioned improper police behaviour (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005).[15]

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[14] The data reported by Frank, Novak, and Smith (2005) were based on 616 usable survey responses from a random sample of 1500 residents in Cincinnati.

[15] Reasons given by respondents were obtained through an open-ended question.

On the other hand, among respondents who had had actual contact with police, only 5% referred to police response time, only 4% mentioned general job features, 0% mentioned crime and neighbourhood safety issues, and only 1% mentioned police visibility. Instead, 55% of those who had contact with police in the previous six months cited officer attributes and 22% referred to the outcome of the interaction (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005). In other words, the reasons respondents who had contact with the police gave for rating their general satisfaction with police, was not so much about how well police were doing with respect to one operational matter or another. Rather, their reasons for being satisfied or dissatisfied were based primarily on the attributes of the officer and the outcome of the exchange.

The survey also revealed that dissatisfied African American respondents were nearly twice as likely as dissatisfied Whites (49% vs. 27%) to cite reasons relating to officer attributes for being dissatisfied with police (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005). In fact, the difference was even greater (55% vs. 20%) when considering only those respondents who had had a contact with the police in the previous six months.[16]

Dissatisfied African American respondents were also much more likely than Whites to cite the outcome of their encounter. Specifically, 60% of dissatisfied African American respondents referred to the outcome of their encounter, whereas only 10% of Whites referred to the outcome of their encounter. In the case of dissatisfied African Americans who had contact with the police within the previous six months, 38% referred to the outcome of their encounter, while 19% of dissatisfied Whites made this reference (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005). Overall, the results suggest that when African Americans are asked about their overall satisfaction with police, they will be twice as likely as Whites to base their assessment on the attributes of police officers. Moreover, this appears to be true whether they had contact with police in the previous six months or not.

Why the African Americans in that same survey (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005) were more likely than Whites to refer to officer attributes and outcomes is not

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[16] What we don't know from this study is whether African American respondents overall were not influenced in their assessment by contact with police extending beyond six months.

entirely clear. It may be that they were treated or believed to be treated in a less friendly, respectful, or more discriminatory manner by the police. Alternatively, it may be a combination of all three possibilities. Regardless, the results of the study are consistent with the view that minorities draw on a different frame of reference than do non-minorities in making their assessment of the police. Clearly, how well police departments do in terms of responding to and fighting crime is not as relevant to minorities as how officers within those departments engage with people.

Among the most researched factors that have persistently shown an association with attitudes toward the police are the number of contacts with the police, types of contacts with the police (e.g., citizen-initiated and police-initiated contacts), and personal experiences with the police. Citizens' contact with the police has an impact on their perception of the police. One may recall the findings presented in Table 1 which revealed the differences between Canadians who have had a positive contact with police as compared to those who have had a negative one in the 12 months prior to being surveyed. Specifically, among citizens who had a positive contact with police, 46% said police do a good job of treating people fairly. Among citizens who had negative police contact in the previous 12 months, only 16% said police do a good job of treating people fairly. Further, while 58% of citizens who had a positive contact with police say police do a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to, only 17% of citizens who had a negative police contact would say this. Finally, while 44% of Canadians who had positive police contact in the previous 12 months said that they have a great deal of confidence in police, only 10% of those who had a negative police contact would say the same (again, see Table 1). Again, it appears clearly that citizens draw on their contact experience to make general assessments of the police. The difference between a negative contact and a positive one will influence significantly how much confidence citizens will have in the police. In this regard, it should be recalled that when compared to non-minorities in Canada, indigenous and First Nations people, established immigrants, people identifying as either bisexual, lesbian, Arab, Latin American, South Asian, South-East Asian, Chinese, or Black, are all less likely to say that the police do a good job of treating people fairly, and are less like to say that police are approachable and approachable and easy to talk to.

Migration Status

There is evidence that it is not migration status, but rather status as part of a visible ethnic minority that is a significant determinant of individual attitude toward the police (Hough, 2021). Distinguishing between minority group and immigrant populations, more recent work has shown that foreign-born individuals are more likely to view the police in a more favourable light than native-born populations. Country of origin and length of settlement are important factors in better understanding immigrants' perceptions of the police. Certain groups of immigrants tend to have more positive views of the police than other immigrant groups or native-born populations (Jung, Sprott, and Greene, 2019).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is important to foster willingness to cooperate with the police, but this is typically mitigated by other factors, including age, race, ethnicity, or social identity (Murphy, 2013; Murphy, Sargeant, and Cherney, 2015; Murphy et al., 2020). For example, identifying more strongly with a social group that the police is seen to represent is associated with greater acceptance of police behaviour (including use of force, whether or not that force seemed to be justified) (Bradford, Milani, & Jackson, 2016). Similarly, perceptions of police fairness are also the results of the social and political cleavages in society (Roché & Roux, 2017). The attribution of fairness to the police seems to correspond to an individual disposition to uphold the existing social order (Roché & Roux, 2017). Moreover, individuals who feel that they are being discriminated against, regardless of their races or ethnicity, have reduced confidence in the police. "Across groups, the perception of discrimination is a key mediating factor that links race and ethnicity to confidence in order institutions" (Wu & Cao, 2018: 715).

Perceptions of police legitimacy vary across neighborhoods or communities. Police interactions in high demand or "hot spot" areas create different challenges for police legitimacy. Policing becomes more complex in settings where there is already a history of mistrust between the police and minority groups (Hough, 2021). As Rinehart Kochel observed in her own study, in "good" neighborhoods, individuals

draw on police effectiveness and procedural justice to infer legitimacy, but in "at-risk" neighborhoods, procedural justice does not play a significant role (Rinehart Kochel, 2017). Several studies have highlighted the importance of perceptions of safety in explaining variation in the attitudes of visible minorities toward the police (Wheelock, Stroshine and O'Hear, 2019). Additionally, fear of the police, resulting from negative experiences with the police, also has an impact on how the police are viewed by visible minorities (Avdija, 2010: 77).

Murphy and Mazerolle, based on a survey of citizens exposed to a randomized field trial of procedural justice policing (Queensland Community Engagement Trial), found that trust in police, but not willingness to report crime to police, was higher among those exposed to the procedural justice condition compared to the control condition (Murphy and Mazerolle, 2018). That association was moderated by age. Another Australian study based on survey data collected from 513 adolescents and 2,611 adults indicated that procedural justice is more important to youth than it is to adults (Murphy, 2015).

The differences found between visible minorities and non-minorities in their opinion of the police can be understood by considering police interactions with citizens as opportunities to demonstrate interactional justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice – all of which have long been confirmed to be very much related to citizens' assessments of police overall (see Tyler, Schulhofer, and Huq, 2010; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Hinds and Murphy, 2007; Murphy, 2009; Jackson and Bradford, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2012; Sargeant, Murphy, and Cherney, 2014; Wheelock, Stroshine, and O'Hear, 2019; Aston, O'Neill, Hail, and Wooff, 2021). Looking at the issue from that perspective, one must ask whether minorities are as likely as non-minorities to experience interactional, procedural justice and distributive justice in their experiences with police.

Interactional justice, as it relates to police, refers to the way in which citizens feel they have been treated in interactions with police. Specifically, citizens want to be treated fairly, with respect, dignity, consideration, politeness, and empathy. When they perceive or experience that they have not treated fairly and respectfully, they do not

feel as though they have been treated as full members of the community (i.e., all citizens). In short, they will perceive that they are being treated unjustly. Research on body-worn cameras, for example, provides indirect support that respectful police–citizen interactions have salutary impacts (Nagin and Telep, 2020).

Procedural justice, as it relates to the police, refers to the demonstrated fairness in operational procedures and practices. Specifically, citizens want assurances that police procedures and practices that are fair and are followed with demonstrated consistency and impartiality. When citizens experience or otherwise come to know about instances where police are not following policies and procedures or applying them impartially, or not applying them to the extent that they should be applied, they will perceive that an injustice is occurring. For example, when a reported crime is not responded to in a timely manner, is not taken seriously, or acted upon in a way which shows full respect and empathy for the victim, the victim can be expected to believe that they are not being treated the way other victims would be treated.

Distributive justice, as it relates to the police, refers to the outcome of police actions. Specifically, this is when citizens experience or perceive that they received an outcome from a police action that was unfair. An example would be a police officer not just stopping you for a traffic violation, but that officer is going out of their way to see what else they can catch you on. It also refers to the inequitable distribution of police resources and services. For example, citizens can be expected to feel that they are being treated unfairly when it appears that some neighbourhoods get better police services than their own. Citizens can also be expected to feel as though they are being treated unfairly when they are uniquely targeted for police services such as when stops are conduced in a manner that is biased towards certain groups (i.e., racial profiling).

There is substantial evidence to show that minorities, to a far greater degree than non-minorities, perceive that they have been victims of interactional injustice, procedural injustice, or distributive injustice (Sivasubramaniam and Goodman-Delahunty, 2008; Avdija, 2010; Oliveira and Murphy, 2015). Each element is a form of unfair action by police departments or their officers. Further, the findings of

previous research are consistent with what can be gleaned from the results presented in this report. Whether we are considering Canada, the United States, Australia, the UK, or various countries throughout Europe, many minorities are more likely than non-minorities to have consistently reported that they have experienced (or are aware of) interactional injustice by police.

It is not just minority ethnic groups who think that people are often treated unfairly by police. It is also people with disabilities, non-heterosexuals, and non-Christians (Table 15).

The importance of interactional, procedural, and distributive injustice on attitudes toward the police cannot be emphasised too strongly. One needs only be reminded of the impact of the George Floyd killing, or of similarly tragic events in the United States and elsewhere. In the case of George Floyd, the associated combination of interactional, procedural, and distributive injustice caused such outrage that Black people everywhere took to the streets to express their anger. They were taking to the streets to call attention to racist policing as well as systemic racism throughout the criminal justice system. The George Floyd tragedy confirmed once more that citizens do not need to be the direct victim of injustice to be outraged about it and to instantly adopt a more negative attitude towards the police.

What the police can do to narrow the gap between the opinions of minorities and non-minorities toward the police

As noted in the introduction, police have undertaken over the years several initiatives to improve their relations with various minority groups. Their impact on police relationships with visible minority groups tended to be limited.

Officer Training

One of those initiatives has been the introduction of officer training to make them more attentive to the characteristics and circumstances of ethnic minority groups. This has occurred under various labels, such as "cultural awareness training", "sensitivity training", "diversity training", and "implicit bias training". Their impact on officers' behaviour, attitudes and interactions with the public, especially members of

visible minorities, has been quite limited, if not negligible (Teahan, 1975; Schlosser, 2013, Zimmy, 2015). This should be no surprise, since studies on cultural awareness training for individuals outside the policing environment have shown similar results (Paluck, 2006; Paluck and Green, 2009; Pendry et al., 2007; McLean et al., 2020).

In the U.K., a multisite control trial on the impact of a training program on disparity in stop and search practices in the U. K. concluded that a one-day police training program to reduce ethnic/racial bias may change officers' knowledge and attitudes but, on its own, may not be sufficient to impact their street-level behaviors (Miller et al., 2020). A randomized controlled trial of social interaction police training showed no evidence of improved police behaviour after social interactions training (McLean, et al., 2020). Another randomized controlled trial involving training in procedural justice at the Greater Manchester Police and linking survey data victims with the officers who dealt with their case, indicated that shifting officers' overall orientations and attitudes had more impact than teaching specific techniques or skills (Wheller et al., 2013).

In recent years, more emphasis is being placed on procedural justice training as a potential solution (Suttie, 2016). Empathy training may offer a vehicle through which police organizations could increase their officers' capacity to interact in a way that meet the procedural justice and interactive justice expectations of the population. Wheelock, Stroshine and O'Hear (2019), in endorsing procedural justice training based on their own research, point out that many police departments throughout the United States, the UK, and Australia have already introduced procedural justice training as part of basic training requirements for their police officers. Relatedly, some police departments in the United States have already included "empathy training" as part of basic training requirements. However, as Ta and Lande (2021) point out, being "good at empathy" is a complicated matter, and more research is needed assess the efficacy of empathy training for police officers.

Another recent study revealed how a change in police behavior can have a positive effect on citizen attitudes toward police was conducted as a randomized trial in crime hot spots in three United States cities. The purpose of the study was to

examine the differences between officers who interacted with citizens in the way they always had, to officers who had received intensive training in procedural justice (Weisburd et al., 2022). Importantly, the researchers were able to conclude that "intensive training in procedural justice can lead to more procedurally just behavior and less disrespectful treatment of people at high crime places" (Weisburd et al., 2022: 1). The study also found that officers who received intensive training in procedural justice were able to reduce arrests and have a positive effect on citizen perceptions of police harassment and violence (Weisburd et al., 2022).

Diversity Hiring, Retention and Promotion

Other initiatives taken by the police have involved the diversification of their ranks, through recruitment, promotion, and retention, to make them more representative of the composition of the community as a whole. There is no question that these were important initiatives if for no other reason than the fact that to do less would be wholly disrespectful of minority groups. However, they do not appear to be effective in improving minority-police relations.

With respect to race and ethnicity, previous work has addressed the impact of representation on community crime rates, racial disparities in "stop-and-search", and police misconduct, racial profiling, crime clearance and officer turn-over, police homicide of Black citizens (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2017), and citizen's perceptions of performance, fairness and trust (Riccucci et al., 2018). Across these studies, the results are equivocal with respect to the effect of minority representation on outcomes, although several studies report positive relationships (Bjørkelo et al., 2021). Johnson's conclusion is more drastic; in his view, "there is absolutely no research evidence to support the argument that increasing racial diversity in a police force will result in improved understanding and effectiveness in dealing with minority communities" (Johnson, 2015: 1).

Whatever else police might do to improve the view that the public and minority groups have of them, they need to appreciate that people will form their opinions about them through police-citizen contact, or vicariously through what they hear about how police officers interact with citizens. That is, citizens will couch those

contacts within an interactive justice context and will have a potentially negative view every time they experience or learn about interactive injustice. For members of minority groups, any police-citizen contact will already be likely to be perceived as interactive injustice because members of minority groups go into the police-citizen exchange carrying the burden of having experienced discrimination from other corners of society.

Technology

Technology may provide new ways to approach the challenge of improving police-community relationships. For example, body-worn cameras may provide "a form of officer accountability that mere training in procedural justice might be insufficient to achieve" (Demir, Braga, and Apel, 2020, 855). A quasi-randomized controlled trial of the effects of police body-worn cameras during traffic stops on citizen's perception of police, compliance and cooperation indicated that their effectiveness stems almost entirely from drivers' experience of procedurally just and legitimacy-enhancing treatment by police officers (Demir, Braga, and Apel, 2020). Proponents of body-worm cameras sometimes suggest that these reductions are caused by a civilizing effect, whereby the presence of the camera leads to improved behavior. That civilization effect has yet to be confirmed (Patterson & White, 2021).

Community Relation Visits

A police community relation program designed to encourage positive intergroup contacts was recently evaluated which involved specially trained officers making unannounced visits to the homes of local residents (randomly selected across ten policing districts) during which they engaged residents in a 10-minute conversation about neighbourhood issues and policing (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019). Prior to the home visits, and three and 21 days after, the residents involved were surveyed on policing issues and their responses were compared to a randomly selected sample of citizens who did not receive a home visit from police. The results of the comparison showed that the residents who were visited had significantly more positive views toward police with respect to each of legitimacy, performance, cooperation, and compliance (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019).

Importantly, in the same study, a comparison between White and Black residents revealed that the visits not only had a more powerful impact on the attitudes of Black residents, but also that the strongest effect on attitudes was observed among Black residents who held the most negative attitudes prior to the police visit (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019). The researchers noted that the results of their study provide "an example of how a relatively simple change to police behaviour can have a substantial positive effect on measures of both values-based and behavioural legitimacy" (Peyton, Sierra-Arevalo, and Rand, 2019: 4).

At one level, improving relationships is not that complicated. Police officers need to demonstrate genuine interest, concern, kindness, and respect to the people with whom they interact. This is particularly important when they deal with people who have already accumulated reasons not to like the police. Obviously, this is a tall order for police officers who are running from call to call, who are commonly taking abuse from some citizens and some media, and who otherwise work in a high stress and sometimes dangerous work environment. Still, given the findings presented in this report, it seems fair to say that if police do not improve their ability to deliver on interactive justice, positive changes in how they are perceived and accepted by various minorities are unlikely to occur.

We can also be reminded that while the police need to improve how they interact with citizens belonging to one minority group or another, the problem goes far beyond their interactions with minorities. It is not just that police treat many minorities with disrespect, it is obvious that a significant percentage of non-minorities are also treated disrespectfully (see Tables 1 and 2).

It should also be obvious that significant improvements are not just needed with respect to the behaviour of police officers, but with respect to some of the police organizations they work for. For example, recent surveys asking Canadians about their views on the RCMP are telling.

As Table 20 shows, in a 2019-20 national survey conducted by EKOS Research Associates, only 61% of respondents agreed that the RCMP treats people with respect, only 60% agree that the RCMP demonstrates compassion, and only 52% say

that the RCMP is sensitive to the needs of diverse cultures and groups. Furthermore, only 47% say that the organization is respectful to women, only 45% agree that it is respectful to the cultural needs of Indigenous people, and only 43% agree that it is sensitive to the needs of the LGBTQ2 community (RCMP, 2020). Notably, only 61% agree that RCMP personnel are honest, and just 36% agree that the RCMP is an open and transparent organization (RCMP, 2020). Remarkably, the RCMP described these results as "generally positive impressions of how the RCMP adheres to its values" (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2020: 6).

Table 20

Canadian's Views of the RCMP: Results from 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 Telephone Surveys*

Percentage of respondents who agreed with the following statements	2017-18 survey	2018-19 survey	2019-20 survey
I have trust and confidence in the RCMP	74	74	69
The RCMP treats people with respect	69	70	61
RCMP personnel are honest	66	69	62
The RCMP demonstrates compassion	60	63	60
The RCMP is sensitive to the needs of different cultures and groups	56	58	52
The RCMP is respectful to the cultural needs of Indigenous people	Not asked	49	45
The RCMP is sensitive to the needs of the LGBTQ2 community	Not asked	46	43
The RCMP treats women fairly	43	49	47
The RCMP provides Canadians with adequate information	41	41	44
The RCMP is an open and transparent organization	38	38	36

*Results taken from "Canadians' Views of RCMP Policing 2019-20: Final Report", prepared for the RCMP by EKOS Research Associates, April 2020. The results are those from the telephone survey only. The five-point scale used for the items listed was: Strongly agree, agree, neither disagree, strongly disagree. Online survey results conducted at the same time consistently showed significantly more favourable results. Unfortunately, the report describing these survey results did not allow for a comparison between minorities and non-minorities. In fact, the word "minorities" is not mentioned.

Conclusion

The voluminous literature, especially in the United States, on the relationships between the police and visible minority groups generally shows that visible minority groups "tend to have less trust in the police and rate their performance lower than majority groups" (Hough, 2021: 56). Strained police relations with visible minorities are reflected in the fact that visible minorities are much less likely than other citizens to view the police as legitimate, fair, or trustworthy, or to report crime to the police. Police in and outside of Canada have long understood the importance of improving their relationship with minorities, and in this regard, they have undertaken a multiplicity of initiatives intended to improve minority-police relations.

However, despite these efforts, national survey data collected over a period of twenty years do not show significant improvements in British Columbia or in Canada in the perception of the police by visible minorities. Minorities hold more negative views of police behaviour than non-minorities. Minorities are still less likely than non-minorities to agree that police treat people fairly or do a good job in approaching people. Since the turn of the century, minorities' views of police behaviour and fairness have generally worsened significantly. Notably, by 2019 those views had become more negative than at any time in the previous twenty years. By then, survey results indicate that less than half of visible minorities agreed that police treat people fairly and do a good job in the way they approach people. While it is true that a similar deterioration of views of the police was also observed among Canadians in general, the persistent gap between minority and non-minority views is British Columbia is an ongoing concern. That gap, measurable both in Canada and British Columbia, can be interpreted an indication that the efforts of police organizations to improve their relationships with visible minorities did not bare the expected results or worse, that minorities are still reacting to what they perceive as discrimination.

That situation is not unique to Canada. The much poorer perception of the police by visible minorities as compared to non-minorities is also apparent to one extent or another in the United States, the UK, Australia, and throughout the Europe.

One should expect improvements in police conduct to be reflected in higher levels of public trust (Prenzler, 2009). The evidence reviewed for this report on the impact of various police initiatives to improve their relationship with visible minorities is disappointing. Special ethnic relation units, diversity hiring, diversity training, social interaction training, procedural justice training, and other initiatives do not appear to have had much impact on police interactions and relationships with visible minorities. They clearly have not been very effective in improving the views that visible minorities hold concerning the police. Public expectations of the police have also changed over time. Evidently, there remains much to be learned about the process by which relationships between the police and visible minority groups can be improved.

The development of relationships based on trust and dialogue is an important components in building police legitimacy (Griffiths & Clark, 2017).   Beyond training, improved communication strategies, better relationship with the media, or consultations with visible minority leaders, or even new technologies, police organizations need to be looking for new approaches to improve their relationships with visible minorities. Improved police governance, transparency, and accountability, with greater participation of members of visible minorities, are likely to be key to the implementation of a broader vision of procedural justice. Such a vision is needed not only to guide individual interactions between the police and citizens, but also to inspire a different kind of police engagement with visible minorities, locally, across the province, or across the country. It is clear that no one law enforcement agency can change by itself public perceptions of police. All law enforcement agencies need to appreciate how the behaviour of their officers can impact on public views of police everywhere. Equally important, law enforcement agencies need to align their policies, training, operational practices, and community relations so that all that they do is underpinned by a commitment to procedural justice as a matter of course. Police leaders need to set a higher bar in terms of what they expect of their organizations and officers in terms of community-police relations, including and especially during daily interactions between the police and members of visible minorities.

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