“Seeing the word ‘police’ can be a huge point of recoil”: A Qualitative Examination of Trans People’s Perceptions and Questions of Police Legitimacy

by

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The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Abstract

This dissertation examines transgender people's experiences and perceptions of police within Canada. Transgender people experience a wide variety of negative interactions with police, including disrespectful language, rude and inappropriate behaviour, verbal and physical harassment, and the denial of police services (Dwyer, 2011, 2014, 2015; Wolff & Clokely, 2007; Shields, 2021). This study investigates the need for a transgender lens when examining the concepts of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Additionally, this study contributes to the growing literature on gender and legitimacy by emphasizing the need for transgender-focused analyses. I answer how trans people construct police legitimacy using in-depth, qualitative interviews.

The following research questions guided this research project: What does the relationship between the trans community and police look like according to the trans community? Why do trans individuals believe the relationship is the way that it is? According to the trans community, what are the proposed best practices for police engagement with the trans community? What is justice to you, and how can police reflect that back to you?

A total of 14 trans people were interviewed through online one-on-one and focus group interviews. The research questions were used as the interview questions.

Findings show that trans people have limited or no trust in the police, as individual officers or in the institution of policing. Additionally, trans people feel the only way to address police mistreatment is to abolish the policing system. This study contributes to the criminological literature by combining transgender theory and procedural justice theory, including a trans-gender analysis of how police legitimacy is formed. This research's significance and further contributions encourage future researchers to examine how trans people express their

understanding of procedural justice and police legitimacy, and add to the growing literature on gender and legitimacy.

Keywords: transgender people; police; procedural justice; police legitimacy; transgender legitimacy

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis consists of original work of which I have authored. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Victoria Ginsley

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Statement of Contributions

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the trans people who bravely and warmly shared their experiences and thoughts with me. Thank you for trusting me to honour your stories, thank you for the laughs, and thank you for the new acronyms (FARTS!). I am so grateful to everyone who decided to take a chance on me. Thank you to Jake at PFLAG and both Brandon and Nathan at AIDS Durham for your compassion, patience, and support of my project. I hope this research can make a meaningful impact, as I will fight to ensure your stories are heard.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

2SLGBTQIA+	An acronym that stands for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and additional gender identities and sexual orientations.
Queer	Once considered a derogatory term, "queer" has been reclaimed by many within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as a term of empowerment. Sometimes used interchangeably with other gender or sexual identities within the 2SLGBTQIA+ umbrella.
Trans	Transgender, sometimes shortened to "trans," describes people who identify with a different gender than the sex assigned to them at birth.
Non-binary	An adjective used by people who experience their gender identity and/or expression outside of the binary categories of man and woman. Non-binary people can also refer to themselves as transgender and are part of the transgender community. Some may not. Non-binary is sometimes shortened to enby.
Genderqueer	Genderqueer refers to a fluid gender identity that changes or exists between the binary categories of man and woman. This may be different from non-binary as, generally, non-binary folks do not identify with the binary of man and woman, and genderqueer folks experience a fluidity of gender between the binary. This term differs from gender-fluid, which describes someone whose gender expression or identity changes over time.
AFAB	This is an acronym for Assigned Female at Birth.
Transmasc	Also known as transmasculine, describes trans or non-binary people whose gender identity is primarily masculine. They may not identify as a man.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2022, Toronto Police Services held a community consultation on gender diversity and trans inclusion (Bignell, 2022). The consultation allowed participants to consider how policies, procedures and forums can include trans and non-binary people (Bignell, 2022). Changes to police policy and procedure came on the heels of the death of a 30-year-old Black trans woman named Coco, who died in Toronto police custody (Vega, 2020). Coco had been apprehended under the Mental Health Act, which permits officers to detain an individual if their behaviour is deemed a threat or risk to themselves or others (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2024; Vega, 2020). Ontario's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) shared little information regarding the incident, stating only that a person was transported to the hospital by police, they went into distress, life-saving measures were taken, and the person was pronounced deceased (Miller, 2020). The SIU also misgendered Coco in their statement (Miller, 2020). The 519, a Toronto-based community organization, and Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLMTO) called for transparency from the Toronto police regarding the cause of death and to correct a report that had misgendered Coco (Miller, 2020; Vega, 2020). BLMTO criticized the police over the mystery of her death and the continued misgendering of Coco in their reports (Miller, 2020). Both the 519 and BLMTO called the Toronto police action unacceptable and posted on social media that Toronto Police Services were responsible for her death (Lavoie, 2023; Miller, 2020). Maggie's, one of the oldest sex worker organizations in Canada, stated that Coco's death is an example of a corrupt police system that continually harms Black and trans people, that "we deserve to live. Coco deserved to live!" (Lavoie, 2023). The 519 launched the #TPSWhatHappened? hashtag campaign on social media to bring more attention to Coco's death and call for accountability and transparency from Toronto police and the SIU (Lavoie, 2023).

Coco's story highlights the ongoing harm towards the trans community by police. It highlights systemic discrimination, lack of respect for their lives, and the further disrespect of misgendering in the wake of Coco's tragic death. This case also showcases the demand for respect and transparency from the community, as community services banded together to create a public movement aimed at garnering attention for Coco and the continued harm by the Toronto police. In 2019, the Toronto Police Services hired its first openly transgender officer (Mauracher, 2019). Constable Myles Glazier says he chose Toronto because of its diversity and hopes his story will encourage other trans youth to be open about who they are (Mauracher, 2019). Despite TPS' hiring (and efforts for inclusion), these changes may not overcome systemic discrimination and harassment, as well as continued harm towards the trans community (as seen in Coco's case, as Constable Glazier was hired in 2019, and Coco's death was the following year).

There is a growing body of literature researching transgender people's experiences with the police. These include multiple forms of discrimination in employment sectors, housing, access to shelters, bathroom usage, and police brutality (Bockting et al., 2013; Bradford et al., 2013; Kidd & Witten, 2008; Puckett et al., 2020). The following research project focuses on transgender people's experiences with perceptions of police, and what participants feel justice means to them. According to existing research, an overwhelming majority of trans people face harassment and violence at the hands of police (Gauthier et al., 2021; Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Stenersen, Thomas & McKee, 2022). Police encounters are often systemic, as trans people's experiences relate to societal expectations of gender behaviour (Miles-Johnson, 2020). Police attitudes are informed by these expectations, which can lead to various forms of victimization for trans people (Dwyer, 2011; 2014; 2015; Lanham et al., 2019; Miles-Johnson, 2020).

This dissertation seeks to add to the growing literature regarding trans people's experiences and perceptions of police, as well as fill the essential gap of understanding trans people's perceptions of police legitimacy. This project utilizes transgender theory and procedural justice theory to form the basis of four research questions, as well as inform how the data was analyzed and collected to answer these questions. These four questions are as follows:

What does the relationship between the trans community and police look like according to the trans community?

Why do trans individuals believe the relationship is the way that it is?

According to the trans community, what are the proposed best practices for police engagement with the trans community?

What is justice to you, and how can police reflect that back to you?

Themes of justice run throughout transgender theory, and themes of marginalization run throughout procedural justice theory. However, to date, there has been no research done on how these two theories can combine to help understand trans people's experiences. This research project aims to understand those experiences and how to better conceptualize how trans people view justice. It is essential that trans people inform research about them, and therefore, this research project provides a space for them to explore what justice means. It is important to note that this study had a total of 14 participants as to not overstate the findings. However, this study acts as a starting point for future research to add to this growing area.

Within this project, the term trans is used as a shorthand for transgender. As GLAAD (2024) states, trans is used as a shorthand for transgender, which describes people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are transgender may use other terms in addition to transgender, to describe their gender more specifically (GLAAD,

2024). Other terms include trans, trans man, trans woman, non-binary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, and others (GLAAD, 2024). For this research, the term trans is used as an umbrella term for all-encompassing transgender identities.

Researcher Positionality

It is important to acknowledge my positionality and its role in this research. My positionality will be examined further in Chapter 4 (Methodology). As a qualitative researcher, I must recognize the influence I have on participants during interviews, but also with data collection and interpretation of the findings (Finlay, 2002). As a cisgender, white, queer researcher (among other identity markers such as colonial Canadian, able-bodied, and highly educated), the multiplicity of my identities impacts my research. I bring myself into the project, influencing my work at every level, from topic choice to interviews to data analyses and interpretations.

Chapter Overview

This chapter introduced the research project and a brief overview of the issues. Chapter 2, the Literature Review, includes research on the general experiences of trans people and experiences with police, including what forms police legitimacy and perceptions of their authority. Chapter 3 focuses on the Theoretical Framework. I utilize transgender theory, procedural justice theory, and police legitimacy to inform this research project. I also make a case for using transgender and procedural justice theories together. Chapter 4 discusses the Methodology. For this research, I utilize one-on-one and focus group qualitative methods. This chapter outlines participants' demographics as well as detailing the data collection and data analysis process. Research results are broken down into three chapters, which correspond to the main questions, to allow for the depth and richness of the narratives. First, Chapter 5 discusses

individual experiences, intersectionality and passing privilege. Chapter 6 uncovers themes of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Finally, Chapter 7 examines what justice means to each participant and how to make change within policing. The dissertation ends with Chapter 8, the discussion and conclusion, including limitations and contributions to research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section discusses previous literature on the experiences of transgender people, perceptions of police, and police legitimacy. First, literature on the general experiences that transgender people have will be discussed, followed by their unique vulnerabilities and experiences with the police. Additionally, this literature review includes police legitimacy and perceptions of police, followed by Canadian police service policies regarding the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community and efforts to address the ongoing harm towards the trans community.

Experiences of Transgender People

In previous research, trans issues have been mainly integrated into broader LGB issues. This means trans people are not often the sole focus of study; therefore, what research has been done is sparse but current. Additionally, research has historically failed to ask whether a respondent is transgender, which results in the community being understudied (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2024). Transgender people have reported that their experiences are not adequately reflected in research and deserve greater representation (Carrottee et al., 2016; de Vries, 2012). This is particularly true within quantitative research, where gender identities are fixed by the researcher, limiting the nuance of identity that qualitative research can offer by offering space for self-identification (Ghorbanian, Aiello & Staples, 2022). Organizations like Trans PULSE Canada and the National Center for Transgender Equality address these issues by running multiple research projects for transgender Canadians and Americans (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2024; Trans PULSE Canada, 2024). This research project adds to the growing area of transgender research within academia, highlighting the continued importance of representing transgender people's experiences.

The following section examines the various vulnerabilities trans people face in their everyday lives, their experiences with police, and what policies police services have created to address ongoing issues. Understanding the unique vulnerabilities of the trans community is imperative to understanding police interactions with them, as it helps to recognize some of the root causes of the treatment they receive. Positive interactions with police will then be examined, as most studies on the relationship between police and the trans community focus on harm. However imperative it is to explore these harms and understand their causes, it is equally important to include positive interactions, however sparse this is in literature. Assumptions regarding the lack of positive experiences in literature can be lengthy; however, given the political climate and overwhelming harm the trans community faces, it is understandable that examining positive interactions may feel disingenuous.

Vulnerabilities

The following examines the vulnerabilities of the trans community as a whole, beyond police interactions. Understanding their position within society is integral to better examining why their relationship with the police has been so fraught. Transgender people are at the highest risk for victimization than any other LGBQ cisgender people (Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016). Resisting gender conformity can result in stigma and discrimination, which is the basis of sexual and mental health disparities for trans youth (compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers) (Bockting, 2014; Logie & Lys, 2016). Additionally, trans people of colour (in particular trans women of colour) face higher rates of discrimination compared to white trans people (James et al., 2016; Puckett et al., 2020). Concerns about personal safety and life expectancy are a part of trans people's lives, as they feel unsafe in public and fear shorter life expectancies due to queer-bashing, police violence, the effects of hormones, and HIV/AIDS

(Stotzer, 2009). In a study conducted by Bockting et al. (2013), 70 % of trans people surveyed in a U.S. National survey reported verbal abuse and harassment. This trend is reported within employment, as 38 % of trans folks reported experiencing discrimination. Physical violence, which is higher for trans people, can include attempted rape, rape, stalking, mugging, or beatings (Kidd & Witten, 2008).

Another area of discrimination is in housing. Casey et al. (2019) found that a quarter of participants experienced discrimination in their neighbourhood (including apartment buildings or houses), and almost half said they considered moving due to the discrimination. Trans women who experienced intersectional anti-trans and racial discrimination had a higher likelihood of facing housing instability (Beltran et al., 2019). Black trans women face higher rates of housing instability than their white trans peers (Anderson-Carpenter, Fletcher & Reback, 2017; Beltran et al., 2019; Kauth et al., 2017). Other experiences of housing instability include staying with friends, couch surfing, staying at hotels and motels, or sleeping outdoors in public spaces (Glick et al., 2019).

These negative experiences can result in adverse mental health outcomes, which result in increased depression, anxiety, alcohol or substance abuse, and self-harm or suicide (Bockting et al., 2013; Cicero et al., 2019; Keuroghlian et al., 2015). Health outcomes are often worse due to discrimination faced in the health care system, and trans people usually avoid preventative or urgent care services due to their experiences (Casey et al., 2019). Clements-Noelle, Marx, and Katz (2006) surveyed trans people on attempted suicide (specifically male-to-female [MTF] and female-to-male [FTM]) and found that social factors such as gender-based discrimination and victimization were associated with attempted suicide. Furthermore, the participants who reported attempted suicide were also experiencing (or had experienced) depression, substance abuse, and

sexual assault (Clements-Noelle et al., 2006). A history of attempted suicide is the strongest predictor for future completed suicides (Bauer et al., 2015).

Bauer et al. (2015) found that the best predictors that had the highest effect on suicide ideation or attempts were social inclusion, protection from transphobia, and medical transition. This reinforces the need to combat trans-related harassment and discrimination and to acknowledge the impact of interpersonal factors (such as social or parental support) and structural factors (such as identification of gender markers matching that of one's lived gender) (Bauer et al., 2015). Rimes et al. (2019) found that across all of their participants, trans people assigned female at birth were more likely to attempt suicide. However, similar rates of suicidal ideation were seen across all trans-identifying participants (Rimes et al., 2019). Suicide rates in the U.S. are as prevalent as 40 % among trans people, whereas LGB people experience 10–20 %, and the general population at 4.6 % prevalence rates (Bockting et al., 2013; Cicero et al., 2019; Herman, Haas & Rodgers, 2014; Testa, Jimenez & Rankin, 2014).

Puckett et al. (2020) surveyed trans and gender-diverse people on the connection between mental health and discrimination. They found that people used various coping strategies to deal with their mental health distress (anxiety and depression) (Puckett et al., 2020). Coping included education and advocacy, detachment from situations, drug or alcohol use, resistance, and internalization of blame (Puckett et al., 2020). Interestingly, their results did not differ across gender, race, ethnicity, or income (except concerning public washrooms where people experienced more discrimination if they were from lower income brackets) (Puckett et al., 2020). Socio-economic status was the best predictor of violence against trans people, as it often resulted in homelessness and partaking in survival crimes (such as sex work) (Kidd & Witten, 2008; Lombardi et al., 2001; Witten & Eyler, 1999).

Within Canada, trans people are the highest targeted group for hate crimes (Perry & Dyck, 2014). Depression is a common thread, as a study conducted in Ontario with trans people found that 61 % of trans women reported depression, and 65 % for trans men (Rotondi et al., 2011). Additionally, 21.2 % of trans people in Ontario reported physical assault due to their gender identity (Ashley, 2018; Bauer et al., 2015). Another survey in Canada conducted on trans youth living in the Northwest Territories reported suicides twice the national average (and for other rural communities), as well as reported sexually transmitted infections ten times the national average (Logie & Lys, 2016). Due to perpetuating transphobia, trans people face higher rates of homelessness, physical and sexual assault, and unemployment rates three times the national average (Cicero et al., 2019; Conron et al., 2012; James et al., 2016; Lombardi et al., 2001).

With regards to sexual victimization, as reported by Stotzer (2009), the most common finding amongst trans people was unwanted sexual activity, as more than 50 % of trans people disclosed their sexual assault victimization. This research also stated that physical violence amongst trans people is common, and there is a high lifetime probability of assault, including the risk of re-victimization (Stotzer, 2009). The most documented type of violence against trans people is sexual assault and rape, and this high prevalence begins at a young age for most (Stotzer, 2009). Rimes et al. (2019) found that of their trans participants, those assigned female at birth experienced higher rates of childhood sexual abuse. Lanham et al. (2019) interviewed trans women in Latin America and the Caribbean, finding that the most common form of abuse they experienced was emotional (including derogatory comments, name-calling, and ridicule). Often, this abuse occurs in public (Lanham et al., 2019).

Finally, trans people face discrimination within the criminal justice system. According to Trans PULSE Ontario, part of a broader Trans PULSE Canada multimode survey revealed that 24 % of participants had been harassed by police (Scheim et al., 2023; Longman Marcellin et al., 2013). Prison is another space that is often fraught with violence for trans people. Trans people usually experience a multitude of mistreatment in prisons, including abuse, sexual violence, denial of medical and mental health care, and being held in solitary confinement for protection (Francisco, 2021). Trans women are often held in men's facilities as prisons still divide prisoners by genitalia (male and female), and this leads to the pervasive fear that men are identifying as women to fraudulently access women's spaces (Francisco, 2021). There is limited data on the experiences of trans men in prison. However, Tahj Graham, a 33-year-old trans man from Texas, was first sent to a men's prison before being transferred to a woman's facility (Stahl, 2021). Within the men's facility, he was forcibly strip-searched, which included being told to spread his legs as the male officer got an erection (Stahl, 2021). During his three years in the women's facility, he faced strip searches, had to grow out his hair, and was sexually harassed by other prisoners (Stahl, 2021). The National Center for Transgender Equality found that 10 % of trans men spent time in jail or prison, which is two times the rate of the general U.S. population (Stahl, 2021; The National Center for Transgender Equality, 2024). Trans men face the same discrimination as trans women in prison, which includes high rates of solitary confinement, sexual assault, and the denial of gender-affirming care and clothing (Stahl, 2021).

Laws protecting trans people vary across state or province, as the U.S. and Canada have conflicting federal protection laws. Within the U.S., federal laws do not protect trans people in areas such as employment, housing, and public spaces, which still means trans people are being fired for being trans, being denied employment, and being denied access to public spaces

(Puckett et al., 2020). In Canada, the federal Bill C-16 was passed, which amended the Canadian Human Rights Code to include protections for gender identity and gender expression (Heidenreich, 2017). This amendment makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone based on gender identity or expression and makes it a hate crime to target anyone for being trans (Tasker, 2017). Transgender people are also protected by provincial/territorial human rights laws within Canada (Scheim et al., 2023).

The broad examination of trans people's vulnerabilities helps situate their treatment within the context of society. It is essential to establish these realities as they help us understand the various ways police treat them. The following examines trans people's experiences with police and the breadth of difficulties the community faces as a result of feeling hesitant to contact the police or as a direct result of police harassment.

Trans People's Experiences with Police

The experiences that trans folks have with police are a common theme within literature on trans experiences, as they often receive threats of violence, harassment, and the dismissal of crimes committed against them by officers. Trans people experience a wide variety of negative interactions with police, which include disrespectful language, rude and inappropriate behaviour, verbal and physical harassment, and the denial of police services (Dwyer, 2011, 2014, 2015; Wolff & Cokely, 2007; Shields, 2021). Gauthier et al. (2021) polled trans women, trans men, and gender non-conforming participants on their experiences of harassment. Over 93 % stated they have been a victim of a hate crime because of their gender identity, which includes verbal harassment, physical assault, victimization by strangers, and victimization by someone they know. Trans people experience a significant feeling of fear surrounding police officers and are

less likely to have positive perceptions as compared to cisgender people (Dwyer, 2011; 2015; Serpe & Nadal, 2017; Shields, 2021).

Additionally, 2SLGBTQIA+ people of colour are more likely to be questioned by police over their gender identity, to be wrongfully accused, and to face sexual advances by police (Hodge & Sexton, 2020). Hodge and Sexton (2020) found a significant difference in the perceptions of police by participants who identified as trans and those who did not, with 60 % and 24 %, respectively, reflecting that they feel the police are incompetent. Scheim et al. (2023) found that among their participants who are not sex workers but are low-income, they anticipated police harassment or violence, avoided calling 911 for EMS or police support, and did not expect fair police treatment in cases involving violence.

Often, 2SLGBTQIA+ identified people feel that their identity impacts police treatment and believe that police respond poorly to incidents (Hodge & Sexton, 2020). Gorton (2011) found that 70 % of participants stated they would not report any gender-identity-related hate crimes. Secondary victimization by police can also include fears that the police prioritize protecting the perpetrator of the violence instead of investigating the hate crime (Jauk, 2013; Gorton, 2011; Shields, 2021; Stotzer, 2009). Fear of reporting victimization for fear of harassment and abuse by police can often stem from past experiences (Jauk, 2013). Lee and Santiago (2023) noted that economic status played a role in whether police help was even sought, as the more disadvantaged a person is, the less likely they are to report. Prior incarceration plays a role in the decision to report, and those with prior police interactions were also less likely to report (Lee & Santiago, 2023).

Trans-identified sex workers are even more likely to experience police harassment, as it is estimated that they are eleven times more likely than other trans folks to experience police

harassment, including forced sexual interactions (Stenersen et al., 2022). That percentage increases for trans people of colour (Stenersen et al., 2022). They are also less likely to report than white people, and Black people are even less likely to report (compared to other people of colour) (Lee & Santiago, 2023). Trans women of colour are even more likely to experience negative interactions with police (Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Shields, 2021). Lanham et al. (2019) interviewed trans women in Latin America and the Caribbean, finding that police neglected their duties and refused to help trans women, who were often blamed for the crimes they were attempting to report. Police also participated in both verbal and physical violence, including punching and the use of police weapons such as batons (Lanham et al., 2019). Robbery, being demanded sex in exchange for no arrest, groping, and sexual comments (such as "my love") were shared among police officers (Lanham et al., 2019). If the police do respond to incidents, they are less likely to classify the issue as a 2SLGBTQ+-centered hate crime (Wolff & Cokely, 2007).

There is a significant concern surrounding the personal safety of trans people, as many are fearful of a shorter lifespan due to incidents of violence from society and the police (Stotzer, 2009). These fears are supported by The National Transgender Discrimination Survey conducted by the National Center for Trans Equality. They found that 6 % of their participants experienced physical assault from a police officer, and 2 % sexual assault (Grant et al., 2011; Stotzer, 2014). One-fifth of trans people experience police harassment, and within that bracket, people of colour experience a 29–38 % higher rate (Grant et al., 2011). Denial of equal services and feeling uncomfortable seeking police support were also substantial findings (20 % and 46 %, respectively) (Grant et al., 2011). These statistics have been consistent across many years, as Stotzer (2009) analyzed a report from 2005 that found 9 % of participants experienced sexual

assault from a police officer, and a notable 47.5 % of those participants did not report their assault. Lanham et al. (2019) noted that trans women were often robbed by police (or military police), that sex was being demanded in exchange for no arrest, and that police usually refused their help. They also found that trans women were being wrongfully accused of the crime they were trying to report and faced both verbal and physical violence.

Some of the treatment that trans people experience can be related to society's expectations of gender behaviour (Miles-Johnson, 2020). Police attitudes are informed by social expectations and the 'homogenization' of gender and sexuality and, therefore, can lead to harsh treatment for trans people (Miles-Johnson, 2020). One participant in Hodge and Sexton (2020) commented on the attitudes of police, stating that there is a "culture of machismo" that "chafes at anything queer or perceived to be queer" (p.256). Therefore, this homogenization leads to a 'one size fits all' approach for 2SLGBTQ+ people, which further singles out the community and their subsequent treatment (Miles-Johnson, 2020).

Some trans advocates suggest better police accountability for their actions, as well as more transparency in demonstrating fairness when responding to calls, needing to showcase a genuine desire for community-focused policing, and improving the relationship with the 2SLGBTQ+ community (Owen et al., 2018). There is concern that the masculine environment within police culture may hinder these developments, as Miles-Johnson (2015; 2016) found that Australian police forces used language that reinforced an in-group mentality, such as *we*, *us*, and *our people* when referring to fellow officers and *them* when referring to the trans folks they came in contact with. This use of language can reinforce the differences between police and trans people, as well as perpetuate harmful stereotypes that transgender people are sex workers (Miles-Johnson, 2016). One officer was quoted during a training video, stating, "If it is a transgender

film … it must be like a porn film" (Miles-Johnson, 2016, p. 117). The perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and lack of engagement with sensitivity training might result in an increase in hesitation and fear from the trans community. Shields (2021) found that one-third of trans participants would not contact the police under any circumstances, and the remaining two-thirds would only be under emergencies. Prior negative interactions and fear of negative consequences lead to doubts about officers' efficacy and helpfulness, and these issues only intensify when police show consistent harmful behaviour (Shields, 2021).

This section discussed the negative, harmful experiences that trans people have with police, highlighting the need to continue research in these areas to bring awareness to ongoing harm. In contrast, the following section examines positive interactions with police, which is a small and under-researched area, as is explained below.

Positive Experiences with Police

Examining positive interactions with police is more challenging to discuss as there is limited data. Still, it is an essential and integral piece to understanding the complex relationship between trans people and the police. Restricted data may be a result of not wanting to highlight positive interactions in fear that it may diminish the harm that trans people experience and may not be seen as a priority, given the severity of discrimination. One can only speculate about the reasoning behind this area, which has minimal research, but the following examines positive interactions as delicately as possible.

To begin, Shields (2021) conducted focus groups on 2SLGBTQ+ people's perceptions of police and found that one trans woman said she feels comfortable contacting the police if something happens. Interestingly, Lee and Santiago (2023) found that non-conforming trans people felt more reluctant to seek police help than trans women or trans men. Additionally, trans

people with prior experience interacting with the police feel more comfortable contacting them again, as opposed to those without previous experience (Lee & Santiago, 2023). Within Latin America and the Caribbean, one trans woman reported positive experiences with the police (Lanham et al., 2019). She felt that service providers were both respectful and supportive, making an effort to affirm their gender identity (Lanham et al., 2019). Both names and pronouns were respected, and one trans woman noted, "[the police] came, they asked questions, they got my sex right. They were professional. [...] It was so refreshing" (Lanham et al., 2019, p. 43). Participants reflected positively on the experience of being treated like any other person, significantly when a service provider did not discriminate against them because of their trans identity (Lanham et al., 2019). The area of positive interactions with police is under-researched. As explained above, this may be for several reasons, including concerns that discussing positive interactions may diminish negative ones.

Police Legitimacy and Perceptions of Police and Police Authority

The following examines what factors impact police legitimacy, including perceptions of police and their authority. Police legitimacy examines the idea that positive perceptions of police authority are rooted in trust and respect for the institution of policing (Tyler, 2017). Trust in police goes beyond kindness; it requires belief in the system (Tankebe, 2012). Efforts to create procedural justice policies and look at police legitimacy have increased in the last decade, but more so in the last several years (Tyler, 2017). Examining demographic impacts on police legitimacy is essential for understanding why there are differences towards police (Wells, 2007). This is important because specific demographics are more likely to have negative encounters with police, while others may have specific expectations or standards of policing (Wells, 2007). It is important to note that no studies (to date) have examined transgender people's perceptions

of police legitimacy. The following literature review highlights current research, which is often situated in perceptions by neighbourhoods and race.

Mazerolle et al. (2013a) systematically reviewed procedural justice research. They found that the most common form of community policing is a close partnership between police and the community through police training, community-oriented task forces, or activities (Mazerolle et al., 2013a). Police-led interventions (such as community policing, informal police contact, and neighbourhood watch) were the best at increasing public satisfaction and perceptions of procedural justice (Mazerolle et al., 2013a). Crime prevention is an essential aspect of policing that results in more frequent interventions in the public's lives and being stopped or arrested over minor crimes (Tyler, 2017). Communities with a higher need for community policing have the most difficulty implementing it and tend to be low-income, urban areas (Van Maanen, 1978). Tensions between the public and police are high and are increased when police stop someone from that community (Van Maanen, 1978).

Often, the policing of a neighbourhood community and the failure of police to meet expectations results in the loss of legitimacy (Wells, 2007). Neighbourhood norms contribute to an individual's perceptions (Antrobus et al., 2015), as Madon, Murphy, and Sargeant (2017) found that the respondents who felt a strong sense of community were more likely to perceive the police as legitimate. This contrasts with respondents who showed lower legitimacy views of police and concern about crime in their neighbourhood (Madon et al., 2017). Within neighbourhoods of high crime rates, officers tend to face difficulties balancing reasonable suspicion and treating suspects with respect. This can result in residents feeling disrespected when their actions are viewed as suspicious, damaging perceived legitimacy (Hough, 2013). Reisig and Parks (2000) found that the relationship between race and police satisfaction lowered

but did not disappear when controlling for neighbourhood characteristics (as cited in Wells, 2007).

Mazerolle et al. (2013a) argue that the features of police training are more robust than a specific strategy to increase perceptions of legitimacy. Any police intervention may succeed if tailored towards legitimacy and procedural justice (Mazerolle et al., 2013a). Wells (2007) found that perceptions of procedural justice and outcome-focused behaviours were associated with higher favour for the officer. When officers engaged in procedural justice behaviour, the perception of their professionalism and competence increased exponentially (Wells, 2007). Interestingly, the intervention chosen by the police is less important than the dialogue within the interaction itself (Mazerolle et al., 2013a). The result of contact with an officer holds less sway towards procedural justice than does dealing with matters promptly, listening to those involved, following the correct procedure, and offering help (though not necessarily a result) (Bradford et al., 2009).

Tyler (2007) discusses the rise of highly publicized police shootings and how they have influenced trust and confidence in the police. Police shootings have also been caught on video, which in turn allows the public to form opinions of police actions based on what they see (Tyler, 2017). Tyler (2017) suggests that because crime rates have been dramatically decreasing, it is more acceptable for the public to question the police. Many recent conflicts with the police have been rooted in defiance of the police, which has deteriorated the legitimacy of the situation (Tyler, 2017). Additionally, the police show frustration when they require community support to help find offenders or act as witnesses (Tyler, 2017). However, the community will not help, and overall, focusing on cooperation (and not compliance) may be the connection to increasing legitimacy (Tyler, 2017).

Race and ethnicity affect police legitimacy with the same rate of negative interactions, police treatment, and community culture (Gallagher et al., 2001; Wells, 2007). Gau and Brunson (2010) found an overwhelming number of notable experiences of racism by police toward Black respondents. Nearly 70 % of respondents felt that the police had harassed or mistreated people in their neighbourhood (Gau & Brunson, 2015). Many respondents felt harassed by police when they were stopped for "doing nothing wrong," even in cases when they admitted minor wrongdoing (Gau & Brunson, 2015, p. 141). Nearly half of the respondents reported experiencing police harassment, while over half said they knew someone who had also been harassed by police (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Respondents felt their actions were undeserving of police response, which involved stops and physical searches (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Stop-and-frisks were considered overly aggressive and demeaning (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

There is an assumption that adults tend to view police more favourably as they age; therefore, youth hold the most negative views (Madon, 2018). Youth experiences with police play a crucial role in shaping their understanding of the law and those who enforce it (Madon, 2018). Witnessing police misconduct with others in their neighbourhood or community influenced negative perceptions of police and, overall, the youth felt mistreated and belittled (Eterno, Barrow & Silverman, 2016). These youth explained that if they perceived the officer as harmful, they would respond negatively, or "if they come to me in a subtle type of manner, then I'll present myself the right way" (Eterno et al., 2016, p. 188). Youths expressed resentment towards police for stopping them based on little or no evidence, especially when police rarely explained why they were being stopped and searched (Eterno et al., 2016).

Slocum, Wiley, and Esbensen (2016) found that youth who were arrested or stopped by police showed an increase in delinquency compared to youth who have had no contact with

police. Youth who had been stopped by police and felt dissatisfied or ambivalent tended to feel more marginalized from their community, and this marginalization was higher among youth who felt police were unjust (Slocum et al., 2016). Interestingly, respondents' feelings towards police were irrespective of whether or not the police were acting within the bounds of the law (Gau & Brunson, 2015). They felt they did not trust the police's motives or sincerity and rejected the idea that police act in the community's best interest (Gau & Brunson, 2015). Gau and Brunson (2015) note that there is a significant overlap between low police legitimacy and high-crime neighbourhoods that can negatively impact police policy. Hough (2013) had similar results, as teenagers who were stopped and searched with only minimal explanation felt victimized, in contrast to officers who took considerable care to explain their actions.

Braga et al. (2014) explain psychological differences that impact people's perception of events. These events are shaped by one's attitudes and beliefs, meaning people can observe the same objective event and subjectively experience it differently (and, in some cases, remember the facts of the event differently) (Braga et al., 2014). Social situations influence a person's perceptions as well, as is seen in research on racial profiling, where minority groups perceive police interactions as disrespectful and feel they were stopped because of their race (Balcetis & Lassiter, 2010; Braga et al., 2014; Tyler & Wakslak, 2004).

With regards to social categories, Tyler (2000) states that if an authority member is not part of a social category we feel identified or emotionally connected with, their treatment should not reflect one's worth, and we should not look to their polite or respectful treatment as the basis of legitimacy. Furthermore, if the officer is part of someone's identity group, more weight should be placed on the authority's respectful, neutral, or trustworthy treatment (Tyler, 2000). For example, one places higher judgment on an officer if they share the same racial or gender

category, but this should not form the basis of whether or not that authority is fair or trustworthy. Bradford et al. (2017) examined people within England and Wales, finding that respondents accepted using force when they identified with the same social category as the police (i.e., law-abiding citizens). They found that respondents who identified strongly with the police were more likely to support the use of force in instances such as deadly force against an armed threat, striking a citizen who attacks, using physical force against a handcuffed offender, or using force to arrest a person unarmed and non-violent but resistant (Bradford et al., 2009).

A significant theme within police perceptions is that police abuse their authority and disrespect citizens, thus emphasizing the need to understand the role of officers in the community and their implications (Van Maanen, 1978). Respondents who felt that police were behaving unjustly were also significantly more likely to perceive race and ethnicity as the reason for the unfair police stop (Renauer & Covelli, 2011). Economically disadvantaged communities that were primarily Black tended to feel they had more negative police contacts, felt less safe, felt the neighbourhood had high crime rates, and felt they had fewer personal economic resources (Renauer & Covelli, 2011). Due to the ways police culture is understood, there is the assumption that if an officer acts in a racist manner during their duties, it assumes the broader police culture is also racist (Waddington, 1999). However, as Bradford, Milani, and Jackson (2017) found, public support for the police does not entirely collapse in the face of police abuse as many people continue to legitimize and identify with what the police represent (Bradford et al., 2017). Apologies to innocent suspects would go a long way in repairing some of the harm (Eterno et al., 2016).

Police have a higher, privileged position because power and control are not evenly distributed across all people (Goldsmith, 2005). Use of force, the enforcement of unpopular laws,

whether the police abide by the law themselves, the suspicious nature of police work, and performance (ability and competency) inform the basis of trust for police (Goldsmith, 2005). These factors examine the subjective ways people experience the same objective act, thus forming the basis of police legitimacy in the eyes of different people (Goldsmith, 2005). Police use of force and coercion must be addressed in terms of their frequency and pretext (Goldsmith, 2005). Police forces that use minimal force tactics tend to have a public motivated by agreement to laws rather than coercion (Goldsmith, 2005).

If a proactive policing contact (such as police stopping individuals in a community) results in suspicion or mistrust, it can damage the relationship between police and the public (Tyler, Jackson & Mentovich, 2015). Respondents who felt that the police saw them as suspicious were more likely to feel that police have a bias towards different members of a community (Tyler et al., 2015). This also applies to those who feel the police do not want the same outcomes as them and do not have people's best interests in mind (Tyler et al., 2015). As Tyler and Jackson (2014) examined, legitimacy is essential in law-abiding behaviour. The higher the legitimacy perception of respondents, the lower the crime rates were across minor and major crimes (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). This pattern showed that 0 % of respondents with high legitimacy perceptions of police committed significant crimes, and 98 % with high legitimacy perceptions said they would cooperate with the police (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Those who believe the police are suspicious of them are likely to feel that the police do not respect their values, do not appreciate their contributions to the community, and disapprove of their lifestyle (Tyler et al., 2015). Disordered neighbourhoods, minority identities, and age (young people) showed weaker relationships with the police (Tyler et al., 2015).

The relationship between the police and communities is fraught with distrust, as the literature examined multiple factors that impact whether a person (or community) feels the police are legitimate. Even when increasing community policing, their efforts can be misguided as communities feel even more targeted by police. The following section examines police policies for addressing longstanding issues with the 2SLGBTQ+ community. While the public's perception of police has been examined, it is equally important to examine what the police say they are doing to address these issues.

Police Service Policies for the 2SLGBTQ+ Community

The following explores Canadian police associations' (federal and provincial) policies on 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, contact, and training. Additionally, the city and regional police services (Toronto Police Service and Durham Regional Police) are reviewed, as most participants reside in Toronto or the Durham region. It is important to note that while this research study focuses solely on the trans community, police policies are inclusive of the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community. However, there is no trans-specific policy. Additionally, this section uses the acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ uniformly, as each police service has its way of referring to the community.

Of all services across Canada provincially, only one association has a dedicated 2SLGBTQIA+ policy. While examining these policies, an important question is whether these policies have positively impacted the relationship between police and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Perhaps these policies were created due to the rising political and social tensions surrounding 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the media and across social platforms or out of a genuine desire to help heal (and prevent) harm. It is essential to examine how effective police policies are. To discover how the trans community feels requires directly asking them about their

experiences with the police. It is equally as important to acknowledge that these police services took the initiative to create 2SLGBTQIA+-specific policies. My research serves to inquire about what trans people's experiences with police look like, what justice means to them, and how police can reflect that. Their experiences may help inform and make police policies relevant.

The federal association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, covers all Canadian police officers. The provincial association, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, is specific to the province of Ontario, where this study takes place. These two policies were the only two publicly accessible training guides and are broken down into sections such as the guide's aims, points for reconciliation and community connections, and workplace procedures for trans-identified officers.

An examination of the policies begins with the guide by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), published in 2020. The guide aims to showcase how Canadian police services support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community across Canada, highlighting that police must uphold the law and create and support safe communities (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police [CACP], 2020). The CACP included equity, diversity, and inclusion in their 2019 policy, followed by their broader 2SLGBTQIA+ policy in 2020 (CACP, 2020). Within the policies, Canadian police services apologize for prior wrongdoings and promise to follow these apologies with concrete actions to address harm (CACP, 2020). The overall purpose of the CACP guide is to assist police services in delivering meaningful apologies to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community through guidelines, recommendations, and practices (CACP, 2020).

Reconciliation is defined as using 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusionary frameworks in policies, procedures, and practices (CACP, 2020). CACP provides 2SLGBTQIA+ training for managers and supervisors (CACP, 2020). The association promises to use gender-based intersectional

analyses and implementation strategies, which means they acknowledge how diverse groups of people (based on gender) may experience policies, programs, and practices differently (CACP, 2020). There is also an acknowledgment of intersecting identities (CACP, 2020). Within the workplace, there is specific recruitment and retention of 2SLGBTQIA+ identified workers, not just for police but also for staff and volunteers (CACP, 2020). The association utilizes the "Pride at Work Canada" organization (see https://prideatwork.ca) for recommendations on recruiting and hiring, understanding any workplace barriers, and utilizing appropriate, inclusive language (CACP, 2020). CACP includes a specific section of its guide dedicated to trans-identified employees (CACP, 2020). They acknowledge that transitions are highly personal and individual and promise to respect name, pronouns, and gender expressions and give any support necessary for transitioning employees (CACP, 2020). This ensures that all employees are protected based on gender identity and expression (CACP, 2020).

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) guide was introduced in 2021 as an update to their prior 2SLGBTQIA+ policing guide (Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police [OACP], 2021). The provincial association consulted 2SLGBTQIA+ stakeholders and partners to help update the guide and encourages other 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to submit information about policing and the community to the OACP Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (OACP, 2021). The OACP guide aims to assist police services with the proactive development of inclusive and safe workplaces, including developing and maintaining a relationship with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (OACP, 2021). As with the Canadian association, OACP acknowledges an intersectional lens when creating the guide. Acknowledging the current climate between the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and police is part of the overall recommendations, and the service asks broader police services critical engagement questions to

challenge whether they have done enough to take these issues into account (OACP, 2021). Additionally, the OACP acknowledges that police inclusion in various Pride parades has been revoked and makes recommendations for ways to improve the relationship with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (OACP, 2021).

There has been an effort by the OACP to recruit 2SLGBTQIA+ police personnel, transform police culture, improve community relationships, and offer support for transitioning employees. They also include a list of 20 suggestions for other police services to help diversify their service (OACP, 2021). Regarding police training and education, they state that mandatory 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusivity training is required for all officers, and the training needs to be regularly updated and evaluated for its effectiveness (OACP, 2021). They encourage connections with community organizations to develop training and offer five suggestions for how to do so (OACP, 2021). Finally, they include a list of Ontario-based police services that they state have accomplished significant steps in healing the relationship with the 2SLGBTQ+ community (which includes Barrie, Halton, Waterloo, York services, and the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) (OACP, 2021). The RCMP is Canada's national police service that oversees national and provincial policing for provinces without provincial police. The federal police association (the policy discussed earlier) would oversee the RCMP.

Finally, the OACP concludes with some recommendations for authentic inclusion. They encourage qualitative analysis research with police members from Ontario services and encourage police services to continue to examine their workplace culture, as failure to do so negatively impacts the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (OACP, 2021). There is an encouragement to create and maintain communication with 2SLGBTQ+ organizations to emphasize trust and trusting relationships (OACP, 2021).

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) policy for transgender people is brief. Their search-and-detention policy explains that officers will be sensitive to the "human rights, privacy issues and the stated preference as to gender identification" of the person being searched and will use "gender-appropriate pronouns" (Toronto Police Services Board, 2024). Additionally, the Toronto Police Services has a dedicated 2SLGBTQIA+ liaison officer who provides community policing support for TPS officers and community stakeholders (Toronto Police Services, 2024). The liaison officer is also responsible for giving sensitivity training to the Toronto Police College (Toronto Police Services, 2024). The Durham Regional Police policy is also brief, and their 2SLGBTQIA+ policy is part of their broader equity and inclusion policy. Their policy includes training opportunities, visibility within the Durham community (including parades, attending PFLAG Durham community awards, and marking Transgender Day of Remembrance), and support for other groups, such as women, Indigenous residents, and youth (Durham Regional Police, 2022).

This chapter has examined previous literature on the trans community, including their vulnerabilities and experiences with police and police policies for supporting the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Additionally, police legitimacy and perceptions of police and their authority were discussed. There is little to no scholarship reflecting trans people's perceptions of police legitimacy. These discussions form the basis for this research study, as it is essential to understand the historical context of the relationship between the trans community and the police, as well as what factors influence trust in police. This helps frame the theoretical frameworks to inform the broader research project and research questions.

The following examines two theoretical frameworks: transgender theory and procedural justice theory. These two theories form the basis for the research project and how to better understand the relationship between the trans community and the police.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks used for this research project, which help understand questions regarding transgender people's lived experiences and the role of police procedure. Transgender theory helps understand the trans perspective and incorporates their lived experiences, while procedural justice theory examines how police procedure impacts how someone views police authority. Within the umbrella of procedural justice theory, police legitimacy and how gender impacts legitimacy will be discussed. Transgender theory and procedural justice theory are used in tandem to help understand how trans people think about procedural justice and to explore the under-researched area of how trans people experience and perceive police.

Transgender Theory

The following section discusses transgender theory, as within the context of this study, trans theory helps think about police legitimacy because it introduces a unique view of justice through the lens of trans people. Given their unique and individual lived experiences, understanding their perspective on police is essential for broader discussions on police legitimacy and what justice means. Transgender theory helps explore and understand the unique ways trans people think about and theorize gender, especially regarding how feminist and queer theories do the same. The following examines (briefly) how trans theory developed, beginning with a discussion on feminist theory, which theorizes gender broadly, and then queer theory, which began as a critique of feminist theory to include a queer lens. Understanding queer theory's critiques helps us understand what gaps transgender theory seeks to fill and how it can be a valuable tool for conceptualizing gender. Transgender theory is rooted in critiques of feminist and queer theories, emphasizing that there are many understandings of gender, as

gender is individual and based on one's lived experiences (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010; Halberstam, 2012). Transgender theory further challenges these two theories based on heteronormative and cisnormative beliefs about gender (Nagoshi, 2014). Separating transgender theory from the broader feminist and queer theory umbrellas allows lesbian, gay, and queer sexualities to be critiqued (Stryker, 2004).

Feminist theory began as a tool to analyze how gender is understood and how to situate gender within social relations (Flax, 1987). Feminist theory focuses on the positionality of women and how they are located in culture, about the dominance of men, and on re-evaluating or altering gender expectations and norms for women (Flax, 1987). Queer theory actively challenged feminist theory on the grounds of traditional gender roles (Nagoshi & Nagoshi, 2014). The theory explores lived experiences of gender and sexuality, moving away from only gay or lesbian identity categories (Halperin, 2003). Queer, as a terminology, became a way for theorizing to reframe terms like heterosexual, gay and lesbian (as these terms are dependent on gender) (Watson, 2005). Queer theory applies the ideology of *queer* to social constructs to help examine non-normativity (meaning anything at odds with what is deemed 'the norm' (Nagoshi & Nagoshi, 2014). Queer asks *what does queer look like* and *what should queer do*, which implies its understanding that gender and sexuality are viewed as important practices and modes of analysis [emphasis added] (Watson, 2005).

Applying queer theory to trans people tends to reinforce gender role stereotyping, as queer theory has focused on the "either/or" of gender and the gender binary (Hausman, 2001; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Queer theory was further critiqued for not focusing on the lived experiences of trans people (Roen, 2001). Being transgender is more than moving from one gender identity to another, and therefore, trans theorists reject the conceptualization of gender as

"both/neither" (Nagoshi, Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2014). The necessity for trans theory arose out of the need to recognize how embodiment interacts with social expectations and lived experiences, as they are how we understand the world and our place in it (Nagoshi, 2014; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010; Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009).

Concerning trans theory, Bettcher (2020) considers the trans perspective. She explores how gender and sexuality have come to be understood and what gender has to do with personhood (Bettcher, 2020). Trans theory is a critical addition to feminist and queer theories, as it examines the role of gender in the construction of "self" and "identity" and recognizes the influence that social expectations and lived experiences have on those constructions (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Gender is defined as the epistemology of knowing (and understanding) how culture operates and that a person's experiences of the world are based on their gender category (Hausman, 2001; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Keeping in line with feminist intersectionality, Bettcher (2020) posits what effect acknowledging trans oppression has on recognizing or analyzing other forms of oppression. The analysis of trans lives, for example, does not necessarily overlap with the goals of queer-based politics (in line with critiques of queer theory), as trans women (in particular) are not shaped by the acceptance of gender norms for women (Connell, 2012). What this entails is trans women not being represented in discourses on identity (Connell, 2012). Therefore, trans theorists critique queer theory on the basis that they are ethnocentric (Roen, 2001). Meaning queer theories have a lack of lived realities of trans people and need to expand their inclusiveness cross-culturally (Roen, 2001). Thus, as Elliot and Roen (1998) discuss, the "reading" of trans theories should analyze all of the complexities and ambiguities that arise from identities and human experiences.

Trans theory has two main strains of thought (Roen, 2001). One argues for the acceptance of gender transition and ambiguity that human experience should be what determines gender, not biological attributes (Roen, 2002). The second thought focuses on acceptance for living as the opposite sex (for example, trans women are accepted as women and trans men are accepted as men) (Roen, 2002). What separates these two strains is the support of gender affirmation surgery versus gender solely based on how one identifies (Roen, 2002). The strength of transgender theory is that it removes binary limitations and views gender as a spectrum that is not limited to the transition between man and woman (Elliot & Roen, 1998; Roen, 2002). This means that transgender theory celebrates the individuality of gender. It does not constrain gender to man or woman; it allows for including all gender identities. It allows for the examination of gender on the binary, for example, a trans man or trans woman, but also those who identify beyond the binary, for example, genderqueer or non-binary folks. It relies on the person's examination of their gender identity.

Trans theory encourages a "trans standpoint" that people should theorize themselves for themselves (Bettcher, 2014). It is essential to recognize how intersectional, oppressed identities are moulded from fluid, self-constructed identities (Nagoshi, 2014). As Stryker (2004) explains, trans theory helps examine "gender and sexuality, identity, embodiment, and desire in ways that gay, lesbian, and queer studies have not always successfully managed" (p. 214). The theory emerged from a Westernized standpoint, but the theory has thrived in its critique of queer theory that comes from many speakers from many locations (Strkyer, 2004). Trans theory can harbour conversations incorporating cross-cultural understandings or interpretations of sexed embodiment and lived gender (Roen, 2001). Cultural identity precedes gender and sexuality in

political importance, “but the two are intrinsically linked: One does not make sense without the other” (Roen, 2001, p. 257).

Transgender theory does not go without its critiques. Some argue that focusing on individual identities can detract from the more significant structural issues of gender inequality (Elliot & Roen, 1998; Hausman, 2001). Others find concern about the erasure of biological differences between the sexes and the potential for reinforcing gender stereotypes through the concept of gender identity (Elliot & Roen, 1998; Hausman, 2001). Transgender theory remains descriptive and ontological, focusing on one’s body and attacking biological understandings of gender identity (Hausman, 2001). Comparatively, feminist theory attacks the social system and not the original problem of sexed embodiment (Hausman, 2001). Ultimately, feminism provides a critique of transgender theory because they are at odds regarding the idea that gender is a category based on experience (Hausman, 2001).

What is present in trans theory are the concepts of personal authority and individual experiences. These two concepts are integral when discussing a person’s understanding of what justice is and how justice is developed individually and personally. A further discussion on what elements are essential to each person when developing their sense of justice and acceptance of police authority follows in the next section on procedural justice theory. There, we will discuss key concepts of the theory and how they play a role in the acceptance of police authority.

Procedural Justice Theory

Procedural justice theory focuses on using authority, including concepts such as trust in justice, legitimacy, cooperation, and compliance (Hough, 2013). The theory helps explore and understand how people view police authority and what makes someone more likely to obey police orders. When the public sees the police as legitimate, it, in turn, allows compliance and

the acceptance of that authority (Hough, 2013). Examining the relationship between police and the public has been a long-standing part of community-oriented policing and police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a). Procedural justice principles involve more than being nice to people; they involve respect, neutrality, trustworthiness, and voice (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). In other words, police need to respect people, make neutral decisions based on the law, showcase trustworthy motives and justify their actions, and listen to citizens' accounts, concerns, and needs (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). Procedural justice is promising because of its benefits to the community, with no apparent consequences (such as controversial crime-control approaches that threaten police-community relations) (Gau & Brunson, 2015; Fagan & Davies, 2000).

Procedural justice theory helps understand situational cues and framing differences that impact how a person perceives a situation and, in turn, their judgments on police authority and legitimacy (Braga et al., 2014). Tyler (2017) divides procedural justice into two components: whether citizens are treated fairly by police and whether police treat citizens with respect, dignity, privacy, and so forth. Therefore, if a person deems the police action as fair, there will be an immediate acceptance of the police's decision, as well as deeming the police as legitimate. Personal experiences with authorities significantly influence a person's perceptions of police, and if those experiences are seen as disrespectful, unfair, or unethical, they directly affect how legitimate the police are (Braga et al., 2014; Tyler, 2004). Police need to be considered legitimate by those they police to maintain social order, and that legitimacy is grounded in how satisfied a person feels in obeying and deferring authority to the police (Antrobus et al., 2015; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Social norms and contexts shape people's attitudes and beliefs, influencing attitudes towards police legitimacy (Antrobus et al., 2015).

Antrobus et al. (2015) explain that fairness lies at the core of an individual's beliefs towards rules and authority structures within procedural justice research. An individual's beliefs can be further shaped by whether they understand the beliefs or actions of others (for example, a person can form their perceptions of police regardless of whether or not they know the police's actions) (Antrobus et al., 2015). Identity and values determine whether someone supports groups or leaders ethically or morally (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b). Therefore, cooperation with the police is based on whether a person believes the police represent moral values (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b). Tyler (1990) determined that compliance with police happens not because of fear of punishment but because people see the police actions as legitimate and fair.

Community support and engagement are essential when developing one's perceptions of police. Validating police is strengthened when others support them (Antrobus et al., 2015; Johnson, Dowd & Ridgeway, 2006). Believing in police legitimacy leads to internalizing a moral obligation to follow the law (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Police officers must appear legitimate to citizens because they have the legal capability and moral authority to issue commands, expect compliance, and use force (Gau & Brunson, 2015). Therefore, compliance is more likely when people believe in the law (rather than fear of punishment) (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Procedural justice theorists would argue that people are willing to "accept decisions and outcomes that they do not regard as being in their personal best interests, provided that they consider justice institutions and officials to be wielding legitimate authority" (Hough, 2013, p.183–184). As Gau and Brunson (2010) put it, it is more than what police do; it is how they do it.

Traditional police strategies relied on the idea that fear of being caught and punished would deter people from committing criminal acts (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a). Reactive police strategies were aimed at crime fighting, but this led to the loss of public support and faith in the

police's ability to provide safety (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a). Tough-on-crime approaches are ineffective, as what tends to be more successful is motive-based, voluntary self-regulation by the public, who view the law as legitimate (Hough, 2013). To maintain order, police officers may need to restrict freedom by having citizens voluntarily agree with the law and police commands (Gau & Brunson, 2015). Officers can only sometimes give citizens the desired results (Gau & Brunson, 2015). However, police must be mindful of how people often accept unfavourable outcomes if they feel satisfied with the police process (Gau & Brunson, 2015).

Hough (2013) points out that if police are seen as unfair or disrespectful, it damages the public's trust in police. Low trust reduces legitimacy; the less the police are seen as legitimate, the less the public responds to their authority, and the lack of legitimacy impacts the public's commitment to the law or the desire to help the police (Hough, 2013). Legal authority alone is not enough to gain compliance, so to "keep the peace," officers must be seen as "possessing the moral authority to represent and enforce the law" (Gau, 2012, p. 761). Additionally, procedural justice does not require any significant shifts in police operations and can offer citizens a sense of feeling respected and dignified (Gau & Brunson, 2015; see also Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013; Mazerolle et al., 2012; Mazerolle et al., 2013b).

Procedural justice might cause tension within the community if the police feel they are acting neutrally or professionally, and the citizens feel they were mistreated and are unhappy with the police process (Gau, 2012). Gau and Brunson (2010) explain that procedural justice legitimacy is often challenged by "maintenance policing," which often consists of police-stopping citizens for minor or low-level offences. A person being stopped may not understand the reasoning, especially if their offence is minor, and therefore, interpret the interaction as harassment (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Stop-and-frisks are maintenance policing strategies

commonly used to reduce social disorder (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Examples of social disorder can be disorderly behaviour, loitering, panhandling, or graffiti (Gau & Brunson, 2010). It is important to note that police can stop behaviour beyond maintenance policing, such as believing a crime is about to occur (Gau & Brunson, 2010). This can lead to overlap or misunderstanding between maintenance policing and stops of severe crimes.

Gender and Legitimacy

There is limited research on gender identity and police legitimacy perceptions, as various research has shown mixed results on gender influence. As discussed in the above section, most research done on legitimacy focuses on race. Some research on gender shows no influence, some show minimal, and it is essential to note that these studies only assessed for gender within the cisgender binary (man/male, woman/female). Research is mixed on whether or not procedural justice has a more significant impact on disaffected minority groups (Madon et al., 2017). As Miller and D'Souza (2016) explain, different social groups have varying confidence levels towards the police. Hinds (2007) discusses various research on gender and young people's perceptions of police, finding that studies differ in the results (see Griffiths & Winfree, 1982; Cao, Frank & Cullen, 1996; Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998; Hurst & Frank, 2000). Miller and D'Souza (2016) found that older respondents and cisgender women tended to have greater confidence in the police. Van der Toorn, Tyler, and Jost (2011) analyzed sex and perceived legitimacy and found that the sex of respondents had no impact. Allen and Monk-Turner (2010) examined experiences with traffic stops and found that women were more likely (63 %) to be stopped than men. Black respondents were less likely to feel the stop was legitimate than white respondents. However, social class, age, and gender were not significantly related to the perceived legitimacy (Allen & Monk-Turner, 2010). Lawfulness and procedural fairness of the

police were the main factors in legitimacy (Tankebe, 2012). There were no significant effects based on gender (Tankebe, 2012). No research to date has focused on gender identity and legitimacy perceptions, nor has there been any research on trans identities and legitimacy.

The legality of police conduct may not be as important as the assessment of the police's actions when assessing their reactions to police encounters (Meares, Tyler & Gardener, 2016). Viewing legitimacy through a lens of trust and confidence means people will view police as sincere, benevolent, and concerned about their welfare (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). It, in turn, means people trust that police will act in ways that benefit people, resulting in trust and shared interests (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Procedural justice is the basis for legitimacy under this framework, as it assesses cooperation with the police and compliance with the law (Worden & McLean, 2017). Procedural justice has two components (Tyler, 2000). First, it has a role in shaping reactions to decisions, and people accept these decisions because of how they are made, and second, whether people feel the procedure was fair (Tyler, 2000). The basis for fairness must be rooted in the procedure, not in whether the outcome is fair or favourable (Tyler, 2000).

There are a few studies that incorporated positive experiences between transgender people and the police, as briefly discussed in the literature review chapter. Lanham et al. (2019) interviewed Latin American and Caribbean trans women whose names and pronouns were respected, and one woman reported that the service providers made an effort to affirm her gender identity. Within procedural justice theory literature, no studies have examined transgender identities and their perceptions of procedural justice. This is a significant gap to fill, as one in 300 people in Canada is transgender (as of the Canadian census completed in 2021) (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Combining Transgender Theory and Procedural Justice Theory

The previous theoretical work on transgender theory and procedural justice theory helps draw our attention to the unique ways trans people think about themselves and how people more broadly think about justice and police authority. However, one area that has received no theoretical attention is how trans people feel about procedural justice. Despite the insights gathered from both theories, the understanding of how trans people experience and perceive police (and procedural justice) remains undertheorized. The following section provides the groundwork for why this research project uses both theories and the importance of combining them when attempting to understand the unique experiences of trans people.

This research project aims to utilize transgender theory to provide grounding for trans people's voices. For far too long, and in too many research projects, trans people have been the subject of research, not contributors. This project seeks to contribute to the ever-growing support of trans people's authority and make them critical research drivers. This ensures that the study is informed directly by the trans community. It is important to note that many current research projects have ensured their trans participants are integral in the research process, and this project adds to that growing number. There is still much work to be done, and one goal of this project is to encourage future researchers to include trans people in their projects from initiation to completion.

As discussed in the transgender theory section, the theory is rooted in the belief that trans people should theorize themselves for themselves (Bettcher, 2014). The only people who can speak to the unique vulnerabilities and experiences of the trans community are trans themselves. As discussed later in the methodology section, this project uses focus groups to create an atmosphere of open dialogue. This allows participants to guide the conversation however they desire, allowing each person's unique experiences to be shared, including relevant topics and

priority subjects. Focus groups also provide a space for community. They can empower participants to share their thoughts about themselves and their community, highlighting the importance of self-identification and individual identity. As transgender theorists have explained, there is a need for understanding the influence that gender identity has on personhood and how one's experiences of the world are based on their gender (Bettcher, 2019; Hausman, 2001; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010; Stryker, 2004).

Transgender theory's application to this research project is an integral part of ensuring that trans people are included in the research project and that their experiences are being respected. Trans people should be critical drivers in research about them, given their vulnerabilities and unique position in society. Therefore, this research project acknowledges the importance of these factors and their influence on the project's overall projection.

The other theory utilized for this research project is procedural justice theory. This theory is what ties the trans community and the police together in attempting to understand the current state of their relationship (or, in some cases, lack thereof). Procedural justice theory helps understand how people interpret interactions with police and how those interactions inform the larger community's perception of police (Antrobus et al., 2015). It helps understand judgments towards police and how treatment by police directly influences how one may or may not abide by (or agree with) police authority (Antrobus et al., 2015; Tyler, 2008). Fundamentally, the more respectful an officer is in their interactions with people, the more likely that a person will accept the officer's decision (even if it is punishment) (Hough, 2013).

Utilizing procedural justice in this project helps understand the concerns of the participants. When they discuss their experiences or perceptions with police, it speaks to the ways they felt during individual interactions or how the community's view of police influenced

their ideas. Getting to the heart of these interactions provides the foundation for a research question asking participants what justice means and how police can show that to them. If the procedural justice theory framework is based on respect, legitimacy, and trust, then based on participant answers, respect, legitimacy, and trust may be one way police can show justice to them. Trans people face unique vulnerabilities, and the core of procedural justice is for police to understand those vulnerabilities and to help people feel respected, heard, and understood. Procedural justice theory's strength lies in those qualities, which is the benefit of its application to this project.

Trans people's experiences shape their understanding of how procedural justice can help them. When their experiences and perceptions of the police are understood, in combination with their ideas of what justice means to them, it can directly influence what procedural justice looks like for the trans community. The trans community needs to be at the core of research on them, and highlighting their voices means procedural justice theory can have trans-specific applications that target the community's specific vulnerabilities and concerns. Procedural justice theory has not looked at gender beyond the binary, nor has it been applied directly to the lives of transgender people. This has never been done before, and this research project seeks to be among the first to do so. This project will encourage future researchers in the area of procedural justice to consider the application of trans voices and the combination of both procedural justice theory and transgender theory.

The combination of both theories allows transgender theory to inform procedural justice theory. As said earlier, the voices of trans people should be what informs any research on them. Therefore, transgender theory should inform procedural justice theory in community research. This ensures all theoretical contexts are rooted in the understanding that trans people should

theorize themselves for themselves and, therefore, when applied to procedural justice theory, that procedural justice is informed by the trans community for the trans community. The combination of both theories informed the four research questions used in this study, which can be found in Chapter 4: Methodology. The only way to ensure research is trans-centered is to center trans people in that research. This research project seeks to add to the growing amount of research conducted by trans people and to fill a very noticeable gap in procedural justice theory.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This section discusses the research project methodology, data collection methods, and ethical considerations. The demographics and researcher positionality will be examined first, as it is important to understand who the participants are and how my identities can impact the research process. Following will be a discussion of the location and context of the study, outlining the recruitment strategies and the importance of working closely with community organizations. Ethical considerations will then showcase how this project respects the vulnerability of the trans community, as well as highlighting the steps taken to ensure all participants have authority over their inclusion. This research project used focus groups and one-on-one interviews to inquire about trans people's experiences and perceptions of police. These methods ensure that the participants had a say in their involvement and could lead the discussion.

Demographics

A total of 14 participants participated in five focus groups and three one-on-one interviews. Additional participant demographics, in addition to their trans identities, were shared on a self-disclosure basis and often came via stories about their experiences. It was essential to give each participant the power to disclose what they felt comfortable, to ensure they could control their level of anonymity. Though all participants were trans-identified, three self-disclosed their identity as non-binary, three as trans men, one as a trans woman, one as genderqueer, and six as trans. Racially, five self-identified as a person of colour, five as white, and the remaining did not disclose their race. Three participants self-identified as first-generation immigrants in Canada. One participant disclosed their disability, and one person disclosed their religion. Their ages also ranged, with many participants in their early twenties and two in their

forties. Most participants identified as queer, but others did not disclose their sexuality unless it was relevant to their experience with the police.

In order to humanize the participants in this study, I share each participant's code and their self-disclosed identity. This is to ensure each participant is situated in their lived experiences, which are often a result of their identities beyond being transgender. Each participant had the opportunity to self-disclose their identities in order to allow them to control how much they shared and their anonymity.

Participant 1 is a white trans person, using they/them pronouns. Participant 2 is a white genderqueer, AFAB person who is over the age of 40 and uses she/her pronouns. Participant 3 is a trans person, using they/he/she/it pronouns. Participant 4 is a trans, non-binary person of colour, an immigrant to Canada, and uses he/him pronouns. Participant 5 is a white trans man who uses he/him pronouns. Participant 6 is a trans person of colour who immigrated to Canada from India and uses she/her pronouns. Participant 7 is a white, trans, queer, disabled person, using they/bat/ze/zer pronouns. Participant 8 is a trans man, using he/him pronouns. Participant 9 is a non-binary, transmasculine white-passing person, using they/them pronouns. Participant 10 is a white trans woman, over 40, who uses she/her pronouns. Participant 11 is a trans man, using he/him pronouns. Participant 12 is a trans person of colour, using they/them pronouns. Participant 13 is a queer, non-binary Muslim person of colour, an immigrant to Canada, and uses they/them pronouns. Lastly, Participant 14 is a trans person using they/them pronouns.

As it relates to naming participants and the possible consequences of naming practices, there are power differences between the researcher and participant (Wang et al., 2024). As I did not ask each participant what pseudonym they would like to be referred to in this research project, I decided to utilize the neutral "Title + Number" approach to naming and identifying

each participant (Wang et al., 2024, p. 7). As Wang et al. (2024) explain, English is often the language used in academic publishing and "research must reflect on the power relations associated with the act and process of naming participants, especially when including participants from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (pg. 7). For future research, especially with the transgender community where personhood and self-identity are important, all participants should be given the authority to choose their pseudonym for research purposes.

Researcher Reflexivity

It is important to acknowledge my positionality and its role in this research. Reflexivity is a self-critical and self-conscious analysis done by the researcher aimed at themselves, their interpretations, and the data reading (Grant, 2014). It is a tool that examines the power relations between researcher and participant (and, as it pertains to my research, vulnerable or marginalized groups) (England, 1994). Reflexivity is difficult and complex as it requires our understanding and takes time and commitment (Finlay, 2002). As a qualitative researcher, I must recognize my influence as a researcher, not just with the participants but also with data collection, selection of participants, and interpretation of the findings (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity allows me to acknowledge that I influence the participants' responses and, by extension, the findings (Finlay, 2002).

Ibrahim and Edgley (2015) explain the process of positional reflexivity, which is how qualitative researchers engage in the self-analytical exercise of relating one's "position in the world to the phenomena being studied" (p. 1672). Informed by Ibrahim and Edgley's (2015) work, my social relationships influence how I interpret the world, and my subjectivity is inescapable (meaning, I form who I am through interactions with the world and how they are interpreted). In addition, utilizing reflexivity allows me to examine my expectations or

assumptions of the research, the relationship I build with my participants, and the particular phenomena (experiences and perceptions of police) being researched (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015).

As a cisgender, white, queer researcher (among other identity markers such as colonial Canadian, able-bodied and, educated), the multiplicity of my identities will impact my research. I bring myself into the project, influencing my work at every level, from topic choice to interviews to data analyses and interpretations. Reflexivity is a tool that enables constant self-awareness and self-critical thinking that recognizes ways I am implicitly biasing the work. McDonald (2013) introduces queer reflexivity, which is a process integral to my research as a queer person doing queer research. Queer reflexivity helps expand the process of reflexivity by actively acknowledging the queer experience, researching the queer community, and my identity as a queer researcher. I focus heavily on McDonald's (2013) writing, as it is unique to the topic of reflexivity and is the foundational work for queer reflexivity. In addition, McDonald (2013; 2016) writes about conducting research with the LGBTQ community and examines the use of queer reflexivity as a tool to acknowledge the shifting identities of researcher and participant continually. While McDonald's (2013) work does not examine the role of cisgender researcher and trans participant expressly, the overarching theme of "who can do the research" is the starting point for developing my unique queer reflexivity as a cis-researcher with trans participants.

Methodology

As this research project worked with a vulnerable population, the goal was to conduct sensitive and safe research and help disempowered groups by addressing their shared problems (Mweshi, 2020). This means my role as a researcher is to be familiar and comfortable working with the trans community, in addition to committing to help improve their conditions by

highlighting their voices and experiences (Mweshi, 2020). Additionally, the experiences participants shared helped shape the themes within the three analytical chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7), including policy and future research recommendations. Staples et al. (2018) explain that trans people are often invisible because they are subsumed (or absorbed) into other groups. For example, trans people are often grouped into the broader LGBT community despite LGB representing sexuality (lesbian, gay, bisexual) and T representing gender (transgender) (Stinchcombe et al., 2017; Sweileh, 2018). There are also examples of misuse and misinterpretation of what trans people share during research, which results in skepticism and the reluctance of trans people to be involved in future research (Staples et al., 2018).

Given the hesitation of trans people to participate in research, qualitative methodology is used in this research project. Qualitative methodology can help "disempowered" groups by addressing problems they feel are imperative (Mweshi, 2020, p. 33). The researcher should be committed to helping improve their conditions (Mweshi, 2020). In-depth interviews are a tool to collect data, which allows the researcher to analyze themes and focus on the meaning the participants share (Mweshi, 2020). This research project utilized an inductive approach: collecting data and exploring what themes or issues emerge (Mweshi, 2020). Grounded theory was also used, and these two approaches will be discussed later in the data analysis strategy section.

Trans people tend to be a hard-to-reach population. Doing research is not as simple as sending out invites to participate, as many potential participants are inaccessible (due to geographical limits or a lack of an online presence), cannot be bothered to answer calls to participate, may not fit the profile of research or, as with the case of trans people, keeping a low profile due to their marginalization (Kaufmann & Tzanetakis, 2020). Kaufmann and Tzanetakis

(2020) suggest snowball sampling or chain referrals to help access hard-to-reach populations. Recruitment for this study utilized snowball sampling, employing the participant's social network to access additional participants (Browne, 2005). This tool helps folks who are not "out" or may feel invalidated or unheard (Browne, 2005). Snowball sampling, however, comes with difficulties, as its reliance on social networks means the range of access is inevitably limited (Browne, 2005). Accessing people outside social networks for any reason still leaves that potential participant absent (Browne, 2005).

As the trans community is a hard-to-reach population, the internet was another helpful strategy. I could connect and interact with participants regardless of geography, which can address concerns about gaining access (Kaufmann & Tzanetakis, 2020). Using the internet and snowball sampling as strategies to gain access to trans people was an essential aspect of my methodology. As explained in this chapter, I connected with community organizations to share a social media graphic calling for participants and their email listservs. The internet helped me access hard-to-reach participants, and snowball sampling extended that reach, utilizing social networks to encourage participation. I implemented the methods of one-on-one interviews and focus groups to conduct the research.

Data Analysis Strategy

The analysis of the data used an inductive, grounded theory approach. The inductive approach allows for analysis during data collection to develop a conceptual framework of emerging themes (Mweshi, 2020). Themes are grounded in the data, and participant experiences developed into themes of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Semi-structured interview questions allow the participants to share experiences beyond the research questions and lead the conversation. This allowed for an inductive, grounded theory analysis, as themes emerged from

the participant interviews. Grounded theory is helpful in work where little is known and a new perspective is needed (Mweshi, 2020). The theory helps generate a theory related to a particular situation to help develop a theory for explaining the "underlying social processes of a cultural group" (Mweshi, 2020, p. 36).

Thematic analysis was implemented to understand the behaviours, experiences, and thoughts throughout the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It is designed to find common and shared meanings, and the steps of thematic analysis work well with grounded theory and the inductive approach, as both rely on coding and searching the data for themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The inductive approach allows for participant data to be uncovered, as some themes within the data may not reflect the exact questions asked (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Varpio et al., 2019).

The first step I took with the data was familiarizing myself, which entails repeated and active reading (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Second, initial codes were noted, which included observations, ideas, and an audit trail to support my interpretation and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017, as cited in Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Next, themes of broader importance are constructed by analyzing, combining, and comparing the codes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). I utilized thematic maps to help highlight cross-connections, including any themes that may or may not be directly related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Early themes included participant intersectionality, their relationship with the police, the history of racism and transphobia in the institution of policing, attitudes of police officers and perceptions of police based on others (friend experiences, social media, word-of-mouth, etc.), to name a few. These themes were then reviewed to ensure data was included correctly, ensuring the individual themes fit meaningfully within the data set and represent the

entire body of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Lastly, the themes were named, which included intersectionality, procedural justice, and police legitimacy (which is described in detail within Chapter 5 on individual experiences and Chapter 6 on procedural justice and legitimacy).

Methods

Data Collection: Focus Groups and One-on-One Interviews

For this research project, I conducted focus groups and one-on-one interviews with the participants over Google Meets. Participants chose the most comfortable format, and I ultimately ran five one-on-one interviews and three focus groups. Focus groups can be a way to address sensitive issues, as participants are more likely to self-disclose or share their personal experiences (Farquar, 2011). They can also facilitate discussions and help lead the focus group, which encourages a sense of self-empowerment (Farquar, 2011). Often, participants only have to meet once or twice, thus contributing to a sense of privacy based on the assumption that they will not meet each other again (Michel, 1999). For this research project, participants will only meet once. In addition, one-on-one interviews were offered to participants who may want further anonymity and may feel hesitant to share their experiences in a group setting. Interviewing is one of the primary methods of data collection (Gudkova, 2018). The interview is focused on a specific purpose, using research questions or topic areas to uncover a person's experiences or interpretations (Gudkova, 2018). As noted earlier, the researcher's subjectivity is important, as it may influence the conversation, meaning that in different conditions, different answers may emerge depending on the researcher (Gudkova, 2018).

Data Collection: Location and Context

Two community organizations supported this research: PFLAG Durham and AIDS Durham. PFLAG Durham was formed in the Durham Region, Ontario, Canada, to support people in the area with their journey through gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. They also provide education and resources to the Durham community. AIDS Durham also supports the Durham region and is a community-based, non-profit, charitable organization that supports people living with HIV, AIDS, and related co-infections. Participants in this study were recruited by PFLAG Durham and AIDS Durham, who have longstanding contact with the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Participation was open to any trans-identified adult over the age of 18 residing in the Greater Toronto Area (which includes Toronto and the Durham Region) who had experiences with, or perceptions of, the police. For this study, trans refers to anyone who identifies as and is not limited to trans man, trans woman, non-binary, genderqueer, a-gender, and gender fluid.

This study involved one-on-one interviews and focus groups guided by four research questions. These questions are as follows:

What does the relationship between the trans community and police look like according to the trans community?

Why do trans individuals believe the relationship is the way that it is?

According to the trans community, what are the proposed best practices for police engagement with the trans community?

What is justice to you, and how can police reflect that back to you?

This study was developed under the supervision of my committee members, and recruitment was supported (and approved) by PFLAG Durham and AIDS Durham. I have also volunteered with PFLAG Durham in their education programming volunteer position.

As a queer-identified woman, I have also been personally engaged with the 2SLGBTQ+ community and volunteered with 2SLGBTQ+ groups in different capacities. As noted, the trans community is a vulnerable and hard-to-reach population. While I connected with two strong community organizations, trust is an issue with this vulnerable population and, therefore, requires careful consideration for its respect and safety. Within the larger community, trans people are more vulnerable concerning marginalization, discrimination, and harassment that impact their daily lives. However, as this study utilized focus groups, the participants chose to attend and were encouraged to lead the conversation. The purpose of utilizing focus groups in this capacity was to ensure that the participants were in charge. The goal of this research was to use the information gathered to understand the unique relationship between the trans community and the police. This research makes recommendations for future research (in Chapter 8) to ensure trans-focused research is grounded in the voices of trans people. The information will also inform future presentations that may help educate the public or inform policy development.

Data Collection: Procedure and Sample

Focus group and one-on-one interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide of the research questions. They were audio recorded and later transcribed. The purpose of hosting the focus groups online was to ensure no exposure to COVID-19 and to remove any transportation costs or barriers. They ran for approximately 1 hour, and participants were asked the four research questions as a starting point for a broader conversation. The 3 focus groups had approximately 5 participants each and provided an open, engaging space where everyone could discuss their experiences with each other. This helped participants share their experiences and find a sense of camaraderie with others. Individual, one-on-one interviews were provided for those who wished to participate privately and maintain further anonymity or had

scheduling conflicts with the focus group times. Five total one-on-one interviews were conducted. Community resources were also provided to all participants at the beginning and end of the interviews, and my email was accessible should they have questions or services be required after the interviews had ended.

The benefits of this research outweighed any risk to participants, as there were minimal risks given that they consented to participate. However, participants could withdraw at any time without any consequence. Given the online nature of the interviews, participants had the option to turn off their cameras and/or microphones for additional anonymity. They also utilized the text chat option within Google Meets to communicate. Recruitment material ensured all participants knew what to expect during the interviews, and the appropriate parameters for withdrawing consent, including the benefits of contributing to overall understanding of trans people's experiences and perceptions of police. As the trans community is not a monolith, each participant shared their unique experiences, which adds to a broader understanding of what the trans community experiences.

Data Collection: Ethical Considerations

Consent from all participants was collected before interviews could be scheduled, and consent was re-stated at the beginning of each interview. During focus groups, participants were given the option of turning off their camera and/or microphone. The focus groups could not be confidential as other participants were part of the conversation and knew what each other had said. That meant participants could reflect on how much personal or sensitive information they were willing to share. This included names and personal information. Furthermore, personal information was not attached to any information collected during the interviews, nor included in insights or quotes for this dissertation, or future reports, presentations, or publications. The

privacy of participants was the utmost priority, and confidentiality was respected to the fullest extent of the law, professional practice, and ethical codes of conduct. Participants were informed that confidentiality could not be maintained in the instance of harm to oneself or others.

The vulnerability of the participants was another area of utmost importance. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. They had the choice to discontinue participation before, during, or after the study, in which case all information relating to that participant would be removed, which was outlined in the consent form. They were additionally informed of their withdrawal rights during the beginning and end of each interview. They could also remain silent or answer "pass" during any or all interview questions. Participants received a $20 honorarium electronic gift card for their time, and received the honorarium if they withdrew before, during, or after the interviews.

I reviewed the research results from the one-on-one and focus group interviews in the following three analytical chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). The data was grouped and analyzed by theme, including intersectionality, procedural justice, and police legitimacy, to thoroughly represent each of the themes analyzed within the data. I utilized transgender theory to guide my examination of the data. Transgender theory incorporates the trans perspective, meaning trans people are encouraged to speak about their experiences of gender, how culture operates, and how one experiences the world (Bettcher, 2019; Hausman, 2001; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). This theory emphasizes self-embodiment and lived experiences as units of analysis, meaning those factors should be viewed theoretically (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Applying transgender theory to procedural justice and legitimacy theories means examining experiences and perceptions of police through the lens of transgender people's voices, anecdotes, and perspectives. Transgender theory highlights self-embodiment and the self-construction of identity (Nagoshi, 2014).

Transgender theory analyzes procedural justice and legitimacy theory themes from the participant interview and focus group findings.

The first analytical chapter, Chapter 5, discusses participants' experiences and perceptions of police. The second analytical chapter, Chapter 6, covers themes of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses what justice means to each participant and how to make change within the institution of policing. Each chapter refers to the theoretical frameworks to situate each theme in the broader literature. As outlined in the literature review, this dissertation seeks to expand current procedural justice and police legitimacy literature that does not incorporate a transgender or gender-diverse lens when assessing themes of trust and legitimacy in the police. The use of transgender theory highlights the necessity of including trans voices, allowing them to speak about their experiences individually, which in turn contributes to a mosaic of trans experiences with police. As discussed earlier, the impact of gender on legitimacy is an under-researched area, and this dissertation highlights the need for a transgender legitimacy framework within procedural justice and police legitimacy.

Chapter 5: Individual Experiences, Intersectionality, and Passing Privilege

This chapter highlights individual experiences of intersectionality and passing privilege as they relate to their perceptions and experiences of police. Each participant reflects on how their own identity, or the identity of others, may impact the treatment by police. This includes reflections on the nuance of identities beyond race and gender identity. These participants clearly articulate their understanding of ways intersectionality impacts their experiences, including the identities of others, especially when they do not share the same lived experiences. It speaks to the awareness and empathy for fellow trans folks and the role that race, disability, sexual orientation, and so forth may play in police interactions.

"Intersections beyond race that genderqueer diverse people occupy": Reflections on Intersectionality

Multiple participants spoke about the importance of understanding intersectionality when discussing transgender people's experiences and perceptions of police. The transgender community is not homogenous, as gender identity is one of many identities that a person has. As a result, there are some expected differences in experiences and perceptions of police depending on the unique makeup of each participant's identity. These differences are due to participants referencing the significance of intersectionality in defining their lived realities and experiences with police. Examining intersectionality helps researchers explore how intersections of race and gender highlight the need to consider the multiple ways the social world is constructed (Crenshaw, 1991; Matsuda, 1991). Intersectionality should be considered when analyzing the lives of marginalized people and their placement within the social power structure — as identities are socially constructed and weaved together (Nash, 2008; Potter, 2015). It is the

"weaving" that must be taken into account when utilizing the concept of intersectionality (Potter, 2015).

Participants reflected not only on their own identities but also those of others and commented on how different identities may result in different responses from the police. Participant 7, a white trans, queer disabled person, articulated that it is the intersectionality of different communities that results in police targeting, and Participant 9, a non-binary transmasculine person, shared similar thoughts: "I think there is so much missing from society, of the intersections beyond race that genderqueer diverse people occupy, or whether it is the ADD-Autism, physical disabilities …" Similarly, Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim person, stated, "It depends on the other type of identities that coexist with being trans."

The overall sentiment in emphasizing the importance of understanding intersectionality is how the participants articulate how different identities intersect, creating different lived experiences. In turn, the intersections of different identities impact each person's experiences with police, that "it is definitely like an element of, like, power and control on the side of the police, and that it is unsafe for a lot of trans folks, especially trans folks who are racialized and/or disabled" (Participant 14, a trans person). Intersectionality also encompasses socio-economic status, including people who are poor and unhoused or unsheltered, as Participant 14 explained. In addition, the policing structure "is ableist; it is everything. We know that disabled people, and people of colour, and trans people will be harmed by the police because we are not fitting into that specific standard and that leads to violence — it leads to the biases that we are talking about." These participants are speaking to the heart of intersectionality to understand how discrimination is experienced based on marginalized identities (and how some may experience unique discrimination based on the intersection of their identities) (Berger & Guidroz, 2009;

Museus & Griffin, 2011). They also highlight the importance of analyzing individual identities and how they connect, as intersectionality requires a "both/and" approach during examination (May, 2014). These experiences do not represent double discrimination — for example, race and gender — but how race and gender interact to create a unique experience (Museus & Griffin, 2011). Each person's unique experience is based on one's intersection of identities (Berger & Guidroz, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Museus & Griffin, 2011). Understanding these unique experiences helps us understand how people from multiple identities are perceived and treated (Berger & Guidroz, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Museus & Griffin, 2011).

Discussions of multiple identities came up as well, as Participant 9, a non-binary transmasculine (transmasc) person, explained that "even just seeing the word [police] is enough to create a full body recoil, and again, this is from me as a white person. I can only imagine, obviously, that it gets amplified for — one of the friends in [my] story who was a trans feminine person, or for people who have different intersections and people of colour." Additionally, fears of police come from every community "who isn't, like, part of a norm, I guess. But then for trans folks, even more so because you kind of have to explain yourself every time" (Participant 6, a trans immigrant person of colour).

"Trauma or have different disabilities, whether even just mobility concerns or ADHD": Nuances of Identity

The following discussion explores the nuances of intersectionality beyond race and gender. For example, many participants discuss disability, mental health, and sexuality in addition to their race and gender identity, and examine how they feel these impact experiences with police. As discussed at length in literature, police perceptions differ between white and Black people, as white folks tend to have more positive perceptions towards police than Black

folks (April, Cole & Goldstein, 2022; Kochel, 2018; Warren, 2010). Within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, people of colour experience higher rates of hate crimes, and trans people of colour are the least likely to contact police, as rates of non-reporting range between 40 % and 90 % (Shields, 2021; Stotzer, 2014; NCVAP, 2017a, 2017b). Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim, reflects that it is ingrained in white communities that the police are there to protect and serve, but for people of colour, that has not been the case.

Race and passing privilege were among the most discussed identities impacting police treatment. However, mental health and disability were also prominent. Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, shared that "the trans community has larger amounts of addiction and mental health crises, so of course, we're going to be a marginalized community." Another discussed the importance of being aware of the overlap between the trans and autistic communities, that "they are heavily intertwined. I believe it was 17 % more trans people in the autistic population than the general populace." Participant 7 states that "cops, you know, often harm people during mental health crises or, especially, things like autistic folks during meltdowns." They go on to say that it "only gives people a much easier way to get away with harming more trans people."

These sentiments are shared by Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, as trans people experience a multitude of disabilities from "autism to ADD to physical disabilities, including hypermobility, joint pain, EDs [eating disorders] and POTs [postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome]." Participant 14, a trans person, shared they "feel like this rigid colonial sense of time is, like, so inaccessible for so many different folks, especially folks that have, like, trauma or have different disabilities, whether even just mobility concerns or ADHD." Participant 14 had a unique take on these circumstances, sharing that being unhoused or using drugs "are

acts that are criminalized. So that fact isn't necessarily the police's fault that those are criminalized. Maybe that's more on the result of, like, the policymakers and politicians."

Participants shared broad examinations of their identities, highlighting the importance of an intersectional lens when understanding police experiences and perceptions. They articulated themes of fear and anxiety, as well as concern and empathy for their fellow queer and trans folks. They also articulated the importance of community support and critically examined the structure of policing. Hearing each participant reflect on the ways their own identities may or may not shield them from police brutality was a meaningful discussion, framing the ways they feel specific identities garner privileges over others. It is not just the identities themselves that play a role, but how they are perceived and how those perceptions can result in such varied experiences. They also emphasize the ways the structure of policing discriminates against their identities. As Participant 7 put it — "saying [they will] support one community is never going to be enough because intersectionality is a thing."

Any perceived "transgression" from cultural norms results in discrimination, and as participants reflected, police are not immune from treating trans people poorly. As Anderson (2020) explains, race and gender combine to produce a unique experience of discrimination, as 2SLGBTQIA+ people of colour experience discrimination as a result of multiple identities. Discrimination cannot be isolated to one identity category, and white queer experiences do not have to navigate the additional racial stigma (Anderson, 2020; Meyer, 2020; Nash, 2008; Warner, 2008). For example, racial stigma can result in Asian men being perceived as gay as a result of being stereotyped as feminine or Black women being stereotyped as masculine (Anderson, 2020; Johnson & Ghavami, 2011). Whiteness often equates to the perceived fulfillment of gender norm expectations, irrespective of one's self-determined gender identity

(Anderson, 2020; Bowleg, 2012). Participants reflected on the nuance of their identity markers throughout this section, noting when they felt certain privileges protected them from levels of discrimination that other trans folks may not have. The care each participant took to ensure that other experiences were not invalidated due to their own is an important theme to note. The unique and varied experiences of discrimination felt by the participants highlight the complexity of navigating police discrimination and harassment and further reinforce the importance of seeking their experiences and perceptions of police discrimination.

"I will likely be safe enough around them because of my whiteness protecting me": Passing Privilege and Whiteness

Many participants discussed how their whiteness or passing privilege protects them from facing the same rates of violence as their fellow trans people of colour or those who are more visibly trans. As intersectionality accounts for the unique ways one might experience the world depending on one's identity makeup, it is essential to highlight participants who feel specific identities protect them. Occupying both privileged and disadvantaged identities creates a distinctive experience for those who share some identities but not others (Museus & Griffin, 2011). For example, Museus and Griffin (2011) explain that a homosexual Latino male might be more or less oppressed than his heterosexual Latino or white gay male counterparts. It is important to note that the goal of intersectionality is not to create a hierarchy of oppression but to understand unique experiences based on multiple identities (Museus & Griffin, 2011).

Some participants discussed passing privilege in addition to their white privilege, which is a commonly used term for when strangers correctly gender a trans person in "passing" (Urquhart, 2017). Passing is another term for when one's gender expression, which "passes" when their expression aligns with one's sense of masculine or feminine (through names,

clothing, hairstyle, and so forth) (Anderson, 2020; Kessler & McKenna, 1985; Wilchins, 2004). Gender expression is not an identity but how one's gendered self is communicated to others (Anderson, 2020). Often, when one's presentation aligns with societal expectations, it is "unremarkable in day-to-day interactions" (Anderson, 2020, p. 324). For example, Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, explained that people "most accepted to society are cishet passing-looking bodies." The importance of passing is emphasized by Participant 1, a white trans person who shared their concerns that "passing as a trans person, or maybe just presenting gender-wise (in ways that don't transgress the binary as much)" leads to better encounters with the police. "So the more visibly trans you are, the more in danger your life will be with the police. So I think that is directly related to how afraid each individual trans person might be around police" (Participant 1).

Participant 1 explains that marginalized identities often exacerbate dangerous situations but that as white person, they are much safer. Concerning whiteness, many participants discussed this privilege when examining the relationship between trans folks and the police. For the participants who are white, they emphasized that their experiences may have been less harmful than those of their racialized counterparts. For example, Participant 1 stated that "like me, personally, as a white person, as a person who is assumed female a lot of the time, I live with a fear of police but also acknowledge I will likely be safe enough around them because of my whiteness protecting me." Similarly, Participant 5, a trans man, reflected on their passing as a cisgender man as well, sharing, "I am trans, but I know that I very much pass, and that's like — I pass as a white man, and I know that because of that, there might be certain privileges that I have in terms of how police may see me." Participant 9 reflected on the problems within policing, that they see the treatment towards trans people regressing as it becomes more aggressive. They

reflect that these viewpoints are from someone white-passing and non-disabled, that experiences with police can only get worse for those who do not hold privileged identities. Participant 7, a white queer disabled trans person, stated that "I am about as pale as they come, so I can't really speak on race for racial minorities here, but as a queer and trans-disabled person, I've had my fair share of moments where me or the people I care about are actively in danger because of the systems that they, these freaking cops, are upholding."

Of the participants who are trans folks of colour, they all shared the exact sentiment of anxiety and fear when dealing with police. For example, Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim, shared, "I think that, like, within my inner community of trans and queer folks in general, who are Black, Indigenous or brown, our experiences are very different because I think that our first interaction with the cops comes from being racialized." They go on to explain that "us folks of colour, I know that there's always been a little bit of anxiety around police for me, even as a kid." Importantly, they emphasize that often, when police engage with someone they do not know is trans, they see their racial identity first and foremost. Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, shared her sentiment that wealthy people created policing to keep members of the community in check, "and those specific members were Black, Indigenous, and very likely at the time also trans." Participant 1 agreed, stating that "other folks that are Black or Indigenous, or much more visibly trans, especially trans women, are living with a lot more fear." They go on to explain that these fears are justified given the extensive history of being harassed, incarcerated, or having lost their lives to police. Calling the police, as Participant 7 says, is not always an option for any queer or trans person who is visible, as they face the most police brutality.

Participant reflection on intersectionality and privilege is complex, even when participants acknowledge they occupy a privileged identity. Their privileges may compensate or

"protect" them despite occupying identities that are marginalized, meaning their whiteness may protect them despite their trans identity. Many participants spoke about the ways they feel their identities, as well as collective experiences as trans people, are unique due to the ways their identities are marginalized by society. The following discussion expands on additional identity markers and the ways participants feel those identities either soften or worsen experiences with police. Many acknowledge how these additional identities intersect to create a complex, layered experience.

Chapter 6: Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy

The following analytical chapter discusses participant themes of procedural justice, followed by their perceptions of police legitimacy. Procedural justice themes include positive interactions and direct interactions with police officers, and police legitimacy themes examine perceptions and feelings of police, police power, and the legitimacy of the policing institution. Participants speak candidly about their concerns, hesitations, and fears regarding police and their interpretations of the institution of policing, which highlights that distrust in the police goes beyond individual interactions.

Procedural Justice and Its Impact on Experiences with Police

Procedural justice theory focuses on police contact and whether or not the actions police officers take are seen as trustworthy or respectful or are following the law (Tankebe, 2012; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Procedural justice theory engages with themes of trust, built when officers' interactions are deemed fair and desirable (Tyler, Jackson & Mentovich, 2015). During police stops, people are more likely to believe that their race or ethnicity is the reason for unjust police behaviour, resulting in overall feelings of being unsafe (Renauer & Covelli, 2011). When a police officer acts in a racist manner, it is assumed that the broader police culture is also racist (Waddington, 1999). Within this research, gender identity is a decisive factor in perceptions and experiences of procedural justice. Throughout the discussion, participants connect police harassment and discrimination to their trans identities, even describing the ways they challenge social norms. Their identities are perceived as the reason for negative police encounters and, even more so, speak to the fundamental problems in policing that lead to continued poor treatment for trans folks. The following is an account of participant experiences that speak to procedural justice themes, exemplifying the "good" experiences (rather, experiences that are not

outright hostile), middle ground experiences (where police showed the bare minimum, but not enough to make participants feel trust or respect), and finally the harrowing experiences and perceptions that often highlight police violence and transphobia.

"There's hope for things to get better": Positive Experiences with Police

The following participants reflect on sharing positive interactions with police and highlighting systemic issues. It is important to note that these positive interactions are not meant to take away or cancel out any of the above and continued experiences of the participants. The violence and harassment faced by police is an important topic to continue discussing, researching, and examining. The following experiences help highlight some ways changes are being made within the institution of policing and highlight some of the success of activist movements aimed at creating a better relationship between the trans community and police.

To begin, Participant 4, a non-binary person of colour, shares that in current times and recent history, it is the best time to be a trans or queer person because "most people have become so much more accepting, and everyone is moving forward so much more that it is essential to let the positivity spread just to make us feel better for life in general, so yes, reading about positive interactions is 100 % essential." Participant 3, a trans person, shares that while positive experiences are not as meaningful as sharing the negative ones, it is still "extremely essential, especially for that next step of moving on and reconciliation, and to kind of show that not all of them [the police] are bad." They go on to share:

> Some people are trying, you know, and I think it also shows because with social media you can see what's happening in other countries. So maybe you're stuck in America, and you're experiencing all of these laws that are, like, pinning you into a corner, and then you see Trudeau came out with a big statement and was like,

> "This is unacceptable, we care about trans people." You know, we're trying to make it better for them, and you're like, well, maybe I need to move to Canada because of what is happening?

They go on to explain that positive experiences can help people in other parts of the world where these kinds of interactions are minimal, to show "there is hope for them outside of their little bubble of space. There is hope for other countries, even other states. There is hope for things to get better" (Participant 3).

Participant 5, a white trans man, shares an experience with police that happened during his teenage years. He explains, "I wouldn't say it was, like, a positive situation, but I will say given the situations I was in, the police treated me in a way that was — that we would say was respectful. And I have nothing, like, really bad to say about how they, like, handled the situation" (Participant 5). He continues to share details about another police encounter revolving around his mental health and a bad experience with LSD. The police ultimately did not charge him, and said, "I am glad they chose not to [charge me]. It would have definitely ruined my trust in the police, for sure." Another incident involving his mental health ultimately ended in the police sending him to the hospital, not in handcuffs. "They talked to me like I was really a person, you know?" (Participant 5). Ultimately, his sentiments towards police are that he was treated with respect and not treated differently due to his gender-non-conforming presentation. However, he shares that "maybe it is because of my race or maybe just — the police were generally good people. I don't know the situation, but I mean, I do know that the way I was treated was good."

Positive interactions or perceptions towards police are an essential area to include within this broader research project despite limited experiences. As stated earlier, these experiences are not meant to take away from the authentic and pervasive experiences most trans people have

with the police. However, as Participant 3 said, it is essential to show that good is being done and that efforts are being made to create a better future between these two communities. Ultimately, as discussed throughout this research, positive experiences with police cannot overcome negative experiences or perceptions of police that contribute to a lack of police legitimacy. The impact of positive experiences often has little to no impact on police legitimacy, according to the experiences of some participants in this study. Even the few who had positive interactions still acknowledged systemic issues within policing and reiterated that their experience does not reflect the experiences of the broader trans community.

"We avoid police as much as possible to stay safe": Direct Experiences with Police

Trans people's experiences with police have been extensively documented, as they experience a wide variety of negative police behaviours, including disrespectful language, rude and inappropriate behaviour, verbal and physical harassment, and the denial of police services (Dwyer 2011, 2014, 2015; Wolff & Cokely, 2007; Shields, 2021). Trans people experience significant feelings of fear around police officers, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people of colour experience even higher rates of being questioned by police over their gender identity, being wrongfully accused, and facing sexual advances by police (Hodge & Sexton, 2020).

Participants in this study who shared their direct experiences with police examined how they felt during the interaction and how they felt the officer behaved. Participant 7, a white queer disabled trans person, shares an instance of enjoying a meal with friends when a uniformed police officer entered the restaurant. They share, "I had to tell my friend, if you see me start ticking, your hand needs to be over my mouth in an instant because I have a *fuck the police* tick that gets significantly worse when around cops." Bat (Participant 7) goes on to share zer heightened awareness of police around zer group of queer and trans friends because "I know we

are already higher risk. We were very clearly a queer group of people in a very conservative area near a job. So we were already high risk for getting targeted". Bat talks about the shift in energy within their friend group and how each person kept their eyes on the officer, wanting to "know exactly where he is. You've got to be prepared to do what you need to survive. That's something that we probably shouldn't be having to think of while eating sandwiches."

While Participant 7 and zer friend group did not directly interact with the officer, zer feelings and prior experiences informed how they felt at that moment, which was one of fear. Another participant speaks to themes of procedural justice and fear, sharing that their experiences "in proportion to a lot of my friends' experiences, those are very minuscule experiences, and it was still enough for me to constantly be on edge" (Participant 13, a queer non-binary Muslim person). They shared their experience as a youth first coming to Canada and interacting with border security agents, acknowledging that while they are not police, they are a form of a government authority. Participant 13 explains that the agents were "very aggressive with me and, like, I almost cried at the airport because they were asking me if I had anything illegal in my suitcases. I was saying no, I have nothing, and then they asked if I had any food because a lot of racialized folks will bring over food from their home country, and I was like, I think my dad may have had a few seeds for me to grow chillies and they forced me to give that to them." This early experience shaped their views on authority, as they share they knew "I was, like, anti-capitalist and knew that white supremacy was a thing, but I hadn't really delved into my own politics, so I didn't have extremely formed opinions about the police."

While this participant formed this experience based on their race, Participant 1, a white trans person, speaks about the ways trans folks feel about police and how their gender identity plays a role. They share that the relationship between trans folks and police is hostile and that

sentiments from the trans community shared via social media are fear, that no one feels safe with police. Additionally, trans people are "very aware of trans people that are murdered by police. So when it comes to trans folks, I think relationally, we avoid police as much as possible to stay safe" (Participant 1).

Establishing procedural justice means understanding situational cues and framing differences that impact each individual and how they judge police authority (Braga et al., 2014). If the police action is fair, then there is an immediate acceptance of the police's decision (Braga et al., 2014; Tyler, 2004). What Participant 13 experienced with airport security was a lack of trust and respect for the actions of the agents, as those actions made them feel targeted. In addition, the agents' aggressive behaviour highlights how trust in procedural justice is formed and how those early dynamics impact how one shapes their overall perception of police.

Participant 13 shared another experience with security personnel while working as a coordinator of the university's gender and sexuality resource center. Two of the university's security guards came into the office. Participant 13 observed, "Of course, they are wearing their tactical gear and everything, which already feeds into their authority — authoritative complex." The security guards caused students to be quiet while enjoying the space. When Participant 13 asked if they could help them, the security guards said they wanted to introduce themselves to make it clear they could be relied on, but asked, "Did you see everyone's reaction out there? You could hear a pin drop." Participant 13 replied that "I mean, understandably so, a lot of, like, queer people don't have the best history, not just with cops but people within authoritative positions that's, like — cop adjacent." The two security officers shared that "we're not the bad guys, we've done the training, we know about queer people," and shared an experience where

“the other day someone was, like, really hurt, so we asked them their pronouns before we called the ambulance.”

Participant 13’s experience exemplifies how procedural justice (or proper procedure followed by the officers respectfully) directly impacts one’s sense of police legitimacy. In the instance of two security guards approaching the gender and sexuality resource coordinator to give their support, it is their authoritarian position that deems them illegitimate, as well as their perceived lack of sensitivity in entering a space for queer people at the university in their security guard uniform. Even while the officers indicated acknowledgement of pronouns, the participant reflects that more needs to be done by the officers to show their support. Entering the queer space on campus in full officer gear overrides the guard’s sensitivity towards pronouns. It is these dynamics that highlight the power of procedural justice because without establishing legitimacy in police through proper, respectful actions, procedural justice does not help heal or change the reasons why one has lost one’s trust in police.

Another participant shared an interesting experience not directly with an officer but with the police institution in their community. They were completing a police check and discovered that the gender options did not include non-binary and that the only two options were male or female. Participant 14, a trans person, wrote to the police service who ultimately changed the form and reached out to thank them. While they share that this experience was more positive than other interactions people may have with the police, this instance still required them to do the labour of reaching out to the service in the hopes they would make their forms inclusive, as opposed to the service doing that work themselves and providing an inclusive form to the public. As Participant 13 puts it, “There is no, like, autonomy; it is not like ‘hey, what would be best for you at this moment?’” As mirrored in the previous example, sensitivity towards pronouns is

insufficient to make these participants feel positively towards the police. It highlights the opposite that pronouns are the most basic form of respect that police can show towards trans people, but the community needs more than just pronouns; they need to feel safe and respected and build trust in the police. These two examples highlight that while the police attempt to do "what is best," they fall short of the community's need to rebuild trust.

The examples of direct police contact highlight the importance of establishing trustworthy procedural justice. How an officer enacts their duties (procedural justice) directly affects the perception of police legitimacy, which is the theme for the next section. In these direct examples, procedural justice varied in its impact on how one feels about the police, as some participants see the police as illegitimate regardless of proper procedure, whereas others felt respected by the police during positive interactions. However, the pervasive message is that no matter the positive interaction, proper procedure, or even sensitivity to pronouns, it does not change the foundation of distrust and lack of legitimacy in the police.

The following section examines police legitimacy and how participants express their lack of trust in the institution, which was the overwhelming narrative from all participants through the interviews. Police legitimacy speaks to the trust in authority figures, and even when the police procedures are done correctly, it does not impact the broader lack of police legitimacy. Participants do not view the police as legitimate, and even in one case where the officer did not interact with them, their feelings towards the officer did not change. They view the police as a threat. Due to broader social discussions about police, the practices, goals and structure of policing are questioned, thus resulting in a lack of trust in the police (Worden & McLean, 2017). The public has to view the entire policing structure as legitimate in order to respect their authority and comply (Tankebe, 2012). The difference between obligation and legitimacy is

either the willingness to comply based on the police being legitimate or out of fear of repercussion (Tankebe, 2012). Part of the process is within the procedures and actions of the police to find legitimacy in the police. This means police must be respectful, make neutral decisions based on the law, showcase trustworthy motives, and listen to citizens' accounts, concerns and needs (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). As Participant 7 reflects, queer people are at higher risk of being targeted by police, that their group of friends needed to be on alert for fear of their survival. Their group does not deem the police legitimate due to their fears, based on their broader understanding of how they feel police treat queer people. Once legitimacy is lost, no amount of procedural justice will change that.

Reflections on Police Legitimacy and Lack of Trust

The following discussion examines participants' feelings about police legitimacy. The feelings they expressed towards police highlight their lack of trust in police, which aligns with research showcasing that transgender people are already at higher risks of violence, fear shorter life expectancy, and experience discrimination by police officers (Bockting et al., 2013; Dwyer, 2011, 2014, 2015; Kidd & Witten, 2008; Stotzer, 2009). Within police legitimacy research, themes of trust, respect, and authority are prominent (Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Police legitimacy speaks to broader feelings about police, that regardless of the police actions (as described in procedural justice theory), one's feelings on whether the police are legitimate or not shape how they view police authority and their willingness to comply (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Those who do not trust the police are likely to feel that the police do not trust their values, do not appreciate their contributions to their community, and disapprove of their lifestyle (Tyler et al., 2015).

"Seeing the word "police" can be a huge point of recoil": Perceptions and Feelings of Police

The following excerpts pertain to perceptions of police from friends' experiences, sentiments on social media, or the general tone of contention in society. Perceptions of police form the basis of police legitimacy, which extends to the broader institution of policing (Goldsmith, 2005). Perceptions are informed by a police officer's use of force, enforcement of unpopular laws, whether police abide by the law themselves, police work deemed suspicious, and officers' performance (ability and competency) (Goldsmith, 2005). Perceptions of police are also informed by one's broader community, especially with instances of police misconduct, lower income, and a lack of police presence (Eterno et al., 2016; Renauer & Covelli, 2011; Van Maanen, 1978). Additionally, if a person feels the police think they are suspicious, they are likely to feel that the police have the same suspicions towards their entire community (Tyler et al., 2015). This discussion includes the overall feelings and attitudes participants have towards police.

Participant 1, a white trans person, observes that the majority of trans folks they know, whether personally or on social media, are afraid of the police. They acknowledge that their privileges may protect them from police harassment that those around them experience. Participant 4 shares that he has had little to no interactions with police, but from what he sees online, there is much animosity between trans people and police. This relationship "depends on who the police officer is," and trans people are at the mercy of the officer, who often humiliates, harasses, or assaults them (Participant 4, a non-binary person of colour).

Participants' perceptions of police often include feelings of distrust, fear, negativity, and hostility. As Participant 1 put it, "I think overall it's a very negative relationship when you're coming from the view of trans folks. I also think that police, both in, like — policy and practice, have shown that their views of trans folks are negative, that they are not necessarily on your

side." Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, added, "I completely agree that there's just general outright hostility, and perhaps even more prevalent, but just as dangerous, is indifference. If you actually go to the police as a trans person seeking help, they are not going to do anything." She goes on to share their concerns about bringing issues to the police:

> I should be able to have that matter taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and to actually get some help and not be blown off and disregarded because, what, you don't take me seriously as a human? That's not — you don't have that fucking right, especially when you're supposed to be helping communities, when you're supposed to be the ones keeping us safe. We are not insurgents. We are citizens, and it's the same with everybody else that doesn't look like them, you know? Like the military is actually better at handling people that are insurgents, than the police are handling people that are having mental health issues and if you're that afraid, don't be a cop.

Participants in this study share their fears and concerns about police violence, which contributes to (and mirrors) the overwhelming research highlighting these feelings. As Participant 7 shares, "We are not safe contacting the police if anything happens to us, and they are still significantly more likely to be the ones who kill us." Participant 2 refers to this as "cultural genocide" and "there is no way you can get that stain off the Mountie jacket." She continues to share that "your gun should not be the first answer to every issue; you should be de-escalating, you should be working with the community." When having to interact with police comes with fears over their safety, it is understandable why participants have no desire to turn to them for help.

Participant 13 reflects on the reality that they cannot live a life without having to interact with police, that "there is just no way for people to exist without having to interact with them,

and so it's just a very dangerous and scary time but police officers just don't see it that way, right?" They go on to explain that police cannot interact with trans people in any safe way given the history of harm done to the community and that police often find themselves in situations that "could be dangerous and then you use your authority and use of force to then harm people. Even if you think that you're still protecting or serving someone else, or even protecting the person that you're harming directly, their existence within spaces automatically escalates a situation that hasn't even really properly formed yet" (Participant 13). Additionally, Participant 13 shares that people who want to become police officers should be aware of the current tensions, especially with the role police play in communities.

Often, participants felt police presence was not necessary and that the police are often the only option for help with no other community resources in their place. For example, Participant 12, a trans person of colour, shared that "I've been seeing a lot recently the rise of anti-queer and anti-trans violence, and how to me it is concerning that it's being used to justify an increase in quote-unquote security, which almost always means cops, or like cop-adjacent people, at Pride events." In addition to police presence, Participant 13 shared some unique perceptions on how police are often the only option to call for help and what that means to their community of friends and personal boundaries:

> So many times, it's ingrained in us that, and especially within, like, predominantly white schools, you know, if you're ever in trouble, if something doesn't feel right, you call 911. The cops are here to come and protect you and serve you, and that, in my experience and then a lot of people's experience, that just hasn't been the case. Now delving more into, like, community work and stuff, I've seen it more first-hand, just how incredibly harmful the experiences can be but also extremely,

> like, jarring, like, you think, you know what to expect when confronting police, and it takes you by surprise every time, like, what their reactions will be.

Additionally, they share:

> I think that my relationship to cops is like, non-existence. I have told people, like, if you have family members that you're still in contact with who are cops, I can't let — that you're very comfortable around, I can't be around you. If you are someone who doesn't believe in restructuring our security within this country I can't be someone who is consistently in your life.

Even the mere mention of police is enough to put off participants, as these two shared their feelings about my call for participants in the text chat. Participant 11 is a trans man, and Participant 9 is a non-binary transmasc person. Below is the transcript:

> Participant 11: When I showed my friends the study their response was "lol ew no" until a friend cleared up that they could talk very negatively as well.
>
> Participant 9: Yeah [Participant 11] you make an excellent point — I know that even seeing the word "police" can be a huge point of recoil for so many of us.

Police must also be held accountable for their actions, as the following participants make clear. They express frustration that police need to examine their policies for accountability and that police brutality has escalated to killing as a result of these unactionable policies. For example, Participant 7 says that police are trying to pretend they are decent to "better mask the fact that they are killing people, and until they can, you know, stop being terrible people and actually do things that are beneficial to anyone but themselves, enacting these policies [to protect trans people] is not just deceitful, it is dangerous. You are giving people the illusion that they are safe when they are not." Additionally, Participant 7 shares:

> They should be [held accountable], but unfortunately, they are not always treated as such, and until we start actually punishing cops for their misdeeds, cops need to not only be taking accountability but speak out. If you see somebody acting in a dangerous manner, it is like — bigoted or not, honestly, you should probably say something, and confidentiality does not actually protect from when you are causing harm to people — should also be something that people are just generally taught.

Participant 6, a trans immigrant from India, shares that a "fail-safe" needs to be put into place as damage control for when officers act out "so that they cannot, like — kill people or humiliate people." Even when police engagement with the public is low, like directing traffic, Participant 9 shares that they would feel uncomfortable in public situations where there might be police presence. For example:

> The interaction that I had, and my friends had was — was very negative there. So with that knowledge in our mind, and all three of the people involved were white or white-passing, I can't imagine that, like, I personally would feel comfortable at a protest for the rights of transgender and gender diverse folks, queer folks in like the elementary schools and schools, as I know them and the GTA, Ontario, knowing that there are cops even like that. I feel like even before I've had personal experiences, I've come to see the uniform as a point of recoil.

They continue to comment on how they have felt tensions between police and communities escalate, that "in recent memory, we've gone from — perhaps what might have been (or closest passably), I wouldn't say non-violent but not aggressive, I'd say maybe a couple years before the lockdowns, and I would say we've — if anything — regressed and that is obviously from the

position of someone who's white passing and able-bodied, not disabled. So if that's my perception, it can only be 'there-and-downwards' in my opinion" (Participant 9). They speak to the lack of trust and legitimacy in the police; over the years since COVID-19, the relationship has only been worsening. Additionally, they comment on their privileges, noting that they feel, despite their privileges, that treatment towards trans people is worsening and that things can only get worse for folks with other marginalized identities. Legitimacy research explains that when people feel reassured by the police, they are more willing to cooperate and build trust with them, and they are also more willing to accept their decision-making (Tankebe, 2012; Tyler et al., 2015). Highlighting examples of participants examining their distrust in police speaks to concepts of legitimacy, that without trust and cooperation, the relationship between trans folks and the police will remain fractured. As Participant 9 says, their lack of legitimacy and trust in police directly results from the regressing relationship. Their perceptions of police engagement with the community directly impact their trust in police and, in turn, results in a severe lack of trust and the perception that police action has only gotten worse over time.

One participant shared a problematic story regarding a family member's experiences during a Pride event. The experience only added to Participant 13's already hostile feelings towards the police, as they shared that their cousin attended a Pride parade that was interrupted by a vehicle of people described as fascists and white supremacists. The driver would drive fast towards the parade and stop suddenly. After failed attempts to divert the vehicle from the parade, one of the frustrated attendees threw a cup towards the vehicle and was later arrested by the police. In this scenario, their cousin witnessed the arrest and shared their experiences with Participant 13, highlighting the importance of acknowledging other people's experiences in

forming perceptions of police. This second-hand information confirmed Participant 13's distrust of police.

Due to the pervasive negative (dis)information about trans people, public reactions have become more hostile towards people (Participant 3). Participant 3 elaborates that everyone grows up being taught about cisgender people and straight people, that it is "quote-unquote normal to be cis, straight, and it is abnormal to be trans or queer." These biases factor into the rise of hate crimes against trans people (Participant 3). As a result, police officers take their biases with them into their jobs, resulting in mistreatment, misunderstanding, and negative feelings towards the trans people they interact with. When a person feels targeted by police because of their identity, they are more likely to believe others with their shared identity are targeted as well (Waddington, 1999). This means that one bad interaction with a police officer results in similar feelings towards the institution of policing.

Themes of power imbalances between trans folks and the police are evident throughout this section, as participants often feel they are at the mercy of how the officer feels about them. The following section explores in greater detail the experience of power, not just regarding police having an abundance of power, but how participants feel they lack it and how that imbalance results in the mistreatment of trans people.

"It all comes down systematically to us being seen as lesser": Perceptions of Police Power

Power imbalance is a central theme as participants share their concerns about how much power the police have and how little power they perceive themselves to have. Additionally, participants reflect on the reality that if in trouble, the police are the only option for help. They are also used for other security purposes, which many participants find invasive and unwelcome. For example, Participant 6, a trans immigrant from India, shares that any amount of power can

corrupt a person and that police should not be given the authority to kill because, no matter what, there will be bad cops. That even "a trans police officer? I still think people would be on edge, like even when there is diversity and stuff in the police force" (Participant 6). The following is an excerpt copied directly from the text chat. Both Participant 8 and Participant 11 are trans men.

> Participant 8: Speaking as someone who's had really negative experiences with police in general, it's more like a power trip. It feels more like they're exercising their power over us. Our voices don't matter in what safety means to us it's all what they want.
>
> Participant 8: I think it's just the way trans and gender-diverse people have been systematically looked down on by every sort of organization out there. We're seen as lesser beings and that is seen as a reason to treat us like we're less than human.
>
> Participant 8: It all comes down systematically to us being seen as lesser
>
> Participant 8: They see us as a threat to their "perfect world" because we do not conform
>
> Participant 11: the ivory towers people tend not to care for us peasants :p

These two participants speak to the themes of power imbalances, that trans lives are not as important because of their threat to "norms" on which our society is built. Participant 1, a trans person, shares, "I think in general, from both sides, it's a contentious relationship. There's this idea of power being held by the police — and fear, and the only way to protect ourselves as trans people is to avoid, or hope that people band in numbers to come alongside and protect us." This sentiment is shared by Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person:

> And I think that people think that the victories that the queer and trans community have won, they think that it's too much happening too fast, but it's not enough happening fast enough because we're not going to be equal until police reform happens. 'Til where we feel safe to come to the police. If we feel like we're in

> danger and we're not actively avoiding the police because we're afraid that we're going to be hurt by them.

Participant 1 shares that in the instance of someone pursuing policing as a career, even when their intentions may be to make policing better, the system they are entering is "going to break them," that "the longer you're drenched in a system, the more likely you are to believe the tenets of the system — and regardless, you have power." Participant 2 shares that:

> We should not have any bad apples spoiling the whole bunch. Because a few bad apples does spoil the whole bunch — so get rid of them, get rid of qualified immunity and make them accountable. They have had no leash for too long and they need to be put back under the control of the people and the citizens that they're supposed to be protecting. Like, I know it's so asinine that I pay your taxes, your salary with my taxes, but honestly, am I paying for the privilege to get my ass kicked?

Police immunity and power are brought up, as Participant 2 shares her frustrations that police are not treated equally under the law as everyone else, that "frankly, I don't give a fuck. You do not have the right to live more than I do, and you definitely do not have the right to hurt me." Themes of individual officers versus the power of the institution of policing are shared amongst the current-day discussions of tensions. Participant 3 similarly describes the efforts that one person might go to and yet be unable to enact much change. They say:

> It's the bigger police force that affects the individuals a lot more because as much as we want to believe that a single person can make a difference and it starts with us, it really doesn't because no matter how much you try, if there's like 500 people against and two people for, the against is going to win. So when individual

> police officers try to bring about the change, it doesn't really work because the greater force is still against. It's when it's one against a hundred, right? That one is very rarely going to win unless they have significant power in the police force, but I also think that with like Gen Z and all of us like, or not all of us but most of us, being more supportive of the LGBTQ community that all of those individuals together can change the police force. But I don't think, like, one or two individuals, having a, like, good feelings towards like trans people and stuff will have any effect really. It will take its time before it gets to the place that it needs to be.

A sense of hopelessness is pervasive that unless there is police reform, the institution will not change. The participants' sentiment is that no matter the intent behind the individual officer, they cannot stand up to or challenge the institution of policing. Participant 6 also says that "there probably are a lot of police officers who wanted to do good, but then, like — you constantly have to be wary because it takes one bad police officer to — it's going to change your life forever." Individuals who enter the police force, especially those who come in with transphobic beliefs, show their beliefs through their police work regardless of who is around them and their opinions, shares Participant 5, "I think also that the whole culture of the police, like the requirements they have can also lead to more transphobic or homophobic, sexist or whatever beliefs, that people around can lead to those things. I think it is both."

Individuals entering policing with their goal and intent of supporting vulnerable groups are going to be influenced by broader policing culture. "As long as they remain a paramilitary group, I think it is a losing battle" (Participant 10, a trans woman). It is essential to acknowledge that participants are mindful that not everyone entering policing thinks they are going to

perpetuate harm against various groups of people. However, it is the police culture that ultimately influences them, that "going into a corrupted industry that is known for harming minorities of all times, it isn't really an option, even if you are 'the good one' to not still be causing harm because by upholding the systems that harm people, you're causing harm regardless" (Participant 7).

Even having diverse identities, as briefly mentioned earlier, does not help; as Participant 9 said: "There are queer or cis-gay identified cops in most factions of any police organization and, I don't mean to sound the wrong way here, but they all think that they are the ones who can change it from the inside if they're coming at it with any diverse perspective at all." They further explain:

> I was sort of pondering on how, like, our last police chief in Toronto was literally a person of colour, a Black man and who then, you know, thank God did not win this current mayoral election, but it was so disappointing to hear someone with, you know, what I would consider at least in that regard, far more diverse experiences and opinions than I would have no matter what I think I can understand from other people's experiences be — I don't have any specifics that come to mind right now. I just know that when I would read them or hear them, I did not like them. He seems to be the type of person who much like with a lot of the anti-queer/trans rhetoric going on right now, like the "LGB without the T" bullshit like that. "Oh, well, I'm so close to this position, or that I'm just going to shit on everyone below me, even people who look like me and sound like me because I want the carrot, and that's right, it's so close I can taste it" right (Participant 9).

When discussing power imbalances, a few participants referred to "ACAB," which is an acronym for "All Cops are Bastards" or "All Cops are Bad" (Groundwater, 2020). This term first appeared in the U.K. during the 1920s but picked up popularity around 2018 to call attention to police brutality (Groundwater, 2020). Currently, "ACAB" is an easy term to express anti-authoritarian solidarity, and the anarchist movement explains that the term is not just face value — but that police are "institutionally trapped in a system that is inherently oppressive" (Groundwater, 2020).

The nuance of "ACAB" is shared by Participant 13, "when people say ACAB, or we hate cops, it's because the entire system is built against people, and we do see that when officers or detectives are trying to make the tiniest bit of change or hold accountability for other officers. That is just not going to fucking fly by. You're not going to be able to survive in those atmospheres if you hold anyone accountable for anything, let alone something as large as racial discrimination or, you know, police brutality." Another explains the power imbalance that police have, speaking to the broader institution of policing rather than just individual officers: "you might have heard of ACAB? I don't know if I would take it that far, but then I'm not — like, I'd say, like, the police are necessary, but then they kind of over — they have too much power basically that they can get away with a lot, which is kind of scary, you know?" (Participant 6).

Participant 13 shares that "it is just a whole system that needs a complete restructure, complete rehiring, complete, like — a whole new type of integration and just learning more about community supports that are not the police." Participant 1 shares likewise, that "it's very obvious that there are folks walking around with guns and other people without and that creates an immediate power dynamic and marginalized folks are going to be the first to be hurt because we're the ones that are not conforming the most visibly."

"There's a lot more work to do before we will trust the police": Legitimacy of the Policing Institution

Participants showcase their perceptions and feelings regarding the history of policing and how that forms their lack of legitimacy. For example, Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, acknowledges the colonial roots of policing, and Participant 1, a white trans person, echoed that sentiment, stating, "I mean, historically, if you look at how police were developed? They were developed as, like, a racist institution to control and police Black bodies, Black, Indigenous, people of colour." Participant 2 continues that "the police are coming from an older institution that has had a very long and complicated history. I think we can agree that we need to have better interactions between the police and the public. Those police roles need to be redefined otherwise, they're just going to keep doing the same thing over and over and over again." Another participant felt it was important to name the roots of policing, "like colonialism and white supremacy that, like, has founded the land and the systems that we're in right now, and how that, of course, is super-intertwined with capitalism." Participant 3, a trans person, agrees, that "there definitely is, like, a history of mistreatment throughout history." Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person, speaks to those historical examples of harm:

> There is a very dangerous correlation between the police and the trans and gender-diverse communities that historically have led to a substantial amount of death. And even today, do. There are still several places in the world where police are allowed to treat trans and genderqueer folks significantly worse and often, as a result, end up getting less punishment, or none at all, when they harm people severely or just end their lives.

The need to understand the formation of policing and the history of colonialism highlights how deeply ingrained feelings of illegitimacy are. These participants utilize their knowledge to form the basis of their opinions. When police illegitimacy returns to its formation, procedural justice cannot overcome these underpinnings. Authorities are deemed legitimate when their goals, structures and practices are not questioned (Worden & McLean, 2017). Throughout this section, the theme of distrust in the structure of policing is pervasive as participants discuss the roots of policing and how they feel it impacts the institution to this day.

For example, Participant 13, a queer non-binary Muslim person, shares that "a lot of the extensive history of, like, police existing as a force to control Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people and just like — not just to protect white people and their property, but to control, right?" This theme of power and control is repeated, as Participant 1, a white trans person, says that "the institution will always serve to, like, keep the status quo, to keep the norm and the norm is controlled by white supremacy, which is hetero-sexist, trans-sexist, trans-misogynist, whatever," and that "policing has only served as a tool of this, like, colonial project of coming to this land."

Ideas of who is criminalized by police and who is not are shared by Participant 5, a white trans man, and Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person. Participant 5 states that "a lot of trans people in the past, especially trans women, would be profiled as prostitutes and stuff like that." Participant 7 states that those in power manipulate laws, texts, and even religion to mean what they want them to, that "a lot of the times laws get put into place or people in jobs think they can use their religion as a guide tool for unethical, inhumane and dangerous behaviour," and that "there are tons of jobs where people will use their religion or their personal beliefs as an excuse to either not help or actively harm people and that isn't okay — but it's a lot easier when your job lets you carry a gun around."

Themes on normality and who gets to decide what the "norm" is have been consistent throughout the participants' reflections on the history of policing. Participant 10, a trans woman, breaks down this process, explaining that:

> I think the sheer nature of the fact that police are supposed to keep the baseline of society is kind of where everything starts to break down right there because the moment you fall outside of that image of normality. Now, you become "an other" that could potentially affect the status quo and people in power like to abuse that power. And one of their levers of power is the police force. So, I think, as long as there's been police, there's probably been similar problems.

Participant 1, a white trans person, shares the same sentiments, elaborating on broader ideas of who has power and who does not:

> If you give a group of people power, to restrict control, whatever, and force, even if it's based on what we communally might say are agreed-upon laws. Although even that can be questioned because who's in power creating laws, what are their identities? How might they benefit versus other folks that aren't getting that power? But, but even if they're, they're agreed-upon laws, you're still giving a group of people power to do so and they're doing it.

What each of these participants is speaking to is their core sentiments of police illegitimacy. In each way, they utilize concepts of power and control, as well as the history of policing, to form the basis of why policing is in its current form. Ideas of morality, doing the right thing right, or the institution's motives help understand how the public can legitimize police (Suchman, 1995; Worden & McLean, 2017). When people feel protected by the police, they are more inclined to engage with and address any issues together (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). What these participants

share is the opposite of protection or trust; instead, they explore the ways policing has harmed different communities of people and the fact that policing needs to be understood within broader contexts of colonialism and harm.

Additionally, Participant 14, a trans person, talks about some forgotten parts of history, that bathhouse raids were still taking place in Toronto within the 1970s, that "I feel like that part of our queer history is often forgotten as well." They continue, "I think, like, colonialism has a huge role to play in that, in capitalism and inequality in general. Like, who was afforded safety, but also who has intergenerational trauma, and different things like that because mental health plays a huge role on how people can interact with each other on a daily basis." They continue to share that "pathologists pathologizing — you still have to be diagnosed, like, having gender dysphoria if you want to receive trans health care. I think, like, even if that's not considered a crime, it is still a level of pathologizing" (Participant 14).

Participant 12, a trans person of colour, talks about forced individualism in a capitalist society, that "it forced folks to see each other as the enemy basically, and not remember community values and collectivist ways of being where, like — because violence is always gonna happen, harm is always gonna happen amongst humans, but it's about how we respond to it and in many, many cultures around the world that response has been community-based, it has been transformative justice, restorative justice. Like, actually getting to the root of the problem, making sure people's basic needs are met."

While discussing the history of policing, it is clear that participants are drawing from many areas to describe the kinds of fear and unequal power they see around them. It is not just the history of policing but broader themes of power and control, questioning those in power, who gets to maintain power, and how crime results from them. Participant 1 goes on to explain that

"we know that systems of oppression are all connected, and so, the same system that supports racism also supports transphobia also supports ableism, homophobia, etc., and because of that, we know that trans people of colour will be affected more negatively from those systems." These systems of oppression combine with policing, forming "why it was created, just wealthy people paying other people to keep members of the community in check, and those specific members were Black, Indigenous and, very likely at the time, also trans," (Participant 1). It is the responsibility of police officers to "treat them the same way you would treat literally anybody else?" (Participant 7). Participant 2 reflects on the environment that police officers exist within, that "they're not taught to have an open mind and come into this situation to try to diffuse it. All they do is escalate, which is not the right thing when everybody's stressing out and there is something bad happening." This is shared by Participant 3 who says that police officers "learned that this stuff was okay. It was drilled into their heads that they were okay. It was accepted, and they didn't get punished, and now suddenly it's not okay, and you can't just be like — how dare you? This is unacceptable? You have to be like — hey buddy, you can't say that, that's no longer an acceptable word. You have to kind of explain that."

Ultimately, these participants have formed their opinions of police from their ideologies on how policing was formed and how it exists today. They all discuss broader concepts like capitalism, colonialism, and power and control. Legitimacy towards police requires trust in their process, not just as individuals but as an institution (Worden & McLean, 2017). Bradford et al. (2009) explain that fairness and community engagement, including a more accessible force, can help improve confidence in the police. When a community comprises individuals who distrust the police to its foundation, it requires more than procedural justice and understanding what affects legitimacy to address those harms.

Participants shared how they feel about the current state of policing, as well as current tensions experienced between the trans community and police. This includes examining the individual officer versus the broader institution of policing. Their perceptions are influenced by their overall perceptions of police, as discussed earlier, but speak to the current-day tensions they experience. In order to restore legitimacy within policing, police must act justly (Cao, 2022). Additionally, there needs to be a reciprocation of trust and confidence between citizens and police (Manning, 2010). Participant 1 explains that the relationship between the two is contentious, violent, and racist and that there is a tone of hostility. The majority of trans folks, they share, do not feel safe and express these sentiments on social media — they are afraid of the police, do not feel safe around them, and are aware that police murder trans people. "So when it comes to trans folks, I think relationally, we avoid police as much as possible — to stay safe" (Participant 1).

Participant 2 talks about the experiences of First Nations and the connection to policing, "I think about how our First Nations siblings are treated with Starlight Tours still happening. Out in the prairies, it's unacceptable and it's fucking gross and the police have not done anything to make me think that they are really serious about changing. Like there's some talk right now and I do hope for it to get better, but there is a lot more work to do before we will trust the police."

Additionally, Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, shares that the only way to achieve change within policing is through defunding, as police funnel their money into weaponry. Within Ontario, Premier Ford (leader of the Conservative party and premier of the province) is offering subsidies to policing programs. "The goal is to essentially fast-track applicants into policing and compare our situation to Nordic countries where there are, like, four or six-year programs where they take more time and are taught about ethics and whatnot — and

the rate of violence, and in the society overall, is lower because there's anti-violent responses like cops, you know, always can de-escalate without violence" (Participant 9). The following is copied from the text chat of Participant 11 and Participant 8 (both trans men) sharing the same sentiments:

> Participant 11: Also knowing that if a police even does get fired (which is rare in itself) they just move to another city and rejoin the force makes me trust any of them even less. There's no real consequences to them being straight-up evil.
>
> Participant 11: The people who are drawn to becoming cops are often just looking for opportunities to harass and harm others, and as the most frequent victims of those things with so few people to come to our defenses of course we're terrified of them. It's rotten on both a systemic and individual level.
>
> Participant 11: I'm just a trans man myself but if I had to report something that would require me to come out, I just wouldn't. It's worse if you're transfem.
>
> Participant 8: To put it into perspective: I had to call the police because of a safety issue at work and I had a panic attack at the very idea of calling them

Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim person, reflects on accountability measures for police and feels that they are not proportionate to the harm police cause. "The fact that so many people are forcibly, like, either brutalized by police or killed by the police like a lot of times, or the rhetoric that a lot of conservatives and pro-police people say in general is that it's kind of part of the job, unfortunately," that police brutality is just part of the job. They go on to share that "there should be no reason why a police interaction should end up with death unless, like, literally the person was about to shoot you. There is no reason why anyone should be even remotely harmed. Seeing police release public statements of, you know, what these officers did was horrible.

However, they were scared, and it's like, but I'm scared every single day of my life" (Participant 13). Essentially, individuals getting into policing should "know what you're gonna sign up for" and that "if you had a mindset of wanting to be the good cop going in, or something like that, ultimately you're not going to survive within the field unless you change your ways" (Participant 14).

The history of policing in Canada is linked to oppression and colonialism, and the police not only uphold law and order but also represent the social order status quo (Cao, 2022; Monchalin, 2016; Razack, 2013). The status quo is often a conservative social structure (Cao, 2022). As participants reflected earlier in chat excerpts on police power, they feel police feel threatened because trans and queer people do not conform to the socially accepted norm (Cao, 2022). Concerning the power and control issues within policing, Participant 14 shares that they want to maintain power over the most vulnerable and do not want to prioritize their well-being or understand their positionality. For example, "a lot of trans-feminine folks resort to sex work as a type of employment to earn money and try to survive in a capitalist society, and yeah, I think even the criminalization of being gender non-conforming in and of itself, like we're seeing that more and more become an issue, especially in the States — the criminalization of being gender non-conforming itself was a crime" (Participant 14).

Sentiments of criminalization and harm are echoed in Participant 1's perceptions that police action and punishment are based on depersonalization, that it harms all parties involved. There is also more aggression towards trans people who are not necessarily passing, that "statistic-wise, you know, they are quote-unquote different and some people cannot handle that, so they just get more of a violent response" (Participant 1). Two participants in the text chat shared similar opinions when asked how police can respond to or interact with the trans

community. Participant 9 is a non-binary transmac person, and Participant 8 is a trans man. Below is the excerpt copied from the chat:

> Participant 9: Don't. Sorry, but like at in the current iteration of the concept of policing, I don't think there is, yeah.
>
> Participant 8: I don't think it's possible until the system changes
>
> Participant 9: Exactly. What [Participant 8] just said in the chat, I don't think it's possible until the system changes, that's basically what I was gonna say. Like there's no best practice.
>
> Participant 8*:* We're safer doing our own security work until then

If individuals truly want to protect and serve the community, then "it's not joining the police. Then you would find other ways to protect your community, you would find other avenues and try to again, like, talk to other folks who are within that same industry of — how do we create what is better and safer that isn't ingrained in police work when we know that specifically police work is completely corrupt on its own, no matter how good of a person you are" (Participant 13). Trying to be a good cop means using physical force or intimidation, and that is when the true essence of police force comes through, Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim person, continues to share. Participant 12, a trans person of colour, explains that the trans community has the skills to keep each other safe and respond to harm in a way that does not continue to inflict more violence, that there is a movement towards community responses without having to involve the police — but that people are ingrained to call the police immediately. Police policies, essentially, cause more harm than good, and it is up to the community to keep themselves safe because the police continue to perpetuate and inflict harm.

Participant 1, a white trans person, shares their concerns regarding police policies and broader legal protections:

> So I think we could put endless policies in place, but honestly, the policies that exist in police work don't get followed anyways because we have people getting murdered left, right, and center, and obviously there are no policies saying murder whoever you want. So, what do policies do? Don't do anything except for legally protect policing as an institution, supervisors, etc. Anyone who is a higher-up? It's just gonna give them legal protection, which is the very thing that [Participant 2] was talking about of just, like, allowing police to be exempt from whatever else in society isn't. That's also not me advocating for harsher punishment. I personally am an abolitionist and I think a way forward that protects marginalized people is abolishing policing and having new and other systems in place, but that's not something we do overnight. That's something that's long work that's being done, that has been getting done for a very long time, led by Black folks, particularly, because they're the number-one folks that are getting harmed by police.

These participants reflect on the sense of power the institution of policing has and how there seems to be only one way to navigate change, and that is through defunding. The participants shared their perceptions that the institution is too powerful to challenge, especially on the individual level, wherein new police officers are trained by the structures of power that harm communities. This study suggests that the relationship between the transgender community and police is complex and that even with effective procedural justice on the police's part, it has no impact on the overall sense of police legitimacy, which means that an individual positive

interaction with a police officer does not change the participant's perception that the police are illegitimate. The discussion also included the nuance of intersectionality and the impact that different, overlapping identities have on an interaction.

These complexities highlight the importance of listening to the trans community about their experiences and perceptions of police, as they are the only ones who can speak to those experiences and speak to what can be done to improve the relationship. The following section examines those ideas in length, as participants discuss what they feel can be done about policing. They discuss abolition and defunding, as well as what justice means to them and how police can reflect that back.

Chapter 7: What Justice Means and How to Make Change

The following section discusses participant ideas regarding what can be done about the current state of policing. Some discuss radical abolition, that we need to do away with the entire system, and others acknowledge that while that might be a goal for the future, there are ways to improve the current policing structure. Finally, participants discuss their ideas of justice and what that concept means. This section highlights the importance of letting participants speak about the changes they want and letting their voices inform them.

"The justice system needs to be completely redone": Police Abolition

One of the main discussions about police reform is the abolition and defunding of the police, as movements that have garnered much momentum in the last five years. Participants speak openly about their feelings about abolition and colonialism, and many of them are abolitionists — meaning they would like to see the current state of policing scrapped and something new taking its place. The following shares participants' thoughts on why abolition is necessary and what would replace the institution of policing.

Police abolition seeks to "eliminate, or massively downsize, American policing" (Harvard Law Review, 2023). Police abolition acknowledges the role of police in capitalism, as police were initially created to maintain control of enslaved people in the U.S. (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Black feminist abolitionist tradition calls for the abolition of policing and instead, invest in non-carceral community safety and self-defense (Richie, 2012; Richie, 2017, as cited in Dodchuck-Land & Walby, 2021).

Within Canada, Indigenous peoples face intergenerational trauma as a result of colonialism, which includes sexual and physical abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, and lower educational attainment (Boyce, 2016; Hsieh & Pugh,

1993; LaPrairie, 1994; 2002; LaPrairie & Stenning 2003 as cited in David & Mitchell, 2021). Indigenous peoples were also confined in residential schools, which had detrimental intergenerational effects on their health (both psychologically and physically) (David & Mitchell, 2021). Colonialism policies directly and indirectly impact Indigenous peoples' contact with the police (as a suspect or perpetrator, witness to a crime, or the result of mental health and/or substance abuse issues) (David & Mitchell, 2021). Canadian police enforced laws designed to control and ultimately eliminate Indigenous peoples "through forced assimilation, dislocation and deprivation," which resulted in the limited freedom of movement, gathering of Indigenous peoples, the criminalization of their culture and spiritual practices and the forcible removal of children from their families to place them in residential schools (Alberton et al., 2019; Comack, 2012; Monchalin, 2016; Razack, 2015; Nettelbeck & Smandych, 2010; TRC, 2015, as cited in David & Mitchell, 2021).

The historical relevance of police creates the foundation for abolition, and as a result, police cannot be reformed and must be disbanded (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Police abolition means disarming, disempowering, and disbanding police (Dodchuck-Land & Walby, 2021; McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Additionally, Vitale (2017) argues that police accountability is a myth. These myths are based on the ideologies that police provide safety, stop crime, are community-based and that police misconduct is a result of bad apples (Crank, 1994, as cited in Dodchuck-Land & Walby, 2021). Police racism and failure to protect is reason enough for abolition (Vitale, 2017; Dodchuck-Land & Walby, 2021).

Participant 1, a white trans person, shares that we need new systems, that currently, police are "first responders of violence, who protect property first and who are sanctioned by the state to do." As discussed in the police legitimacy section, participants do not view the police as

legitimate and, therefore, call for an entire restructuring of the institution. Participant 1 acknowledges much fear when discussing abolition that there would be a "void of protection." Instead, "I think the reason why folks who don't feel safe with police already laugh at that is because, like, what protection?" Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person, shares these sentiments, as they are "a very proud abolitionist when it comes to these things, but you know, it would help if they would stop promoting policies that actively harm trans people, and if they stopped letting cops get away with brutalizing trans people." As Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, puts it boldly, "it's got to be a top-down reform, like it all has to be reformed. The justice system needs to completely be redone." Participant 14, a trans person, states simply, "I think the police should be abolished."

The history of policing has a big part in abolition because during colonization, "our ancestors [came and decided] to take things, and those things were not defined as crime because they had power and then they got to define crime in a way that would marginalize other folks" (Participant 1). Participant 1 goes on to explain:

> And that perpetuates this whole, you know, idea of land back and Indigenous sovereignty. Like it's not a cute idea, it's a core. It is the core pivotal movement and shift that would need to happen for policing to be eradicated and for communities within our country to be well. I think trusting the people who are original stewards of the land and who already had systems in place that did not involve policing.

The process of abolition requires more than small changes or minor reforms to policing. Participant 7 explains that small changes could be possible individually but not on an institutional scale. These institutions are based on laws that can take years to overturn and an "absurd number of yes votes" because these policies are "written by, quite frankly, a bunch of

bigots. It would help drastically if we could fix all of this, but until that's a possibility, it isn't realistic to assume that they will be safe" (Participant 7). They share that "I mean if we punished every police officer who does things that are bigoted, we wouldn't have any police — which personally, I am okay with, but I understand that that's not typically the goal of police reform." Copied directly from the text chat, Participant 11 and Participant 8 (both trans men) share mirroring thoughts on abolition:

> Participant 11: It's too much of a problem to be solved with anything other than a complete overhaul if not tossing them out altogether.
>
> Participant 8: The system itself needs to be torn down and rebuilt from the ground up.

Participant 10, a trans woman who was in the same focus group as both Participants 11 and 8, chimes in:

> The system is not just a police-based system issue. It's the overarching system because it is controlled by, you know, I hate to say it but the cis-het, white folks. They were the ones that developed it. They made it for them, and everything that we live in and interact with has spawned from that, and yeah, the whole system needs an overhaul, I think, before the police can do anything to improve the relationship with us.

Participant 14, a trans person, also discussed ideas of an entire system overhaul, that the police are only part of the problem that the overarching institution is perpetuating. They share thoughts on transformative justice, a movement popularized by 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities that focuses on community-building and collective solidarity against oppressive structures (Kaba, 2021). It is the entire system that needs restructuring; they share:

> I don't think it's just policing that it's problematic to this but also like, the criminal legal system as a whole, the prison industrial complex, as well. I think,

> just, this is complicated and I feel like I've done, like, a lot of reading on transformative justice and everything like that. For just personal interest and everything, and I think within tight-knit communities, there's different things that can happen for transformative justice. But I feel like now we have so many people in so many cities, and there's such a sense of, like, isolation and disconnection, and so I don't really think my idealistic ways would really work. I think — and certain communities that strive for it and how to do the work. They can avoid calling the police for different things, but I've seen even people that are abolitionists call the police in different situations where they get violently attacked by strangers because that's the systems that we have in place in the system. So I think it's, like, very complex and nuanced.

Participant 2, a genderqueer AFAB person, speaks about her frustrations towards police, one of the biggest concerns being that our police officers are armed. She feels we do not need armed police, especially when the people are not armed. She continues:

> We need to put more money, the money that we're spending on OT [overtime] for the police to sit there and rack it up and steal from communities, which is another complaint that I have. Just wasting resources to get into their pockets instead of doing that. Why don't we put all of that money into education, health care, mental health, treatments for addiction, and therapy for people? Because if you support all of those, you won't need the goddamn police because people won't be breaking down. You know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the police are just a band-aid on social problems, and it's a shitty band-aid at that. Like, all of these things could be cut down so much if we take a bunch of the

> funding that we're currently, in my opinion, wasting, we're just setting on fire and instead of enriching these positions that are, you know, what's the word I'm looking for? A position of privilege instead of enriching more positions of privilege, we should be taking that money and putting it into the communities, making our communities better. Then they'll just be safer in general.

Participant 1 shares sentiments of frustration that police are only being called preventatively and that only after harm or a crime occurs do the police come into action. For example, suppose a person is raped, harmed, or robbed. In that case, the police do not prevent that harm, that "what we are seeking at that moment is punishment, and if we come into an honest understanding of how policing is working, that what we want from them is to punish someone else because of what happened to us." Change needs to be institutional, and the laws in place need to do more than give the police a slap on the wrist, Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person, says. Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, mirrors this, that policing is "attracting a certain type of mindset, even if it's attracting people who want to change it from the inside, it's still governed by the same mindset. You are just putting a gigantic band-aid on a gigantic wound with a teeny little band-aid that's not doing anything." In the chat, Participant 9 shares:

> Your points about community enforcement instead of police enforcement reminded me how I've been thinking a lot about the ideas of abolishing the carceral system and what that looks like too.

Many participants share that it is impossible to have police reform without abolition. There needs to be severe institutional changes. I inquired about what abolition would look like, engaging each participant in their ideas of what would replace police if abolition came to fruition. Participant 1, a white trans person, said that institutions would need to "consult Black Lives Matter, like there

are grassroots organizations who are already doing this work. We just need to listen to them and then in conjunction with them. I think a world without policing would primarily, in Canada, look like Indigenous sovereignty, like land sovereignty, cultural sovereignty." Police reform is more than just improving the current state of policing; as Participant 12, a trans person of colour, puts it, minor improvements to policing have not made genuine changes. Even for people who are not reformists or abolitionists, the system itself is not working even if it is something you believe in, and "the only other option is defunding and abolish — or else we are never gonna get anywhere" (Participant 12).

Participant 1 admits that thinking about a world without policing is scary because the institution of policing is one pillar that upholds the overarching capitalist society. Without that pillar, there are fears over how the system could maintain itself. Despite these fears, Participant 1 states that "we're already not safe, so I think, personally, there's only better things waiting on the other side. I also don't think it's like a — today, police exist; tomorrow, they don't, and I know that there are big wise thinkers who have been talking about this for centuries since policing was invented. There have been people talking about how terrible it is and how we need to get rid of it." Since policing is rooted in a system of punishment, and we only really understand justice in that way of making equality or balancing the scales, in Participant 1's opinion, it only makes things worse.

Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim person, speaks about the loss of a "pillar" like policing in the current capitalist society, acknowledging that they have hope for the future to have better structures in place to abolish the police. Participant 12, a trans person of colour, reflects that interesting changes are happening within the U.S., that specific cities are diverting 911 calls to mental health crisis workers or community and peer-led groups trained and

knowledgeable in de-escalation. While we may not be able to get rid of policing altogether, "abolition is like making sure that we are taking away police power as much as we can, like chipping away at it" (Participant 12). People must examine what needs to be enforced and what does not, considering what police are tasked with doing. Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, says, "Obviously, housing is such a massive issue in the city. We talked about it, with the parks already and whatnot, but, like, taking the funding out of the police budget and give it all to the folks who put it into more shelters, put it into — actually, filling all the empty condo units for everyone who actually needs housing." Participant 14 speaks to this, as police are "criminalizing you for existing as you are, whether it be, like, drugs or having a mental health crisis, or whatever."

The discussion regarding the future of abolition was explained by Participant 9, who reflects on the realities of it, not just theoretically. They share:

> I've been thinking a lot lately of what, like, the concepts of, like, abolishing the carceral system as a whole looks like, societally which is, you know, a really hard thought experiment, but in more real world how do we embody that as people? And I've been reconnecting with a lot of, especially queer folks in my life that I may not have had the best experiences with when we were all younger, and you know, we're all — it's really cool and been really healing for me to speak with a lot of these people about the mistakes we've all made and taking accountability for them and understanding that some of them may not want to speak to me again. Some of them are interested in growing together, but not in the ways we needed each other before and all that sort of thing and like, you know, saying, where, where is the line between, you know, crimes or crimes against other human

> beings, forget crimes in the way that the police define them, but, like, think actions that we can't tolerate in society versus actions that we can tolerate with growth and, like, in my own mind, I think that comes down to, and the best way to word this, like, sexual, certain kinds of sexual assaults and murder not in self-defense.

Concepts of crime and what can be done about it have been at the core of how participants reflect on their ideas and hopes for police reform. Participant 13, a queer, non-binary Muslim person, shares an interesting vantage point as an activist and community supporter, sharing that they believe in transformative justice because its key pillars are anti-punitive, punitive, and proportional reactions. Transformative justice considers incarceration, how Participant 13's circle of peers and community members have expertise and practice in changing laws, and how to call for support. They share stories about how businesses on certain blocks have accountability measures with each other, such as if someone is being robbed or in an unsafe situation, they call each other instead of the police. Additionally, they have done much training in de-escalation and understand the steps necessary if external help is needed. They share that "even smaller forms, making sure that physically we're able to be there for each other and be able to, like, know your neighbours. If you were to know all of your neighbours and you didn't see one of them for a really long time, you would know to go check on that person, right? And you wouldn't need to call the police for a safety check or a wellness check. But yeah, just like those type of examples of finding alternative to policing, like, there's definitely a lot more work, that I'm sure" (Participant 13).

They reflect that much of their work is to ensure the community can rely on itself and hold each other accountable. "Make sure that we're truly, instead of just being punitive, truly

trying to get down to the root of the issue and trying to help someone have the resources, tools, and support to be able to change their behaviour." Participant 14, a trans person, reflects on community resources such as the Trans Lifeline in Canada and the U.S., a 24/7 non-profit support network run by trans folks. They share that this is an incredible example of how "we keep our community safe and how they don't call the police when you're in crisis. They also do incredible work for peers, being able to support peers, and I think models like that are really important for communities that are the most marginalized and vulnerable" (Participant 14). Participant 13 goes on to share their thoughts on the importance of community safety:

> And it's not finding people disposable. That's one of my biggest problems with the police, how disposable everyone is to them. It is not a community that they're protecting and serving; it's a community of random people who are in their city and are acting up, and they need to put them in their right place. I think that's, like, what true justice would be, being able to make sure that, I mean, it goes way back to making sure that Indigenous folks have their lands, making sure that there is a true reconciliation for the amounts of colonization, and murder and genocide that has happened at the hands of police officers. Also making sure that we're, like, slowly but surely maybe not just abolishing police, but making it so that you feel safe in your own space, right? You just want to be able to go down the street and feel safe and not think that like if you're not safe, [you are] going to die.

Defund, Listen, and Change: How Current Day Policing Can Evolve

Abolition is extreme, even to some participants who firmly believe it is the only option for police reform. The following accounts for participants who support defunding or reallocating police funding to change policing without abolition. Many participants in the above section

reflect on alternate ways to exist without police, noting that the community should protect one another and consider new forms of justice (like transformative justice) instead of the current punitive model. Participants in these examples explore ways to change policing as it stands to make it more manageable and, perhaps, change policing as it currently exists while working towards an abolitionist future.

Defunding the police is a movement to reduce police budgets (Fegley & Murtazashvili, 2023). Defunding the police also means ending policing in its current state (Fegley & Murtazashvili, 2023) but not seeking extreme measures like abolition. In contrast to abolition, defunding refers to reallocating funding and resources (Jackson et al., 2023). Black-led activist movements call for defunding to shift control from policing to social services and agencies serving the community directly (Su, O'Rourke & Binder, 2022). A result of defunding is to improve the public's capacity to support themselves (Su et al., 2022). There are three prongs to defunding, the first being the connection of current-day policing to slavery in the U.S. (Su et al., 2022). The second is that due to slavery, Black people are limited in their access to resources to live free lives (Su et al., 2022). Lastly, governments expand police budgets and, in turn, deprive Black people of economic opportunities (Su et al., 2022).

Police resources should be reallocated to public services that deal directly with social problems contributing to crime rates (Buchanan et al., 2020; Jackson et al., 2023). This means supporting the reduction of police budgets and allocating that funding to social services, such as mental health, housing, medical care, and job training (Fegley & Murtazashvili, 2023). The movement also calls for reducing police power and duties (abolitionists call for the complete reduction, whereas non-abolitionists call for less drastic reductions) (Fegley & Murtazashvili, 2023).

Attempting to bridge the gap between the community and the police is something that Participant 13 has done, being an advocate and activist in their community. Their experiences speak to alternate ways to improve the relationship between the trans community and police when abolition is not necessarily the end goal. They share that the typical work comes from non-profits for queer and trans people or racialized folks and immigrants, where the police call them in, have conversations and expect them to disseminate the information back out into the community for them. They share that police tell them:

> The police are good, the police will do the work you know, and they will evolve. And every time I've had conversations with folks, like, either who have done that work, or I've done that work, it's always been the same. It's never been a situation where they've been like — let's have a, like, not that, like, I want to have an open conversation with them, but maybe I am in the wrong or even, like, a possibility of being educated or, like, learn and learning something new. Like, there's very little of that and more so, like, learning our language, learning our mannerisms, learning what we react to, and then, like, just either feeding that back to us with propaganda in it or just, again, trying to do a lot of community outreach of, like, we are the best people, please still believe in us. And it's like, what we came to the table to tell you to stop doing what you're doing and you came to the table to tell us we're actually great. So it's just not a conversation.

Participant 4, a non-binary person of colour, shares that the best way to ensure trans and gay people do not feel left out when it comes to police interactions is that instead of following a specific protocol for any trans or queer person reporting a crime, police should treat everyone the same way. Having specific protocols can feel alienating, but they share that police engagement should be "equal; it just shouldn't matter if the person reporting a crime is gay or straight, cis or

trans, or whatever — just treat everyone the same way." It is equally crucial that police consider what practices are appropriate, that "you're making sure not to, well, basically do anything that will also be bad to a cis-person, like excessive force and disrespectful insults" (Participant 5, a white trans man). Participant 4 goes on to share that it is crucial to be mindful of differences in those reporting crimes, and "we need to figure out what the balance is between treating people equally and treating people with the sensitivity and the care that needs to be around these sort of things," (Participant 4).

The police need to acknowledge outwardly that they hear community concerns, that they respect those opinions, and that they are going to make necessary changes so that people feel comfortable (Participant 3). These changes require the police to actively listen instead of assuming what is best for a community, as Participant 14 shares, "For example, listening to the fact that if trans and racialized people of colour, queer folks are saying, like — don't show up to our prides in uniform, we are not saying full stop don't show up to Pride, but if you want to be an ally, you can show up in regular clothes like every other fucking person that comes to Pride." Participant 5, a white trans man, reflects that it is important not to antagonize the police too much, especially with those who generally mean well. They go on to share that it is equally important to acknowledge that the past cannot be changed nor erase the abuse people faced. However, policies might help ensure that these harms do not continue to happen and that they are taken care of if something does happen.

Participant 3, a trans person, reflects on the time and generational changes that need to be made in order for there to be a better relationship between the trans community and police. They reflect that it takes time for police forces to change, and each generation gets further and further away from the current state of violence. As they go on, "It will still take time for trans people to

accept and even trust police again. Some people won't, like, you have to wait until those people are either like — you know, died, hopefully, old age, but you know, it might take generations. Where, like, our generation might be more cautious of cops and that kind of stuff because there has been that history of violence." Maybe fifteen years from now, as Participant 4 reflects, "we look back and like, yeah, that was absolutely fucked up, so many people were killed or — any negative thing that happened against them that shouldn't have, and I think this is something that will keep happening for a few years, maybe even a decade, then a point will come and it's like — oh, what we did was absolute shit, sorry." Participant 4, a non-binary person of colour, reflects that in this scenario, there is no real reconciliation, that time between this current state of violence and a future that is more accepting is as though the police "throw dirt over it and move on and learn from it."

Powerful statements from police supporting the trans and queer community are needed in order to avoid the scenarios just shared. Loud statements such as "Yes, we support you, we hear you, we're going to change what we are doing to make you feel comfortable are very powerful" (Participant 3). Actively helping involves active listening, for a police officer ensures voices are heard and that sometimes someone does not need help; they just need to be listened to (Participant 3). Participant 4 believes that more education and listening are necessary to ensure that people who have experienced harm are being heard. Participant 5, a white trans man, adds that the police need to take complaints very seriously, especially with the treatment of trans people, like excessive force, and make sure there is accountability for officers.

It is not just police that need reform, but security presence in general. Participant 12, a trans person of colour, reflects that new funding for Pride includes upping security. However, "we could be investing that money into community-based safety, like community-based safety

defense at Pride" because security presence "puts the most marginalized folks at risk in our community" (Participant 12). These sentiments are mirrored by Participant 7, who notes that there are situations where sending a crisis worker makes more sense than a police officer, especially with minorities, because mental health crises are more common. They continue that people should not "get shot for having things like mental health episodes which, fun fact, you can't actually control just because a cop shows up and tells you to stop doing that. That's not how that works, for starters, and is also just a moronic way of looking at that."

Regarding community-based safety protocols, Participant 9 shares a fascinating view of de-escalation training. They share:

> The most I had ever learned about any kind of real de-escalation in safety has been from our own queer communities, folks who are offering, like, martial art defense. I think I read about that a few years ago for trans-feminine folks, especially, like, in the pandemic in the Toronto area, like GLAAD Day [Bookshop] with their harm reduction in different places. They do more good every day to de-escalate and try to remove as much violence from people that need help than cops forcing people out of parks.

These community-based efforts to ensure people are educated in de-escalation and self-defense are important factors for considering real-world examples of changing policing, primarily if resources are funneled into community efforts. These goals are similar to abolition efforts and could be implemented in the interim while efforts are being made to engage with accurate world abolition measures.

Another example that Participant 9 offers is the pilot project in Toronto for calling 211 instead of 911 for mental health crises and support services:

> Instead of immediately calling 911 or calling the police or even a non-emergency line so that — I believe they have to still send out, um, that they still have to send out a police officer, but they'll also send out a paramedic and a firefighter, I believe something like that, but that the point is to shift away the response that the city has from immediately criminalizing a mental health issue or, you know, outburst or whatever the scenario is, to focusing on their mental health. I don't know if it's successful, I think I only remember that it happened from a posting on GLAAD Day's doors. I'm not sure how successful it's been so far. I believe I was interviewed back when they were talking about doing this by another university group that was pushing the pilot, like, pushing for systems that are making sure that they have the funding to be successful.

The topic of diverse police officers came up, especially those who may be trans, and participants began to share their thoughts on what impact diversity within policing may or may not make. Participant 4 shared that if there were a trans captain of the NYPD, for example, as a non-binary person, they would hope that things could improve because this captain has gone through similar experiences. Participant 3 also says, "As those identities start to pop up, you have people who are more like, okay, this person is like me. I'm more likely to trust them and therefore, the people that fall under them who have to listen to their instructions and their commands." Trans police officers might help to change the culture of policing (Participant 5).

However, Participant 6 reflects differently. She shares, "I feel like their attitudes sometimes help more than their diversity. When police are like — when I'm on edge and a police officer talks to me, and they're just casually talking, and they smile and stuff like that, attitude, I feel like that makes it a little better because you can kind of sense that they aren't, like, I can't put it into words, but they don't mean any ill will." The personality of the individual officer, not

necessarily their identity markers, can distinguish an officer showing kindness and empathy (Participant 6, a trans person of colour).

Participant 6 continues to share fascinating anecdotes from India, where she was born and grew up before immigrating to Canada. She explains that police in India are scary, but she never feels like she is going to die. It might be slightly better than Canada; it is still bad there, but police officers do not carry guns; they carry sticks. She goes on to explain what changes she thinks are necessary to police in Canada, starting with community service and helping people out with day-to-day tasks:

> It should be called volunteering. I think it should be part of their job. […] They can request help for certain things, and they can just like come and help, you know? […] That's why I feel like if you make it a part of their job, it would help because they are forced, you know, to go and help out and come help you? Then instead of just sitting and patrolling or something, they're actively doing work, they're helping out and if they do get a call or something, or they can just leave that because it's not that important, right?

Ultimately, it is not the job of the police to carry out justice; it is the role of lawyers and the court (Participant 6). Participant 7 asks for the bare minimum — stop arresting trans folks for things that do not make sense, do not beat people up, and stop behaving like a bigot.

"I think justice is repair": Participant Reflections on What Justice Means to Them

Among all of the conversations regarding abolition and police reform, the idea of justice was formed. I asked participants what justice means to them and how they think police can reflect that meaning. Participant 1, a white trans person, succinctly says: "I think justice is repair. I don't think it's punishment," and that repair is not objective; it is personal to the person who has experienced harm. They contend that our current system dehumanizes people because we

throw them in prison and view them as less than human. Justice involves healing; they share, not punishment.

Participant 9, a non-binary transmac person, shares these sentiments: justice is how communities define it, what is meaningful to them, and that justice is different for everyone. For example, “There are people of colour I might have never harmed, who just don’t want me around for the way I look because of their trauma and history — and I have to accept that pushing myself into their space is an act of harm.” Participant 6, a trans person of colour from India, says that justice is hard to define but that things that are detrimental to everybody should not be okay; they should be stopped. Justice is also a sense of belonging to a community at large, says Participant 14, a trans person, and Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person, shares that justice is when police take trans people seriously when reporting hate crimes and stop threatening trans people as well. Within the text chat, Participants 11, a trans man, and 12, a trans person of colour, reflected on their understanding of justice. Below is the copied transcript:

> Participant 11: most situations that require justice dont require police
>
> Participant 12: Everyone having their basic needs met with dignity. Community accountability measures that are local, intentional, and resourced.

Participant 9, a non-binary transmasc person, chimes in that police need to reflect justice to the trans community by understanding there are places they are not welcome because their existence is an act of harm. They argue that “the best justice they can do is rewrite their own rules so that they avoid those places, like remove policing from harm reduction, remove policing from Pride. Get the city to create minimal security where there’s no word of police.” Participant 7, a white trans queer disabled person, says that justice is police taking accountability for one’s misdeeds, especially in a job where doing things wrong has life or death consequences.

Additionally, Participant 5, a white trans man, reflects that justice is when the police treat people with dignity and respect. He discusses how they felt during their interactions with police:

> Like not using excessive force or not being degrading or demeaning. You know, not doing more than what's necessary to do. I will say, I feel like it has been reflected back to me like when I had my experience. They pat me down, but it was done in a respectful way, they didn't like to do anything bad; they talked to me like I was a person; they talked, you know, talked to me as though I was almost like a normal kid, even. I feel like I've experienced what justice was, that's my personal situation. I guess it's important for other trans people who, say, who did not pass or do not have the privileges that I have they should also be treated in the same way that I was treated. I think that everybody should be treated the way I was treated. That's what justice would be.

Justice is having basic needs met, and everyone has equal value, says Participant 1, a white trans person. Justice happens when every human has equal value and the right to autonomy, the right to be alive, and that it is "not my decision to make for someone, of how they desire justice to be enacted, you know? So, I'm saying a lot of — basically I don't think there's an answer to that. I don't think there's one answer. I think justice is small-scale, I think it's personal, and I think it's based in communities. I think our policing system has no capability to do that" (Participant 1). Participant 1 continues:

> When it comes to really enacting justice, I don't think the police are capable of helping our communities do that. And yet, I think there are ways that police can do a little better, and small examples can be like, police have been repeatedly requested to stay out of pride parades as people in uniform and they don't and they fight it. Requests like that come up from communities that say hey, this practice hurts us, here's why."

They continue that police should be aware of the outcry from communities, and yet they still do not make changes and that on an individual level, new police officers should quit. “So that’s how you can reflect back to me that you care about my trans life — get a new job” (Participant 1). Participant 3 reflects on the broader system of justice, not just police, but within the court system as well:

> I think justice is just like at least the attempt to be correct, like, get situations in order and have the best outcome for everyone involved. It may not be a hundred percent perfect for everyone involved but it’s the best scenario where everyone gets, like, essentially what they deserve. So if someone’s a victim, they deserve, you know, the help and support; if someone’s an abuser, they deserve to, like, to have a punishment. […] How that is reflected though, I think that’s just something that, like, will come with time and with court cases and stuff that go through, and it’s like, Oh, this trans person won their court case against an abuser, like, just as that stuff comes out and becomes more normalized than it — you can you can see it, the proof is there. And then you’re like, oh yeah, this is a win.

Participant 4, a non-binary person of colour, says that justice depends on the time one is living in, that currently, “the good get the good, and the bad get the bad,” and like Participant 3, a trans person, said, “everyone gets what they deserve.” Crown Law, Participant 7, a white trans, queer disabled person, explains, was explicitly designed to protect people of colour, specifically Black folks, and wonders if something similar can be done for trans folks. Something “that could keep us a little bit less discriminated against, maybe” (Participant 7).

Participant 5, a white trans man, shares the importance of being kind and thoughtful in interactions with people who may not be educated or know much about the trans experience. He shares the importance of emotional labour in scenarios that may help educate another person:

> When I meet people that are like, they don't really know much about trans people and stuff, and then maybe they ask me something that comes off as very ignorant, I've learned that I don't respond with hostility when it's just genuinely that — they are not trying to like actually say anything bad, they just don't really know what to say because if I do, it's usually because if I do respond with being impatient or being like rude to them that will cause them [to be rude]. That's the first experience with a trans person then, that just influences how they see trans people. So I try to respond by being patient and kind to them if, in general, they do not know. […] It definitely is a bit of the emotional labour piece because, like, where somebody says something insensitive, of course, you don't like to hear that. But at the same time, you know, in the long run, the next time they meet a trans person, if you are rude to them, they will think that's how trans people are. [...] Especially if it's, like, the first time they've ever met somebody who is trans and then they are rude, then they're gonna think they're, like, every trans person is rude, or insensitive, and like, all these things. So I just tried to — it's different if they're coming from, like, if I can tell they're being hostile, that's a different situation. But, like, I'm talking about people that, like, they generally just don't really know what to say. So they're kind of just, like, trying but they don't know what to say.

Participants speak to the core of procedural justice and legitimacy theories, which state that respect, trust, and dignity must be present during police interactions. Those calling for abolition spoke about their lack of trust and respect for the institution of policing and that the creation of

policing was founded in colonial and racist procedures. From the beginning, the police authority was deemed distrustful and even harmful. Trust in the goals, structure and policing practices is necessary for the police to be deemed legitimate (Worden & McLean, 2017). Tyler (2000) states that authorities must ensure compliance with the law and acceptance of their decision-making, as legal authorities are responsible for ensuring the public is willing to obey. Willingness to obey is based on the legitimacy of the police, not fear of repercussions (Tankebe, 2012). Pro-abolitionist participants speak openly about their rejection of the policing institution, calling for an entire re-haul and restructuring. In order to replace the institution, they say that Indigenous people need to be at the center, as they are the original stewards of the land (Participant 1). For participants who call for other means of police reform that are not rooted in abolition, they often comment on the procedures of policing and how to improve interactions with the trans community. These ideas are often rooted in trust, respect, and dignity, and it is the actions of police officers that can have the most significant impact on improving the relationship. Procedural justice recognizes how different people perceive situations and how that perception reflects on police authority and legitimacy (Braga et al., 2014). Personal experiences with authority also play a significant role; if experiences are disrespectful, unfair, or unethical, one perceives the police as illegitimate (Braga et al., 2014; Tyler, 2004). Participants calling for the police to understand the trans experience and the kinds of harm they have faced is an essential aspect of ensuring future interactions are rooted in the very changes trans people need. Ultimately, participants acknowledge the systemic issues within policing and how it has resulted in harm to the community and also acknowledge that there are numerous changes necessary to improve the relationship (or, as some call for, the abolition of policing). This dissertation highlights the need to turn to the communities affected

by police violence and to use their ideas to form the basis of change. As Participant 1 stated, they want their basic needs met and that every person has equal value. That is justice.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

This section highlights the main findings from the four guiding research questions used during the focus groups and one-on-one interviews. This chapter highlights the complexity of the relationship between the trans community and police, especially with the nuance of procedural justice and police legitimacy. As alluded to in Chapter 6, discussing procedural justice and legitimacy results, procedural justice has no impact on police legitimacy for the participants. Procedural justice theory examines authority, focusing on justice, legitimacy, cooperation, and compliance (Hough, 2013). Procedural justice principles involve more than police being nice to people; they require police respect, neutrality, trustworthiness, and voice (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). Legitimacy helps shape a person's acceptance of police authority (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). What separates the legitimacy of the obligation to accept police authority is the willingness to obey based on the legitimacy of the police (Tankebe, 2012). This means that participants who experienced positive interactions with police (procedural justice) still perceive the police as a threat to trans people and are, therefore, illegitimate. Poor procedural justice added to the issues that participants feel make the police illegitimate, even when that procedural justice is merely police presence.

The findings from the participant focus groups and interviews uncover a tense relationship between the trans community and the police. This relationship is fraught with harm, perceptions of violence, and a lack of trust and legitimacy in the institution of policing. The findings align with research, highlighting that trans people experience police harassment, both verbal and physical, denial of police services, fear surrounding police officers, and are less likely to have positive perceptions of police compared to cisgender people (Dwyer, 2011, 2014, 2015; Gauthier et al., 2021; Serpe & Nadal, 2017; Shields, 2021; Wolff & Cokely, 2007). According to

several participants, as discussed in Chapter 6, the relationship feels one-sided, and the police do not listen to them and their concerns. Research shows that trans people feel the police are incompetent, purposely avoid calling 911 for support, and do not expect fair treatment of cases involving violence (Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Schiem et al., 2023). They feel as though they are expressing concerns about police harassment and violence, but the police are focusing on the bare minimum, such as respecting pronouns. Again, police legitimacy goes beyond police being nice or respecting pronouns; it involves trust and legitimacy in the institution of policing, which aligns with fears over police violence, as research has shown that trans people face (Dwyer, 2011, 2014, 2015; Murphy & Tyler, 2017; Shields, 2021; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Wolff & Cokely, 2007). Participants also discussed the heightened fear they have when in police presence, especially in queer spaces (such as Pride, queer social groups at university) and often find themselves avoiding police to stay safe.

Additionally, police presence is seen to escalate violence and aggression, whether by the police officer themselves or their presence alone. In line with research, trans people avoid reporting gender-identity-related hate crimes, which stems from fears of experiencing secondary harassment and abuse by police after the call for help (Jauk, 2013; Gorton, 2011; Shields, 2021; Stotzer, 2009). Police officer harassment can include robbery, demanding sex in exchange for no arrest, groping, sexual comments, and verbal or physical abuse (Lanham et al., 2019).

Participants reflected on the history of policing when discussing reasons why the relationship is so complicated. They discuss the roots policing has in colonialism and harm to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of colour) communities. Police within the U.S. were created to maintain control of enslaved people (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Canadian police enforced laws designed to control and ultimately eliminate Indigenous peoples “through forced

assimilation, dislocation and deprivation," which resulted in the limited freedom of movement, gathering of Indigenous peoples, the criminalization of their culture and spiritual practices and the forcible removal of children from their families to place them in residential schools (Alberton et al., 2019; Comack, 2012; Monchalin, 2016; Razack, 2015; Nettelbeck & Smandych, 2010; TRC, 2015, as cited in David & Mitchell, 2021).

Many participants feel the best-proposed practice for police is to not engage with the trans community at all. They feel the police do not offer any protection and, therefore, do more harm and should steer clear of the community. Other participants feel there should be alternatives to policing or more police roles that do not require an armed officer and instead, involve community support. Engagement with the public should be low or be limited to specific roles, such as directing traffic. Finally, participants discussed self-protection for the trans community, that they can rely on each other for support and protection as opposed to turning to the police.

Participants explained that justice means treating people equally but sensitively to each person's unique circumstances. Justice is repair, but that repair depends on the person who experienced harm (meaning repair is not a blanket idea). They also feel justice requires the individual to be involved in the process and that police need to take hate crime concerns seriously and be accountable for their actions. Justice is also police understanding that sometimes their presence is not welcome and can be harmful to the community they are interacting with. Finally, participants expressed that justice is having one's basic needs met with dignity and respect.

The participants' experiences and perceptions of police reflect those of people of colour, as opposed to research examinations of gender. As discussed in the literature review, race and

ethnicity are significant factors when assessing police legitimacy. To racialized people, race and ethnicity are often perceived as the reason for an unfair police stop, and Black disadvantaged communities primarily have negative police interactions (Renauer & Covelli, 2011). Gender, however, tends to have no significant impact on legitimacy, as examined in multiple research studies (Allen & Monk-Turner, 2010; Tankebe, 2012; Van der Toorn et al., 2011). In this study, participants perceive their trans identity as the reason for poor police treatment. They deem the police institution as illegitimate, given the ongoing and historical harm towards the trans community because of their trans identities. They also acknowledge the role intersectionality has on their interaction with police, which includes their race, ethnicity, disability, and so forth. Overall, the findings of this study highlight the distrust that transgender people have with the police and that they perceive the institution of policing as illegitimate.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the sample size of the participants was small (14) and, therefore, could not be generalizable. The study had a selection bias of participants willing to discuss their experiences with police. Recruitment for this study was conducted with two community partners, and there may be a self-selection bias because participants active in their community may be willing to talk about police and are aware of the issues happening between police and trans folks. Finally, as the focus groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted through Google Meets, the sample was limited to participants who could access the Internet.

Focus group motivation is also a limitation of this study, as some participants may have felt nervous or embarrassed to share their experiences. However, research shows that focus group participants are more likely to self-disclose and share personal experiences, as they can

feel empowered and supported by others (Farquhar & Das, 2011). One-on-one interviews also posed a limitation to this study, as these were offered to participants who felt more comfortable discussing their experiences in a one-on-one environment. This interview style may result in a power dynamic issue between the researcher and participant (Farquhar & Das, 2011). Finally, due to my identity (white, cisgender, highly educated, researcher, for example), I acknowledge my insider/outsider status amongst the diverse, transgender participant population. My insider/outsider role may have allowed participants to feel more comfortable opening up to me as I am not a part of the community. However, it may have also impacted the experiences and perceptions of the police they shared. Given the limitations and implications of this study, future research should examine a broader participant pool on their experiences and perceptions of police and utilize different interview methodologies.

Contributions to Research: Possibilities, Empirical, Theoretical, and Praxis

This research is within the Canadian context, an understudied area concerning transgender studies. Given Canada's federal and provincial protections for trans people, the Canadian demographic is an interesting and vital place to examine the experiences of trans people. Canada is a liberal-leaning country, and therefore, trans people may be more connected to their community and informed about issues involving police. This study encourages researchers to examine transgender perspectives in Canada, as well as other understudied countries, with the hopes of garnering a global understanding of transgender people's lives.

Within police legitimacy research, few studies examine the impact of gender on legitimacy, with no known research (to date) conducted on the trans perspective. Most research examines gender within the cisgender binary (man/male, woman/female), showing no influence or minimal influence of gender on legitimacy (Madon et al., 2017; Miller & D'Souza, 2016; Van

der Toorn et al., 2011). Most studies are conducted within the U.S., with limited studies conducted internationally (April et al., 2023; Boehme et al., 2022; Dario et al., 2020; Gau, 2012; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009). This study is the first to examine Canadian trans perspectives on police legitimacy.

This doctoral research examines procedural justice through the lens of the trans perspective. This perspective helps draw our attention to the unique ways trans people think about themselves and how trans people think more broadly about justice and police authority. Trans people face unique vulnerabilities, and police need to frame their procedural justice policies based on trans people's experiences in order to help them feel respected, heard, and understood. This research also examined whether procedural justice can influence or change perceptions of police legitimacy. Ultimately, as examined within the results chapter, procedural justice cannot change police legitimacy, as many participants explained that a few "positive" encounters cannot undo years of harm the community has felt. There is still a need to assess perceptions and feelings towards police through the trans perspective. Additionally, there needs to be an examination of gender and legitimacy and to expand the understanding of gender beyond the binary. Through the transgender lens, procedural justice does not impact perceptions of police legitimacy.

Research conducted in this area should ask the trans community how justice can be achieved, as the community should indicate the foundation for work moving forward. Additionally, the trans community should also be asked about their experiences with police, procedural justice, and police legitimacy in order to shape the understanding of their experiences, how to ensure theoretical frameworks are appropriate, and inform current and future research in this area. Asking the community directly about what justice means to them and how the

relationship between the police and the trans community can improve ensures that any changes are rooted in their experiences. Finally, listening to their ideas about police abolishment and defunding the police can help form policy improvements, as well as shape how police listen and integrate trans people's perspectives.

It is essential to acknowledge that the relationship between the trans community and police is very complicated. As participants explained, they perceive the police as illegitimate, and the institution is not fixable. They feel the only way forward is to abolish policing altogether. The perspectives and experiences of trans-identified police officers may offer insight into how they navigate their identity alongside their careers. Answers on how to move forward or what recommendations made to the police may lie in positive experiences that trans people have had with police. As explained in the literature review, this is an under-researched area, and within this study, positive experiences with police were limited. There could be several reasons why this area is under-researched, including not wanting to undermine or shadow the negative experiences that trans people have. This may be an essential area to determine best practices for police and policy recommendations on how to begin repairing the relationship between the police and the trans community.

Policy recommendations come from the suggestions of participants (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). They recommend police abolishment or a restructuring of the entire policing institution. Additionally, restructuring should call on the Indigenous community, as they are "original stewards of the land" and "had systems in place that did not involve policing" (Participant 1, a white trans person). Transformative justice was another theme discussed by abolition-seeking participants, who discussed how harmful isolation, individuality, and armed forces are on citizens. Land sovereignty and listening to Indigenous voices was a major theme in

recommending achievable policy changes within policing. For those focused on immediate police reform, they discuss the importance of community policing and defunding. This means expanding on community-based outreach for police that do not involve police uniforms, as well as reallocating funding to help community organizations, resources, and social services.

This doctoral dissertation attempted to look at the experiences and perceptions of police by the transgender community. This research seeks to fill the research gaps, contributing to the Canadian context of police experiences, expanding research on gender and police legitimacy to examine transgender experiences, and utilizing transgender theory in combination with procedural justice theory for similar research. The results show that the community has distrust in the police, as well as views the institution of policing as illegitimate. The trans community should be involved in policies and practices aimed at them, including repairing the relationship between them and the police. This ensures that their voices are at the core of any policies created for them, as it is one step in the direction of repairing decades of harm felt by the trans community.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study

Title of Research Study: Transgender People's Experiences and Perceptions of Police
Name of Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Carla Cesaroni
PI's contact number(s)/email(s): carla.cesaroni@ontariotechu.ca; 905-721-8668
Names(s) of Co-Investigator(s), Faculty Supervisor, Student Lead(s), etc., and contact number(s)/email(s): Co-Investigator - Dr. Barbara Perry (Barbara.perry@ontariotechu.ca), Student Lead – Victoria Ginsley (victoria.ginsley@ontariotechu.net)
Departmental and institutional affiliation(s): Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ontario Tech University
External Funder/Sponsor: (if applicable)

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Transgender People's Experiences and Perceptions of Police". You are being asked to take part in a research study. Please read the information about the study presented in this form. The form includes details on study procedures, risks and benefits that you should know before you decide to participate. You should take as much time as you need to make your decision. You should ask the Principal Investigator (PI) or study team to explain anything that you do not understand and make sure that all of your questions have been answered before signing this consent form. Before you make your decision, feel free to talk about this study with anyone you wish including your friends and family. Participation in this study is voluntary.
This study has been reviewed by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (Ontario Tech University) Research Ethics Board #17238 on April 24, 2023.

Purpose and Procedure:

Purpose:
Transgender (or trans) people face disproportionate rates of hate crimes, including physical violence, verbal harassment, victimization by strangers or by someone they personally know (Gauthier, Medina & Dierkhising, 2021). Trans people often hesitate reporting their crimes to police, or avoid reporting altogether, over fears that police will not take their claims seriously, arrest them, face wrongful accusations and unwanted sexual advances (Gauthier et. Al., 2021; Hodge & Sexton, 2020). Trans people of colour are less likely to report, and black trans people are the least likely of all people of colour to report (Lee & Santiago, 2022). These findings are significant as trans people have more negative perceptions of police due to worries over fairness, accountability, community engagement and the general relationship with the broader LGBTQ2IA+ community (Owen et. Al., 2018).
The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences that transgender people have with police. The proposed study is to invite transgender people to focus groups that they will lead and have control over, to examine what questions and topics they feel are important for any future, long-term research involving trans individuals. The focus group will focus on the relationship between the transgender community and police, why the relationship is in its current state, and what they feel can be done about it. Ensuring trans individuals are at the forefront of research involving their community can ensure relevant information is being shared, as they are speaking from their lived-experience and as a community member. The focus groups will allow researchers to utilize information gathered to inform future research questions and interview guides regarding perceptions and experiences of police.
If you feel uncomfortable with the focus group format or prefer a private, one-on-one interview, please specify when contacting the Student Lead.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you identify as a trans person (trans is an umbrella term for those who identify as, and is not limited to, trans man, trans woman, non-binary, gender queer, a-gender and gender fluid), and have experiences with, or perceptions of, the police.
The researchers are not associated with, or staff at, the community organizations reaching out on my behalf. They have agreed to assist us in recruiting for participants and your relationship with these organizations will not be hindered or impacted in any way, should you choose to participate, not participate, or discontinue participation.
Procedures:

- As a trans person who has experiences with, or perceptions of, police, your perspective is very important and you are being asked to participate in a focus group.
- The focus group will be audio recorded, as well as transcribed, where you will be asked to share your thoughts on the relationship between the trans community and police, why you feel the relationship is in its current state, and what you believe can be done about healing this relationship.
- You will be asked your perspective on individual experiences or perceptions you have gained through lived-experiences or community experiences, and how future research can ensure that it respects the first person authority of trans individuals.
- The focus group will be approximately 1 hour and you will be contacted regarding various dates and times that suit your schedule.
- All focus groups will be happening over Google Meets and therefore do not require transportation or include potential exposure to Covid-19.
- Community resources will be provided to you within this consent form, at the beginning of the focus group, and researcher emails will be accessible should you require services after the focus group has ended.

Visit*	**Study procedure/tests/interventions**	**Duration of visit**
Visit 1	Focus Group	1 hour
Visit 2	Focus Group	1 hour
Visit 3	Focus Group	1 hour
Visit 4	Focus Group	1 hour
Visit 5	Focus Group	1 hour

*More focus groups may be scheduled dependent on the number of participants.

- The goal is to use the information gathered to understand the unique relationship between the trans community and police. This research will also make recommendations for future research in these areas to ensure trans-focused research is grounded in the voices of trans people. The information will also inform potential presentations that may help inform education or policy development.
- The minimum number of participants we hope to interview is 10, and there is no maximum as we will accommodate anyone wishing to participate in this study.

Potential Benefits:

- You will not directly experience benefits from this study. However, you may experience the indirect benefit of knowing your experiences and perceptions help understand the relationship between the trans community and police. These experiences and perceptions may inform future research that looks deeper into this issue, with goals of policy change and educational benefits.

Potential Risk or Discomforts:

- We anticipate no major risks associated with this research, but you may find discussing your experiences or perceptions with police stressful or upsetting in some circumstances.
- In light of that risk, we want to remind you that all aspects of the research are entirely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics you do not wish to talk about.
- If you do feel any strong feelings during or after the interview, please let the research team know right away by contacting them through the emails provided. We will discuss with you what steps to take, including taking a break, ending the interview and providing community resources. Some resources are listed below.
- Additionally, due to the online nature of the focus groups, participants can use background filters to obscure their location, as well as keep their cameras off to maintain anonymity. Participants may also keep their microphone muted and use the chat window for further anonymity.
- We will revisit this form and potential risks during the focus group should you choose to participate, and remind you that you are free to end your involvement (revoke your consent) at any time, including before, during or after the focus groups.
- Some potential risks relate to focus groups. As focus groups are not confidential, there may be social risks that can come from speaking up and sharing experiences (such as embarrassment or vulnerability). The research team has connected with multiple community organizations in order to ensure a safe and comfortable environment, including the set-up of focus groups and access to community resources. This risk will be re-assessed on the day of the focus group.

Community Resources:

- Trans Lifeline (24/7, toll-free phone support, trans-focused hotline run by trans volunteers)
  - 1 (877) 330-6366
- Gerstein Crisis Centre (24/7, toll-free phone support, in-person mobile crisis team in downtown Toronto, community support referrals, substance abuse support, short-term crisis beds in downtown Toronto)
  - https://gersteincentre.org; (416) 929-5200
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto (24/7 Mental Health Crisis Management Service, Toronto-based, for Aboriginal clients, based in Traditional practices)
  - https://aht.ca; (416) 891-8606
- Connex Ontario (Ontario-wide crisis information, toll-free phone and text support, mental health crisis support, substance abuse support)
  - www.connexontario.ca; 1 (866) 531-2600; Text CONNEX to 247247

Use and Storage of Data:

- The research will take great care in storing and using the information you provide to us.

- We will need to get your name and contact information so that we can get in touch to schedule your focus group date and time. Your name and contact information will not be attached to any of your interview materials (with the exception of your name on the consent form) and it will be stored in a separate password protected file. Your personal information will not be shared outside of the research team. Please note that your name will be attached to the consent form and no other identifying information will be attached to any interview materials. Your information will then be assigned a unique ID code to ensure that your participation in the focus groups is not directly

linked to your consent form, in order to maintain anonymity between yourself and the research team.

- Any paper research materials will be stored in a locked cabinet prior to being stored in a password protected electronic folder. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a password protected folder and will be deleted immediately upon transcription.

- All stored data will have any identifying information removed and assigned a non-identifying ID number. Your contact information will be stored separately from your focus group interview.

- We will be asking for some demographic and background information including your gender identity and experiences with the police.

- None of your raw information or personal details will be shared outside of the research team

- The transcripts of the focus groups will be stored for 1 year past the study period to allow time for analysis and re-analysis. After this time, all research data and personal information will be permanently deleted. Any physical data will be shredded, and all electronic data will be deleted from the hard drive.

- All information collected during this study, including your personal information, will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the study unless required by law. You will not be named in any reports, publications, presentations or future research that may come from this study.

Confidentiality:

- The focus groups are entirely confidential and your name and personal information will not be attached to any stored data or transcripts and no one will be notified about your participation in the study. Further, your identity or personal information will never be attached to any insights or quotes shared in any reports, presentations, or publications.

- To protect your confidentiality, any research information will only be marked with a unique ID number. This ID number will be matched to your personal information in a separate password protected document that will be stored separately from the research materials.

- Your privacy shall be respected. No information about your identity will be shared or published without your permission, unless required by law. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law, professional practice, and ethical codes of conduct. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data is in transit over the Internet.

- As mentioned, no identifying information about you will be shared in any report or presentation (including demographics), but it should be noted that because this research is specific to trans people's experiences with police, people reading a report or seeing a presentation might be able to guess you as a participant in the research.

- The focus group, however, is not confidential in that other focus group participants will know what was said. You should reflect on how much personal or sensitive information you are willing to share in light of that limitation on confidentiality.

- The main limit to confidentiality to be aware of relates to the legal obligation to report any reports of imminent harm to oneself or others.

- No identifying information will be shared outside of the institution

- Please note that communication via e-mail is not absolutely secure. Thus, please do not communicate personal sensitive information via e-mail.

Voluntary Participation:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may partake in only those aspects of the study in which you feel comfortable. You may also decide not to be in this study, or to be in the study now, and then change your mind later. You may leave the study at any time without affecting your relationship with service providers or relationship with police. You will be given information that is relevant to your decision to continue or withdraw from participation. You may refuse to answer any question(s) you do not want to answer, or not answer an interview question by saying, 'pass'.

Right to Withdraw:

- You will be given information that is relevant to your decision to continue or withdraw from participation.

- If you withdraw from the research project at any time, you can request that any information you contributed will be removed from the study and you do not need to offer any reason for making this request.

- You will be able to withdraw your information from the study until November 30, 2023 by providing the Student Lead with your unique ID code. The Student Lead's email will be provided. Your unique ID code will be attached to your focus group interview (the ID code will replace your name to ensure further anonymity) as well as attached to any interview materials (with the exception of the consent form, which will not include your unique ID code to ensure your name and ID code are not connected). All material containing your unique ID code will be deleted should you wish to withdraw your information.

Conflict of Interest:

- Researchers have an interest in completing this study. Their interests should not influence your decision to participate in this study.

Compensation, Reimbursement, Incentives:

- You will receive a $20 honorarium electronic gift-card for participating in the focus group.

- If you withdraw before, during or after the focus groups, you will still receive the honorarium for your participation.

Debriefing and Dissemination of Results:

The aggregated results from this study may be shared in reports, presentations or research. As noted, no identifying or personal information will be included in future reports, presentations or research. If you would like a copy of any reports or presentations or to view them in advance, please let the researcher know and we will keep you updated. We will store your contact information until September 30, 2023 for this purpose. This information will be stored separately from any research data.

Participant Rights and Concerns:

Please read this consent form carefully and feel free to ask the researcher any questions that you might have about the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, complaints, or adverse events, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 721-8668 ext. 3693 or at researchethics@ontariotechu.ca.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or experience any discomfort related to the study, please contact the researcher Victoria Ginsley at Victoria.ginsley@ontariotechu.net.

By signing this form you do not give up any of your legal rights against the investigators, sponsor or involved institutions for compensation, nor does this form relieve the investigators, sponsor or involved institutions of their legal and professional responsibilities.

Please note that communication via e-mail is not absolutely secure. Thus, please do not communicate personal sensitive information via e-mail.

Consent to Participate:

1. I have read the consent form and understand the study being described.
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I am free to ask questions about the study in the future.
3. I freely consent to participate in the research study, understanding that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. A copy of this Consent Form has been made available to me.

   ☐ I agree

Appendix B: Focus Group Guide

Focus Group Guide

The following questions will act as a topic guide. They are directly related to my research questions. They will be used to loosely structure the focus group. However, as cited in trans theory (which forms the theoretical basis of the dissertation), the research questions and discussion should be largely directed by the participants themselves. Trans theory states that trans people should speak for themselves about themselves, and therefore I will insert myself as little as possible in the discussion in order to respect their First Person Authority.

Focus Group Questions:

What does the relationship between the trans community and police look like according to the trans community?

Why do trans individuals believe the relationship is the way that it is?

According to the trans community, what are the proposed best practices for police engagement with the trans community?

What is justice to you, and how can police reflect that back to you?

Focus Group Preamble:

Thank you for your participation in this research. My name is Victoria Ginsley, the PhD student lead for this research and I will be running the focus group today. You will be asked prompt questions that will guide our discussion about your experiences with the police. I want to reiterate again that you have the right to withdraw your consent in this participation at any time, including during this focus group at any time, or afterwards up until the deadline of November 30, 2023. As focus groups are not confidential, there may be social risks that can come from speaking up and sharing experiences (such as embarrassment or vulnerability). Due to the nature of focus groups, you may not feel comfortable sharing your name, your identity, or your voice with the group. You can use background filters to obscure your location, turn off your camera to obscure your identity, as well as mute your microphone and use the chat box to further your anonymity.

I anticipate no major risks associated with this research, but you may find discussing your experiences or perceptions with police stressful or upsetting in some circumstances. If you do feel any strong feelings during the interview, please let me know immediately. You can use the private chat option should you wish. Should you experience strong feelings after the interview, please let the research team know right away by contacting them through the emails provided. We will discuss with you what steps to take, including taking a break, ending the interview and providing community resources. Some resources are listed in the chat window.

- Trans Lifeline (24/7, toll-free phone support, trans-focused hotline run by trans volunteers)
    - 1 (877) 330-6366

- Gerstein Crisis Centre (24/7, toll-free phone support, in-person mobile crisis team in downtown Toronto, community support referrals, substance abuse support, short-term crisis beds in downtown Toronto)
    - https://gersteincentre.org; (416) 929-5200
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto (24/7 Mental Health Crisis Management Service, Toronto-based, for Aboriginal clients, based in Traditional practices)
    - https://aht.ca; (416) 891-8606
- Connex Ontario (Ontario-wide crisis information, toll-free phone and text support, mental health crisis support, substance abuse support)
    - www.connexontario.ca; 1 (866) 531-2600; Text CONNEX to 247247

Please refer to your consent form for any additional information regarding your right to withdrawal, use and storage of data, and other important factors. Should you have any questions about anything you see in your consent form or hear during this interview, please contact me by using the chat box privately, or my email provided (which has been included in this chat, and can be found on the consent form).

I will begin by prompting the group with one of the research questions. There are three in total to encourage discussion. Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C: Email Recruitment

Email Recruitment Script

My name is Victoria Ginsley and I am currently a PhD student at Ontario Tech University. I am reaching out for volunteers to participate in focus groups regarding trans individuals experiences and perceptions with police for my PhD dissertation. I want to ensure my dissertation is being framed from the standpoint of trans people, based on their expertise and lived experiences. I will use the information gathered in these focus groups to inform my dissertation, as well as provide the foundation for any future research in this area.

I have extensive volunteer history with LGBTQ+ organizations, as well as almost a decade as a Youth Justice Committee volunteer. I believe that community engagement is an integral component to my research. I am not associated with, or staff at, the community organizations reaching out on my behalf. They have agreed to assist me in recruiting for participants and your relationship with these organizations will not be hindered or impacted in any way, should you choose to participate, not participate, or discontinue participation.

You will be asked to sign a consent form to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you will be reimbursed for your time. Each step of the focus group process will be explained to you and you may choose to withdraw your consent at any time, with no consequence. The focus groups will run for approximately 1 hour.

"This study has been reviewed by the Ontario Tech University Research Ethics Board (REB # 17238) on April 24, 2023."

Please contact the Student Lead Victoria Ginsley directly should you wish to participate.

Victoria.ginsley@ontariotechu.net

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Victoria

Appendix D: Focus Group and Interview Debrief Script

Debrief Script

Thank you for talking with me today.

There were several topics that we discussed that you may have found upsetting or made you feel uncomfortable. How are you feeling right now? Do you feel that you are ok to leave the focus group? The community resource list has been included in the chat window should you wish to use those resources now, or after the focus group interview has ended. You can find a copy of these resources within your consent form as well. Should you wish to speak privately, I am available to do so, and you may feel free to contact me privately through the chat. I am happy to help you deal with any emotions you may be experiencing, or helping you contact any community resource should you feel distress.

Appendix E: Social Media Graphic

Call for Participants!

If you are transgender, gender queer or non-binary, we welcome you to participate in a study examining your experiences and perceptions of police.

See details below.
Please click on graphic to enlarge.

My name is Victoria Ginsley and I am currently a PhD student at Ontario Tech University. I am reaching out regarding volunteers for focus groups regarding trans individuals experiences and perceptions with police for my PhD dissertation. I want to ensure my dissertation is being framed from the standpoint of trans people, based on their expertise and lived experiences.

You will be asked to sign a consent form to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you will be reimbursed for your time. Each step of the focus group process will be explained to you and you may choose to withdraw your consent at any time, with no consequence. Please contact the Student Lead Victoria Ginsley directly should you wish to participate.

victoria.ginsley@ontariotechu.net

This study has been reviewed by the Ontario Tech University Research Ethics Board (REB # 17238) on [date]."