CITIZENS AND THE POLICE: ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND RACE

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Carolyn Barnes, candidate for the degree of Master of Arts, has presented a thesis titled Citizens and the Police: Attitudes, Perceptions, and Race, in an oral examination held on March 26, 2007. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this study were to construct an empirically sound tool that can be used to gain insight into the factors that contribute to community evaluation of the police service, and then to apply this tool in a community setting. In response to a scarcity of sound empirical research on attitudes toward the police, a scale was constructed and validated for the specific context of examining cross-race differences in perceptions. In order to investigate these attitudes, several variables were assessed, including fear of crime, negative police contact (personal and vicarious), ethnic identity, authoritarianism, and demographic information.

The survey tool constructed for the purpose of this study was administered to an urban community sample in Saskatchewan. There was a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward police across race, with Aboriginal respondents demonstrating more negative attitudes than the White sample. This finding does not, however, indicate a direct relationship between race and attitudes as a number of significant other factors were identified in the study. Statistically, the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police was negative police contact for Aboriginal and White participants. Much of the previous research on group differences in attitudes toward the police focuses on categorical variables such as an individual's self-identified race. The findings of this study, however, enforce the view that it is not just an individual's skin colour that predicts their attitudes towards the police. In fact, attitudes are shaped by experiences, personality variables, and socio-economic background. Importantly, this study adds to the literature on factors that predict attitudes toward police within an ethnic

group that has received little attention from researchers despite a troubled relationship with the police.

Aboriginal people are substantially more authoritarian than the White people surveyed. This is significant because previous literature shows that more authoritarian individuals typically show more support of formal authorities such as police (Altemeyer, 1996; Larsen, 1968). There is no literature on Canadian Aboriginal people and authoritarianism, and so the scale used has not been validated previously with this group.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Although many researchers have assessed citizens' attitudes toward the police (e.g., Auger, Doob, Auger, & Driben, 1992; Chow, 2002; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004), there are few researchers who have conducted surveys about perceptions of experiences that people have with the police. Like most of the research on policing, very little of this work is conducted in Canada, and very little of it examines what influences positive or negative perceptions of police.

The increasing diversity in the ethnic and cultural composition of the North American population poses challenges for police services (Holmes, 1998; Perrott, 1999; Riley, 2002). Conflict between the police service and ethnic minority groups is a major concern (Davis & Miller, 2002; Holmes, 1998), especially following high-profile incidents of negative police contact. In the United States, protests and even violence followed the beating of Rodney King (Lasley, 1994). Examining the rapport between the police service and ethnic minority groups is important because if the relationship is understood, it can be improved, enhancing police legitimacy and their control of crime.

Overwhelmingly, minority group members believe they experience more police contact (Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2005, Viki, Culmer, Eller, & Abrams, 2006), perceive more negative behaviour on the part of police (Reisig & Parks, 2000; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004), and express more negative attitudes toward the police (Eschholz, Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Reisig & Parks, 2000) than White people. Most of the research in the area of conflict and mistrust between police and citizens has been conducted in the

United States, where the largest of the minority groups are African-American and Hispanic citizens. The historical and political contexts are different in Canada as are the minority groups. One reason that Aboriginal Canadians are different from African-Americans and Hispanic Americans is because they lived in North America long before White people colonised it. With colonisation, Aboriginal Canadians were dispossessed of land and even culture. Other researchers speculate that for Aboriginal people, the police are seen as enforcers of a colonial system that oppresses them (cf. Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001). Of particular interest in this proposed study is the perspective that Aboriginal Canadians (i.e., Status and Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit people) have on the Saskatchewan police services. The components of this perspective that were examined include attitudes toward police, fear of crime, and experiences with police. All of these factors have been established previously as predictors of attitudes toward the police. Two psychological factors were examined: ethnic identity and authoritarianism. There is no substantial research on the relationship between these psychological variables and attitudes toward the police. All factors were investigated from the perspectives of White and Aboriginal Canadians to determine whether there are differences in the perceptions of these two groups.

1.2 Overview of Research on Attitudes toward the Police

There is an abundance of research on attitudes toward the police, and interest is growing as police services face critical issues on their treatment of visible minority group members (Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2005). Overall, people tend to evaluate the police in a favourable light (e.g., Amoroso & Ware, 1983; Chow, 2002; Normandeau & Leighton,

1990), but upon closer examination, there are divisions of opinion across specific demographic, experiential, and psychological variables.

1.2.1 Demographic Variables

The majority of the population support the work that police do (Amoroso & Ware, 1983; Chow, 2002). However, minority attitudes toward police are more negative than those of their White counterparts in Canada (Auger, Doob, Auger, & Driben, 1992) and in the United States (Davis & Miller, 2002; Scaglion & Condon, 1980). Across North America, relations between ethnic minority communities and the police have been tense and strained (Davis & Miller, 2002; Perrott, 1999; Rigby & Black, 1993).

Classifying by race is a common way for social sciences researchers to categorise their participant samples for comparison purposes. Race has been used as a categorical variable in a great deal of the research on attitudes toward the police (e.g., Orr & West, 2007; Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2005; Sullivan, Dunham & Alpert, 1987). However, classifying participants by race is a contentious issue. Helms, Jernigan and Mascher (2005) argue that *race* is conceptually meaningless, and go so far as to assert that this categorisation by researchers perpetuates stereotypes and social problems.

In the current study, participants were sampled only from White and Aboriginal groups. They were asked to identify their ethnicity using a portion of Phinney's (1992) ethnic identity scale. The use of ethnic identity as an independent variable has been suggested as a substitute for *race* because it encompasses more concepts that simply the colour of ones' skin. Taking this into consideration, in the present study people were classified according to their self-identified ethnicity (e.g., Asian, Aboriginal, Caucasian, etc.) and also their strength of ethnic identity was evaluated as well. The term *White* is

used in this thesis to describe the dominant demographic group in Canada. It has been used by other researchers in the same manner (e.g., Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Dixon & Linz, 2000; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). These issues notwithstanding, I am using this contested term in the current study because I am relying on self-identification by physical appearance.

Race is the most consistent predictor of negative attitudes toward police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Davis & Miller, 2002; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). White people tend to express more positive evaluations of the police, to be more sceptical of criticisms of the police, and to prefer more aggressive tactics of law enforcement (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Many White Americans view Black Americans as being particularly prone to violent or criminal behaviour, and therefore support more aggressive crime-fighting strategies that serve to control individuals of that ethnic group (Weitzer, 2000a). Conversely, Black and other American minority groups are more likely to favour stronger controls on the police service. Weitzer and Tuch (2004) argue these attitudes arise from minority group members being more likely to view negative police contact as a serious problem that is a result of antagonism against them specifically. The police are one of the most visible forms of societal control, especially for people who view themselves as victims of the justice system. These people may hold the opinion that the role of the police is to maintain the status quo for the White elite (Baker, 2006).

Very few of the studies examining attitudes toward police held by minority group members have been Canadian. Chow (2002) was the first to assess attitudes of Chinese residents toward police in Toronto, Ontario. A random sample of 402 Chinese-Canadians in the Toronto area completed a survey (by mail or phone) where they were asked to

express their views on police use of power for search, arrest, and questioning, police use of physical force, treatment of visible minorities, and police services. Overall, participants had only slightly positive perceptions of police, with 15.4% of the respondents reporting recent experiences with police that were either negative or very negative, and 8.3% reporting police mistreatment.

One researcher demonstrated that there was decreased public support and confidence in the police after the much-publicized police beating of Rodney King in 1991. Following this event, Lasley (1994) surveyed African-American residents of inner city South Central Los Angeles on their attitudes toward police. Surveys on citizen attitudes toward the police in those neighbourhoods had been collected shortly before the King incident for the purpose of gathering opinions and reactions to a new community-based policing program. Overall, regardless of race, sex, or age, attitudes toward the police were more negative following the event. Not surprisingly, African-American people reported stronger and more enduring negative attitudes toward the police, given that King was also African-American.

Lasley's (1994) study, however, had one major limitation that could result in misinterpretation of the findings. Citizens were polled before and after the critical event (e.g., the King beating) but the researcher did not inquire about the factors contributing to the change in attitudes. Lasley speculates that the drop in support for the police was an outcome of learning of the event, but this question was not posed to the respondents. The findings are certainly still relevant to the study of attitudes toward the police, but it cannot be assumed that the negative attitudes of the population surveyed in the Lasley study are based on the Rodney King incident. This study is an example of many studies that assesses attitudes of minority group members without investigating what shapes these attitudes.

Police relations with Aboriginal groups are an issue of global concern (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001). Aboriginal people are massively over-represented in every stage of the criminal justice system, and have additionally been shown to hold a deep mistrust of government agencies (Day, Giles, Marshall, & Sanderson, 2004; Riley, 2002). Aboriginal people in countries that have experienced colonisation face long-standing patterns of discrimination on the part of these systems (Riley, 2002). In Canada, Aboriginal people move from reserves into cities where there is better employment and improved social and economic conditions. The province of Saskatchewan has had the largest off-reserve migration in the country. One consequence of this mass relocation is the development of *ghetto-like* conditions in many city cores with problems mirroring those found on reserves. The poor living conditions of these neighbourhoods bring with them high rates of crime, violence, and conflict with the police (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001).

In the context of Saskatchewan, there has been only one empirical study on the attitudes toward police of a visible minority group. Samuelson and Strelioff (2001) compared urban Aboriginal residents from Canada and Australia on their attitudes toward, perceptions of, and experiences with the police services in their city. It was discovered that relations are mostly negative, and, overall, the Aboriginal community was dissatisfied with the service provided by the police. Among the Canadian sample (from a mid-sized Saskatchewan city), 52% reported being in trouble with the police, 33% experienced physical or verbal abuse from the police, and 15% reported being abusive towards police (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001). The numbers were similar for the Australian sample, but were slightly lower for reporting trouble and abuse. Clearly, more research needs to be conducted on this topic so that the relationship between Aboriginal

people and the police can be improved. Specifically, it should be investigated whether attitudes vary by race, and what factors contribute to perceptions and opinions of police. It would have been useful if the study had been followed by a comparison of the attitudes of White people in the same city.

One Australian study relevant to this topic did compare the attitudes of White and Aboriginal people towards the police. This particular project endeavoured to link adolescent attitudes toward the police to attitudes toward authorities (e.g., parents, the law, and teachers) in general (Rigby & Black, 1993). After interviewing children of Aboriginal background, it was discovered that attitudes toward the police and other authorities were not negative as a whole, but were less positive than those expressed by non-Aboriginal youth. In this study, police were highly visible in the areas where there was a concentration of Aboriginal people, and conflict between the Aboriginal people and the police was common. A number of the youth in this study had witnessed such conflict themselves or received the information second-hand from peers or relatives. This demonstrates that at least in part these attitudes are shaped by contact with police.

When studies are designed to evaluate perceptions of the police, it has seldom been asked whether attitudes differ based on the race of the officer. By not differentiating between attitudes toward White and visible minority police officers, respondents may base their responses upon the *prototypical* police officer (i.e., a white male), and these responses may not be representative of attitudes toward police officers who are members of a visible minority group (Frank, Brandl, Cullen, & Stichman, 1996). Currently, no studies with Aboriginal Canadians have assessed whether attitudes toward police differ depending on the race of the officer, and we do not know whether attitudes are influenced

in a positive or negative way by police officers' race. This information could prove quite valuable to Canadian recruitment officers if it is shown that a difference exists, as it could affect how police services deploy their officers to represent the ethnicity of the neighbourhood they are assigned to.

One investigation of attitudes toward police officers by race was a study conducted in Washington, D.C., by Weitzer (2000b). This researcher found that in middle-class neighbourhoods (one primarily White and one primarily Black), residents believed there was no difference in behaviour between White and Black police officers. The majority of the poorer neighbourhoods, however, believed police officer behaviour was different between the races. This lower SES (and mostly Black) neighbourhood had more positive attitudes toward Black police officers than White officers. The results of this study illustrate the importance of sampling from residents of different levels of socio-economic status, because although minority citizens tend to have lower opinions of police, this finding is not necessarily consistent across levels of SES.

Chandek (1999) surveyed individuals who had been victimised to determine whether officer race and expectations of police behaviour had an effect on how police are evaluated. The researcher expected to find that contact with an officer of the same race as the victim would be more satisfying than contact with an officer of a different race. However, the race of the officer contacted had no effect on satisfaction with police performance. Evaluations of the police were affected instead by expectations of conduct. Interestingly, minority participants had higher expectations of police officer performance than White participants. The author does not explain why expectations from minority participants would be higher, but does mention that this finding contradicts the assertion

that minority group members have lower expectations of the police. For the present study, it was proposed that what mattered more for the evaluation than race was how the officer treated the victim and whether the police fulfilled the victim's expectations of service.

Asides from race, several other demographic factors have surfaced as important predictors of attitudes toward police. Two of the most consistent factors are neighbourhood context (Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Williams & Nofziger, 2003), and socio-economic status (Thomas & Hyman, 1977; Weitzer & Tuch, 1999). Sampson (1986) reports that residents in poorer neighbourhoods tend to have more contact with the police because they have a more active street life. A lack of financial resources often limits the mobility of residents of these neighbourhoods who may not own cars.

Research on sex differences in attitudes toward police has provided varied results (Rigby, 1989). A number of studies completed in the United States (Amoroso & Ware, 1986) and Australia (Rigby & Rump, 1981; Rigby, Schofield, & Slee, 1987) have shown no differences between male and female citizens' attitudes toward police. Numerous other studies have reported more favourable attitudes on the part of female respondents (Amoroso & Ware, 1981, 1983; Brandt & Markus, 2000; Emler & Reicher, 1987; Griffiths, 1982; Williams & Nofziger, 2003). These results are consistent across race, and are more recent than the results that showed no sex difference. Finding a sex difference in attitudes toward police is logical because males tend to have more exposure to police as offenders (Eschholz et al., 2002), making them more likely to have negative contact with police than females.

The length of time as a community resident also affects attitudes toward police; newer residents tend to show more negative attitudes toward police (Chow, 2002; Torres & Vogel, 2001). A lack of understanding of the justice system as well as possible language barriers impede the formation of harmonious relations between new residents and the police (Chow, 2002). The length of time spent as citizens of the community could potentially affect attitudes toward police if the respondent emigrated from a non-urban environment, for example, a small rural community or a reserve. In a non-urban environment, there is likely to be less crime and fewer police officers.

Recent studies show that adolescents do not have positive attitudes toward the police (Chow, 2002; Williams & Nofziger, 2003), and that these attitudes are more negative than attitudes toward other authority figures (Levy, 2001). Rosenbaum et al. (2005) discovered that citizens' initial views of the police shape how they judge actual contact with them. These initial views also shape their future attitudes toward police. This is one reason why it is important to analyse the relationship between young people and the police-interactions they have at a younger age.

1.2.2 Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is a construct that represents the degree to which a person feels they are psychologically connected to their ethnic group, and includes not just racial identity, but also a shared language, world view, and set of behaviours that are specific to a particular cultural background (McMahon & Watts, 2002). Membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group has the potential to affect attitudes toward police (Williams & Nofziger, 2003). However, there is a lack of empirical research into this topic. Previous research has demonstrated that a stronger ethnic identity is predictive of several other

variables including lower aggression (McMahon & Watts, 2002), more negative perceptions of the university environment (e.g., perceptions of discrimination within the institution; Castillo et al., 2006), better quality of life (Utsey et al., 2002), high self-esteem, and low marital and family stress (Basurto, 1996). These findings indicate that there is a relationship between our ethnic identity, personalities and perceptions.

There have been no studies that have looked at the association between ethnic identity and attitudes toward police among Aboriginal Canadians. It is worthwhile to include this variable in a study of Aboriginal people's attitudes toward the police because culture and race play a role in our perceptions of other people, and most Canadian police officers are White (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001). Corenblum and Stephan (2001) found that stronger ethnic identity among Native Canadians was associated with the perception of increased threat to the group. These researchers found that more negative attitudes toward White people in general were predicted by two factors. These factors were a strong sense of group identity and an increased level of contact with White people. It is possible that these findings could be analogous to the citizen-police context, and ethnic identity and police contact will affect attitudes toward the police particularly if negative interactions are seen as a threat to the group.

1.2.3 Fear of Crime

Fear of crime also affects attitudes toward police. Fear of crime is "a negative emotional reaction to crime or symbols associated with crime" (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987, p. 72). Fear of crime is a complex issue involving perceptual and cognitive processes, as well as emotional and behavioural responses on an individual or societal level. Some alertness and apprehension about crime is positive because people respond

by making themselves less vulnerable to victimization. Too much fear, however, can have negative effects on a person's emotional health and well-being. For elderly people, who typically are less mobile and suffer more health problems than younger people, fear of crime can result in feelings of helplessness and isolation (Hale, 1996).

Citizens' attitudes toward the police are connected to how safe they feel in their community. Williams and Nofziger (2003) found evidence of this in a college sample; independent of age and degree of personal contact with police, college students had less trust in the police than the general population. These students were also more than twice as likely to report feeling unsafe in the community. Williams and Nofziger propose that membership in the college community has a social influence upon the attitudes and perceptions of the students toward the police, differentiating their views from those of the general public. The relationship between fear of crime and attitudes toward the police is such that citizens tend to blame the police for not controlling crime in their neighbourhood (Williams, 1999). Fear is a rational response for community members who are afraid of being victimized (Baumer, 1985), so it is not surprising that perceptions of police are more negative in neighbourhoods perceived as unsafe (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

The complexity of this topic is illustrated by the challenges that researchers have faced in operationalising *fear of crime* and creating a scale to accurately measure it as a concept. In this study, fear is conceptualised as the affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses to a stimulus, as recommend in a literature review conducted by Hale (1996). The stimulus for this fear is the likelihood of being victimised. Researchers have examined fear of crime quantitatively to try and explain the discrepancy between

perceived and actual crime rates (Hale, 1996). This information could be valuable to police services if it could be discovered why residents assume increases in crime rates and crime severity in the community when increases are not supported by statistics. These assumptions could be based upon perceptual biases such as the availability heuristic rather than based on objective facts and statistics.

Ho and McKean (2004) examined the relationship between confidence in the police and perceptions of neighbourhood crime risk. Respondents' age and race were good predictors of confidence in the police, as White people and older adults had more positive attitudes toward the police. Neighbourhood crime risk was predicted by respondents' decreased education level and household income, and their evaluation of contact with the police (as a victim or a witness). Confidence in the police and crime risk were correlated negatively, lending support to the notion that people who believe their neighbourhoods are safer also have more trust in the performance of their police service.

People who are confident in the police feel safer than those that are not confident in the police. Nofziger and Williams (2005) discovered that participants in a rural sample had increased confidence in police when they perceived crime levels had decreased in their community. Although it is not possible to say that feelings of safety caused increased satisfaction with the police, this study does give further evidence of the relationship between the two variables.

1.2.4 Police contact

Experiences with the police, personal or vicarious, positive or negative, have been shown to affect citizens' perceptions of the police service (Auger, Doob, Auger, & Driben, 1992; Davis & Miller, 2002; MacDonald, 1997). In order to improve relations

between the police and minority groups, both groups should work to build trust. Increasing contact, however, also increases the likelihood that negative experiences will occur, and negative contact affects attitudes toward police more strongly (in the negative direction) than positive contact (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004).

Minority group members, especially African-Americans in the United States, are the most vocal opponents of police. This group experiences more negative police contact and asserts that it is a result of racial discrimination (Kerstetter, Rasinski, & Heiert, 1996). It has been proposed that because of racial profiling in police practices, minority group members are more likely than non-minority group members to have contact with the police for questioning (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999). It may be because of this increased contact that Black peoples' attitudes toward police in the United States are affected more strongly and are more enduring than those of White people (Tyler & Huo, 2002). If negative contact with the police is seen as racially stimulated, this may fuel confrontations between police and citizens, leading to more frequent and more severe conflict, deepening the distrust of the police service (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005).

Weitzer and Tuch (2004) examined the views of three ethnic groups in the United States (i.e., White, Black and Hispanic) on their experiences with verbal abuse, excessive force (i.e., police brutality), unwarranted stops, and corruption. Race (visible minority as opposed to White) was the strongest predictor of perceptions of police behaviour, followed by negative experiences with police, increased exposure to mass media coverage of police conduct, and poor neighbourhood conditions such as prevalent rates of crime and low levels of income.

Holmes (1998) examined perceptions of abusive police practices in several neighbourhoods in El Paso Texas, known to be one of the poorest cities in the United States. Data were collected from White and Hispanic people. Researchers questioned the participants on whether they had ever seen the El Paso Police use vulgar or offensive language, conduct an unwarranted search, use unnecessary force during an arrest, or strike a suspect who was in custody. The researchers measured the degree to which respondents perceived they had been exposed to police misconduct. Respondents' perceptions of how much police brutality occurs in El Paso were assessed. Holmes discovered that younger residents, males, Hispanic people, and those living in the poorer, less safe neighbourhoods were exposed more than others to perceived police misconduct. Both White and Hispanic people living in the poorer areas perceived a higher frequency of police misconduct than White people living in more affluent areas. Hispanic respondents, however, reported no difference in perceived frequency of police misconduct regardless of the area of the city lived in.

Positive direct experiences with the police do not always result in positive attitudes toward the police (Leiber, Nalla, & Farnsworth, 1998). In one study, positive personal experience with police was found to have different effects on attitudes toward police of citizens of different races. Positive contact improved the attitudes of White people, but worsened the attitudes of African-Americans (Hurst, Frank, & Browning, 2000). The authors do not explain why positive attitudes worsened the attitudes of the African-Americans sampled, but this finding implies that there are other possible factors affecting attitudes, such as expectations and previous judgements. It is also possible that positive encounters are considered patronising, and thus evaluated negatively. If people

are more cynical towards the police, it may not matter if their experiences with them are positive. One or a few positive encounters may be seen as exceptions to the norm for police behaviour. In a similar study (Williams & Nofziger, 2003), young White adults had improved evaluations of police after positive experiences. Positive evaluations of police contact did not mitigate the negative perceptions held by young Black adults.

The majority of people do not have any personal contact with the police, but vicarious experiences (e.g., events seen or heard about) can also have a profound effect on how people view the police (Hurst, McDermott, & Thomas, 2005; Murty, Roebuck & Smith, 1990). In a study examining the attitudes toward police using juvenile girls (i.e., grades 9-12), several demographic and experiential factors were determined to predict attitudes toward police (police contact, race, age, rate of victimization, fear of crime), but the strongest predictor of negative perceptions was vicarious negative experiences with the police (Hurst et al., 2005).

1.2.5 Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is a personality variable that is related to attitudes toward authority (Rigby & Rump, 1982). Right-wing authoritarianism is a construct developed by Altemeyer (1981). *Conventionalism* is a strong adherence to rules and norms put forth by established authorities. *Authoritarian aggression* is the expression of aggressive attitudes towards groups or individuals that are rejected or disliked by authorities. *Authoritarian submission* is characterized by submissive and unquestioning behaviour and thoughts directed towards authority figures (Altemeyer, 1996).

There is remarkably little research on the relationship between authoritarianism and attitudes toward the police. One early study conducted in Australia (Larsen, 1968)

demonstrates a substantial positive correlation between these variables. These results should be interpreted with caution, however, considering that the only group sampled was university students, and the only demographic variable examined was sex. According to the author, this strong relationship occurs because individuals who are highly authoritarian perceive more numerous and greater severity of threats than people who are less authoritarian. The police may be seen as protectors from these threats, and so people with authoritarian personalities support the police service. Support for the police may also be related to the authoritarians' submission to established authority.

Rigby and Rump (1982) found a relationship between attitudes toward authority (e.g., police, teachers, law) and authoritarian personality variables (e.g., dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, cognitive simplicity), with an interfactor correlation of .41. Data were collected from Australian University students using a battery of tests that evaluated these variables. In this study, race and sex were not examined as variables that could affect attitudes toward authority. Because the sample contained only University students, results from this study should be interpreted with some caution in terms of generalisability.

1.3 Research Problems and Purpose

Currently there is no contextually relevant tool available to measure the attitudes toward police of Aboriginal Canadians. Of the scales available to measure these attitudes, most come from the U.S. and concentrate on a single variable for the purpose of evaluation. This single variable is most often trustworthiness (Urschel-Farley, 1994). Studies on attitudes toward the police typically try to link these attitudes to demographic variables such as race, age, and gender, without examining a broader range of variables,

such as personality and experiential factors. In order to understand how people view the police and feel about them, the first goal of this study was to develop a multidimensional tool to measure these constructs.

This tool was then used to evaluate the attitudes of a community sample of Saskatchewan residents. As mentioned previously, there is very little empirical research on Aboriginal Canadians and how they view the police. Considering their over-representation in the criminal justice system (La prairie, 1992; Ross, 1998), this is an important issue and a relationship that must be examined more closely.

1.4 Relevant Theories

Social identity theory is a social psychological theory that rationalises how group processes, membership, and relations all play a role in our self-concept (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Our social identity shapes how we view ourselves and how we present ourselves to others. According to this theory, people who belong to a certain group will identify with other members of that group and will define themselves using the same attributes held by other group members.

According to social identity theory, negative group evaluations result from the motivation to assess out-groups in a less positive way relative to one's in-group. This reaction functions to enhance self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this way, the racial difference between the Saskatchewan police and Aboriginal people may serve to distinguish them from each other to the point where Aboriginal people evaluate the police negatively.

As Aboriginal Canadians see themselves as different from the majority White population, the predominantly White police officers also see themselves as different from

minority groups (Davis & Miller, 2002; Holmes, 1998). One reason for this perception of differences between the police and minority groups could be status and power differentials, leading to mistrust and hostility (Vrij, Winkel & Willien, 1991). Based on the research with Aboriginal Canadians by Corenblum and Stephan (2001), stronger ethnic identity is predictive of more negative out-group attitudes because when people see themselves as more like their group, they perceive the other groups as more different, and consequently have more negative attitudes towards them (i.e., the more one identifies with their own ethnic group, the more negative attitudes they have for the out group).

In this situation, social identity theory is difficult to test because race is not the only group category. Individuals may categorise themselves as *non-police* and the police would be an outgroup regardless of race differences. Social identity theory has been used previously to explain differences in attitudes toward the police (see Molloy, 2004). However, it is difficult to determine whether the theory applies to differences across race without also investigating other factors. One other issue that would be relevant in this further investigation is whether attitudes toward the other race are negative or positive for group members other than police officers.

Another theory that could explain citizen perceptions of the police is the *contact hypothesis*. First presented by Allport (1954), the contact hypothesis explains how intergroup contact serves to shape intergroup relationships. How does contact hypothesis theory provide a theoretical basis for this research? In order for intergroup conflict to be reduced, four conditions must be met: equal status, shared goals, cooperation between groups, and support of authorities involved. In the context of police-community relations, status is not equal because the police are a form of authority. For minority citizens, status

is often lower because of the typical race difference between them and the mostly White police. The goals of the community and the police may differ as well. For example, the police service may have more of a focus on crime-fighting while the community may have a focus on social service. City police services sometimes have to adapt to a wide variety of cultures in their citizen population. In this context, it is likely that goals of the citizens of different cultures vary from the goals of their urban police service. Visible minority group members may not support the police as an authority as much as White people do for a variety of reasons, such as perceived racism and a feeling that their needs are not addressed (Holmes, 1998). A community-policing model is also likely to initiate positive contact and cooperation between the police and citizens. The background literature lacks a formal definition of community policing, but it is summarized as a policing model where there exists exchanges between the police and the public on service delivery (Fielding & Innes, 2006). In this study, the quality of contact was examined between citizens and the police. This theory pertains to hypothesis 10, which is about whether negative contact shapes attitudes toward the police.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The percentage of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is increasing, with a substantial proportion of this group 18 years or younger. This specific demographic is the most likely to come into contact with the police (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999). Investigating the relationship they have with police is becoming increasingly important especially in urban areas. Police services have responded to this issue by attempting to reform the traditional model of policing so that it is more like the community policing model, which is more adapted to serving Aboriginal people (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001). These

efforts, however, do not address the fundamental issues of socio-economic marginality and racism that this population faces. It is critical that these issues are examined in the context of police-community relations

Implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research adds to the literature on ethnic identity, authoritarianism, fear of crime, and attitudes toward police in two Canadian groups (i.e., White and Aboriginal people). Currently, there is very little research on these topics in regard to Canadian Aboriginal people, even though the relationship between Aboriginal people and the police in Canada is a troubled one (Day et al., 2004).

On a more practical note, the outcome of this research can be used to help us better understand the perspectives that Aboriginal and White people in Saskatchewan have of the police. It is hopeful that this greater understanding may be used to design and implement programs to improve the current situation experienced by Aboriginal people in an urban setting.

1.6 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses have been derived from the general research problem of this study. The first research question posed is whether attitudes toward the police are positive or negative. Within this question it is also examined what factors affect these attitudes. The second research question is whether attitudes toward police are different across race (White and Aboriginal). Thus, data were collected from Aboriginal and White community members for the purpose of evaluating and comparing the results. The specific hypotheses related to these research questions included:

1. White citizens will have a more positive attitude toward the police than Aboriginal residents.

2. Participants will have a more positive opinion of police officers of their own race.

3. People with a weaker ethnic identity will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

4. People with a higher annual household income will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

5. People who have a higher level of education will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

6. Females will have a more positive attitude toward the police than males.

7. People who have lived in their current residence for a longer period of time will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

8. Older people will have a more positive attitude toward the police than younger people.

9. People who express less fear of crime will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

10. Residents who have experienced less negative police contact (personal and vicarious) will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

11. People who score higher in right-wing authoritarianism will have a more positive attitude toward the police.

Previous research shows that minority groups in North America have more negative attitudes toward the police than White people (Davis & Miller, 2002; Holmes, 1998; Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 1996; Weitzer & Tuch, 1999). However, there has been very

little empirical research on the attitudes of Aboriginal Canadians toward the police, and so it is not known yet whether this particular group will have the same opinions and perceptions as other minority groups surveyed. This study proposed to evaluate these attitudes and perceptions and the factors that they may be based on. Ethnic identity is one factor included in this survey that has not been discussed previously in the literature.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A survey tool (see Appendix D) was created and validated in order to empirically examine the suggested contributing variables to perceptions of the police. Following pilot testing with a University student sample (n=200) to test reliability, participants were recruited by two methods outlined below.

2.2 Participants

The sample size for this study was 120. The sample included four demographic groups with 30 participants in each group. The four groups were Aboriginal males, Aboriginal females, White males, and White females. All of the participants were 18 years or older, with an average age of 36 years (SD = 12.8). The summary statistics for each group are reported in the results section.

2.3 Procedure

Following ethical approval from the University of Regina (see Appendix A), the scales designed specifically for this study were pilot tested using a sample of participants from the undergraduate participant pool in the psychology department at the University of Regina. Several small changes were made to the scales and another ethics application was submitted to the University of Regina Research Ethics Board for approval to conduct the study using a community sample of 60 Aboriginal and 60 White citizens of Regina. When approval was granted for this part of the study, permission was requested to distribute the survey in several places of employment, community centres, and the First Nations University.

Two recruitment procedures were employed. First, surveys were placed in envelopes along with two copies of the informed consent form (see Appendix B) and the information sheet (see Appendix C), and then were distributed to several places of employment in Regina. This method could be termed *multiple snowball sampling,* given that participants were recruited through contact with other participants, at several locations such that the *snowball* did not begin with one individual. Completed surveys were then returned to the researcher in a sealed envelope. Possible limitations to the use of snowball sampling include the restriction of the researchers' social networks, and that participants are not selected randomly (Browne, 2005). Second, participants were approached in person at community centres and at the First Nations University. Participation in the study was voluntary.

2.4 Survey Tool

Prior to completing the survey, participants were asked to read and then sign the informed consent form if they chose to participate. The informed consent forms with the participants' names on them were detached from the survey and stored separately from the data which has no identifying information attached to it. The completed surveys were stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office, and were identified with a three-digit code in place of the participant names.

The survey included sections on demographic information, strength of ethnic identity, attitudes toward the police, fear of crime, experiences with the police, authoritarianism, and negative police contact. The demographic questionnaire assessed sex, age, annual household income, length of time as a resident of the community, education level, student status, and race. The ethnic identity section included an ethnic

identity search subscale, and also assessed affirmation, belonging, and commitment to one's group. The attitudes toward police section contained items adapted from Chow (2002), plus other items created by the researcher. The fear of crime section contained items, some developed from Smith and Hill (1991), adapted to fit the purposes of this study. These items assess the level of fear a person feels in their neighbourhood and community as well as their response to the fear. The items that ask about negative police experiences came from a survey developed by Weitzer and Tuch (2004). Authoritarianism was assessed using the short form of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (see Zakrisson, 2005). The scales are described below.

2.4.1 Attitudes toward Police

Attitudes toward police were measured using an 18-item scale that is specific to measuring the attitudes of Aboriginal and White people in Saskatchewan. Items are rated on a seven-point scale (1= *very strongly disagree*, 7 = *very strongly agree*). Some of the items were modified from a scale created by Chow (2002) to assess attitudes toward the police of Chinese Canadians in Toronto. Borrowing from Chow's format, but changing the context to Saskatchewan, the scale contains items concerning: 1) police powers of search, arrest, and questioning; 2) police use of force; 3) police treatment of visible minorities; and 4) quality of police services. In addition to these areas, items were created to measure attitudes toward police personality and attitudes toward police officers by race. The scale produced an alpha coefficient of .90, demonstrating high internal consistency.

Results from a factor analysis of the survey tool indicated that four of the original items should be removed in order to enhance reliability and homogeneity of a one-factor solution. The resulting scale has a one-factor solution that explains 42.9% of the variance.

Following the factor analysis, three of the original 21 items were dropped that lowered the scale's internal consistency.

2.4.2 Fear of Crime

This section included 13 questions that were divided into three subsections. Eight of the 13 questions are slightly modified items from a scale used by Smith and Hill (1991), for which there is no reliability information available. The first subsection was *fearfulness* (items 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8), which assessed the degree to which participants respond emotionally to crime with feelings of anxiety. The second subsection was *behavioural response* (items 5, 6, 9, 10, and 12), which asked questions about how the participant changes their behaviour in response to fear of crime. The third subsection was *cognitive response* (items 4, 11, and 13), and consists of questions that assess how much the participant thinks about crime occurring whether they respond to it (emotionally or behaviourally) or not. Reliability testing of this scale produced an alpha of .86.

2.4.3 Police Contact

This questionnaire was a modified version of one used by Weitzer and Tuch (2004) in a study that examined participants' perceptions of negative experiences with the police. It contained ten questions that assess the respondents' history of personal and vicarious interactions with police. The interactions investigated include: unjustified police stops, police use of insulting language, police use of excessive force, and police corruption. Perceptions of these interactions were assessed on a personal and vicarious level. Items 3, 4, 5, and 6 assess personal experience with police actions, and items 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10 assess vicarious experience. There was no information available on the

reliability and validity of the original scale (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004), but in the present study the scale produced an alpha coefficient of .86.

2.4.4 Ethnic Identity

This section contained questions originally developed by Phinney (1992), and were modified to fit the objectives of this study. It began with two demographic items that asked the participant to identify the ethnic group that they belong to. These 16 items measure strength of ethnic identity using two major factors, *ethnic identity search,* and *belonging. Ethnic identity search* is a variable that measures the degree to which the participant has attempted to understand their group (items 7, 8, 10, 14, and 16). The *belonging* subsection included items that measure how much the participant feels committed to their group, and how much they feel they are integrated into their group (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 18). The belonging subsection included four questions specific to participants who self-identified as Aboriginal.

The original scale (Phinney, 1992) has been used in dozens of studies and has shown strong reliability, usually with alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages. The questions are rated on a seven-point interval scale from very strongly disagree (7.0) to very strongly agree (1.0). The suggested ethnic group names in the first paragraph have been adapted to this particular population as the original version is American. There were also questions concerning race if the participant indicates that they are of Aboriginal ethnicity (Barnes et al., 2006). In the current study, the scale produced Cronbach's alpha of .92 for the whole data set (questions 7-18) and an alpha coefficient of .93 for the Aboriginal sample, which included reliability analysis of questions 3-18.

2.4.5 Authoritarianism

Altemeyer's original Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale contains 30 items and has well-documented validity and reliability (Altemeyer, 1981; Altemeyer, 1996). A 15-item version was used in this study; according to Zakrisson (2005), it has a reliability of .78. This shorter form taps a narrower concept of right-wing authoritarianism and does not include the subscales assessed with the original scale. However, the author argues that this shorter form is still a valid tool for measuring authoritarianism. In the present study, the alpha was .68 for the full data set, .72 for the Aboriginal data, and .62 for the White data.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

3.1 Overview of Analyses

Data from the demographic measures and measures of predictor variables were compared for differences by race and by sex through factorial analyses of variance (ANOVA). Hierarchical regressions were used to predict attitudes toward the police from three blocks of variables (demographic, crime related, and personality variables). These analyses were done separately for White and Aboriginal participants. A logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine whether race of participant could be predicted from demographic, crime related, and personality variables.

3.2 Correlations among Crime Related and Personality Variables

Prior to conducting the ANOVA and regression analyses, correlations between the measures were calculated separately for the Aboriginal and White participants. These correlations are presented in Table 1. For both Aboriginal and White participants, negative police contact was associated with negative attitudes toward police. Fear of crime was associated with high authoritarianism but only for the white sample. For the Aboriginal sample, fear of crime was correlated positively with negative attitudes toward police and with negative police contact. Ethnic identity was associated with high authoritarianism for the Aboriginal sample. No other relationships were statistically significant.

Table 1

Correlations among the Crime-Related and Personality Measures

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. FOC	---	.56**	.00	.05	-.32*
2. PPA	.09	---	.05	.24	-.56**
3. AUTHR	.31*	-.07	---	.29*	.17
4. ETH	.12	.04	.21	---	.00
5. ATP	-.13	-.57**	.18	.19	---

Note. Aboriginal data above diagonal, White data below the diagonal.

FOC = Fear of Crime scale; PPA = Negative Police Contact scale; AUTHR = Right-wing Authoritarianism scale; ETH = Ethnic Identity scale; ATP = Attitudes toward Police scale

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

3.3 Demographic Variables

The average age of the Aboriginal participants was 37.7 years (SD = 11.2). The average age of Aboriginal people in the province is much younger (Statistics Canada, 2001), but this study excluded persons younger than 18 years. In regard to annual household income, 35.2% reported less than $10,000; 13% reported $10,000-14,999; 5% reported $15,000-19,999; 3.3% reported $20,000-30,000, 11.7% reported $30,000-40,000, and 26.7% reported over $40,000 a year. The last census (Statistics Canada, 2001) reported that the average annual income for working-age Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan was $15,961. In regard to the relocation variable, 15% of the sample reported living in their current location for less than one year, 24% lived in their current location for less than two years, and the remaining 61% lived in their current home for more than two years. One-quarter of the sample reported that they were currently in school; most of these students were from the First Nations University in Regina. Regarding highest education level achieved, 21.7% completed some high school; 28.3% completed high school; 11.7% completed some college or vocational training; 13.3% completed a college or vocational diploma; 11.7% completed a university degree; and 10% completed a graduate or professional degree. Reports for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan aged 15 or older show that 48% had less than a high school education, 22% had graduated from high school, 12% had attained a trade certificate or diploma, 11% had a college diploma, and 5.8% had a University degree (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Of the Aboriginal people sampled, 33% had a criminal record. Finally, 26.7% of the Aboriginal participants sampled reported having a family member who was a police officer, and 48.3% reported having a friend who was a police officer.

The average age of the White participants was 34.2 years. In regard to annual household income, 10% reported less than $10,000; 3.3% reported $10,000-14,999; 6.7% reported $15,000-19,999; 8.3% reported $20,000-30,000, 10% reported $30,000-40,000, and 60% reported over $40,000 a year. The average annual income for Non-Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is $26,914, which is much higher than for Aboriginal residents (Statistics Canada, 2001). Results for the relocation variable showed that 28.3% of the sample reported living in their current location for less than one year; 3.3% lived in their current location for less than two years, and the remaining 68% lived in their current home for more than two years. Thirty-six percent of the sample reported that they were currently in school. Regarding highest education level achieved, 3.3% completed some high school, 18.3% completed high school, 38.3% completed some college or vocational training, 6.7% completed a college or vocational diploma, 18.3% completed a university degree, and 15% completed a graduate or professional degree. There was 6.7% who had a criminal record. Reports for Non-Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan aged 15 or older show that 30% had less than a high school education, 25% had graduated from high school, 10% had attained a trade certificate or diploma, 15% had a college diploma, and 15% had a University degree (Statistics Canada, 2001). There were four White participants with criminal records, making up 6.7% of the sample. There was a statistically significant difference across race for possessing a criminal record χ^2 (2, $N =$ 120) = 13.33, $p < .001$). Finally, 11.7% of the White participants sampled reported having a family member who was a police officer, and 26.7% reported having a friend who was a police officer.

Correlational analyses were conducted for the combined White and Aboriginal data to determine the relationships among Attitudes toward Police scores and the following demographic variables: sex, age, length of time in current residence, annual household income, and education level. No statistical significance was found for correlations among attitudes toward the police and sex, r (120) = .02, p = .84, age, r (119) = -.06, p = .49, length of time in current residence, r (120) = -.02, p = .80, annual household income, r (113) = .08, p = .40, or education level, r (118) = .03, p = .74.

3.4.1 Attitudes toward Police

Aboriginal and White participants, and male and female participants, were compared on the Attitudes toward Police Scale. Aboriginal participants expressed more negative attitudes toward the police (M = 3.9, SD = 1.0) than White participants (M = 4.2, SD =.8), F (1,116) = 3.89, p = .05. There were no statistically significant difference between male and female participants, F (1,116) = .08, p = .78, nor a race by gender interaction, F (1,116) = .28, p = .60.

3.4.2 Fear of Crime

Participants were compared by race and sex on the Fear of Crime Scale. The average score for Aboriginal participants on the seven point scale from low fear to high fear was 4.0 (SD = 1.06) while White participants average score was 3.5 (SD = 1.08). This difference between Aboriginal and White participants was statistically significant, F (1,116) = 5.96, p < .016. There was no difference on the Fear of Crime Scale between females and males, F (1,116) = 2.00, p < .16, nor was there a race by sex interaction, F (1,116) = .32, p < .57.

Comparisons by race and sex of the subscales of the Fear of Crime Scale were also evaluated. With regard to the *emotional response subscale*, there were no differences by race, $F(1,114) = 3.22$, $p < .08$, sex, $F(1,114) = 1.13$, $p < .29$, or race by sex, $F(1,114) = .10$, $p < .76$. Aboriginal participants had a mean score of 4.2 ($SD = 1.31$) and White participants had a mean score of 3.8 ($SD = 1.19$). With regard to *the behavioural response subscale*, there was a statistically significant difference by race, $F(1,114) = 5.36$, $p < .022$, but no statistically significant difference by sex, $F(1,114) = 1.46$, $p < .23$ nor a race by gender interaction, $F(1,114) = .02$, $p < .90$. Aboriginal participants had a mean score of 3.65 ($SD = 1.08$) and White participants had a mean score of 3.2 ($SD = 1.14$). With regard to the *cognitive response subscale*, there was a statistically significant differences by race, $F(1,114) = 5.10$, $p < .026$, but no difference by sex, $F(1,114) = 2.33$, $p < .13$ nor a race by sex interaction, $F(1,114) = 2.22$, $p < .14$. Aboriginal participants had a mean score of 4.10 ($SD = 1.44$) and White participants had a mean score of 3.5 ($SD = 1.48$).

3.4.3 Police Contact

Aboriginal participants scored higher than White participants on the scale assessing negative police contact, $F(1,116) = 36.84$, $p < .001$. The Aboriginal sample had a mean score of 4.0 ($SD = 1.3$), and the White sample had a mean score of 2.7 ($SD = 1.17$). Furthermore, males scored higher than females on police contact, $F(1,116) = 10.30$, $p < .002$. The male sample had a mean score of 3.70 ($SD = 1.43$), and the female sample had a mean score of 3.0 ($SD = 1.3$). There was no interaction of race by sex, $F(1,116) = .29$, $p < .59$.

The negative police contact scale has two subscales that assess vicarious and personal contact with police. For both subscales, statistically significant differences were found for race and for sex. For the vicarious contact subscale, Aboriginal participants scored higher (M = 4.09, SD = 1.47) than White participants (M = 2.7, SD = 1.3), $F(1,114)$ = 31.61, p < .001, and males (M = 3.77, SD = 1.57) scored higher than females (M = 3.05, SD = 1.44), $F(1,114)$ = 9.06, p < .003. There was no race by sex interaction, $F(1,114)$ = .015, p < .90. For the personal contact subscale, Aboriginal participants scored higher (M = 3.97, SD = 1.37) than White participants (M = 2.6, SD = 1.07), $F(1,114)$ = 39.41, p < .001, and males (M = 3.57, SD = 1.43) scored higher than females (M = 3.02, SD = 1.35), $F(1,114)$ = 6.52, p < .012. There was no race by sex interaction, $F(1,114)$ = .012, p < .76.

3.4.4 Ethnic Identity

Scores on ethnic identity varied by race, $F(1,104)$ = 37.1, p < .001. Aboriginal participants had a greater sense of ethnic identity (M = 5.76, SD = 1.26) compared to White participants (M = 4.33, SD = 1.13). Scores were also different across sex of participants, $F(1,104)$ = 4.36, p < .04. Ethnic identity was greater for males (M = 5.20, SD = 1.32) compared to females (M = 4.70, SD = 1.42). There was no interaction between sex and race, $F(1,104)$ = 1.93, p < .17.

For the search subscale of ethnic identity, there was a statistically significant effect for race, $F(1,100)$ = 45.68, p < .001. Aboriginal participants had a mean score of 5.48 (SD = 1.34) while White participants scored lower with a mean of 3.72 (SD = 1.26). Males and females did not differ on this subscale, $F(1,106)$ = 3.16, p < .08, and the interaction between race and sex just failed to attain statistical significance, $F(1,100)$ =

3.87, $p < .052$. The mean score on the subscale for males was 4.73 (SD = 1.56) versus the mean for females of 4.24 (*SD* = 1.53). White females and males did not differ substantially on the search subscale, but Aboriginal males (*M* = 5.89, *SD* = 1.00) scored somewhat higher than Aboriginal females (*M* = 4.95, *SD* = 1.54).

For the belonging subscale of ethnic identity, there was a statistically significant effect for race, $F (1,103) = 8.55$, $p < .004$. Aboriginal participants had a mean score of 5.53 (*SD* = 1.27) while White participants had a mean of 4.77 (*SD* = 1.29). Males and females did not differ on this subscale, $F (1,103) = 3.60$, $p < .06$, and the interaction between race and sex was not statistically significant, $F (1,103) = .42$, $p < .52$. The mean score on the subscale for males was 5.33 (*SD* = 1.25) versus the mean for females of 4.85 (*SD* = 1.39).

3.4.5 Authoritarianism

Scores on the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale varied by race, $F (1,114) = 20.22$, $p < .001$. Aboriginal participants with a mean of 4.2 (*SD* = .60) were more authoritarian than White participants with a mean of 3.6 (*SD* = .79). There was no effect for sex, $F (1,114) = .02$, $p < .90$, but there was a race by sex interaction, $F(1,114) = 4.85$, $p < .03$. White males (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = .90) were somewhat less authoritarian than white females (*M* = 3.73, *SD* = .64); conversely, Aboriginal males (*M* = 4.32, *SD* = .52) were somewhat more authoritarian than Aboriginal females (*M* = 4.0, *SD* = .66). Thus, the most authoritarian participants were Aboriginal males.

3.5 Regression Analyses on Attitudes toward Police

The first hierarchical linear regression model included six demographic variables including race, fear of crime and negative police contact, and authoritarianism and ethnic

identity to predict attitudes toward the police. Variables were entered into the model by set (e.g., demographic variables first). The data from Aboriginal participants were analysed first.

Examination of the correlation matrix and multicollinearity diagnostics revealed relationships between the predictor variables were modest. The largest correlation between any two predictor variables was r (40) = -.65, $p < .001$ between negative police contact and attitudes toward police. No other correlations between predictor variables were greater than r = +/- .60.

The first step of the regression model predicting attitudes toward police was the demographic variables. This model was not statistically significant, F (5, 36) = .54, $p <$ .75, R^2 = .07. The second step of the regression model was crime related variables. The second step was statistically significant, F (7, 34) = 5.50, $p < .001$, R^2 = .53, and this second step was a statistically significant improvement over step one, ΔF (2, 34) = 16.75, $p < .001$. The one statistically significant predictor for step two was negative police contact (β = -.77, $p < .001$), followed by how long one has lived in one's residence (β = .24, $p < .054$), a variable from step one. The third step added personality variables. The third step was statistically significant, F (9, 32) = 4.86, $p < .001$, R^2 = .58, but this third step was not a statistically significant improvement over step two, ΔF (2, 32) = 1.75, $p < .19$. All of the variables in step 3 are reproduced on the next page. The two statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward the police for aboriginals are police contact (the more negative the police contact, the more negative attitudes toward the police) and length of time in current residence (the more time living in the current residence, the more positive the attitudes toward the police).

The second hierarchical linear regression model repeated the preceding analysis for the white participants. Again, examination of the correlation matrix and multicollinearity diagnostics revealed relationships between the predictor variables were modest. The largest correlation between any two predictor variables was r (57) = -.56, p < .001 between negative police contact and attitudes toward police. No other correlations between predictor variables were greater than r = +/- .50.

The first step of the model tested demographic variables. This model was not statistically significant, F (5, 53) = .26, p < .94, R^2 = .02. The second step of the regression model that tested related variables was statistically significant, F (7, 51) = 5.30, p < .001, R^2 = .42, and this second step was a statistically significant improvement over step one, ΔF (2, 51) = 17.5, p < .001. The two statistically significant predictors for step two were negative police contact (β = -.68, p < .001) and income (β = -.27, p < .038). The third step that added personality variables was statistically significant, F (9, 49) = 4.80, p < .001, R^2 = .47, but this third step was not a statistically significant improvement over step two, ΔF (2, 49) = 2.17, p < .12. All of the variables in step three are reproduced in Table 3. The one statistically significant predictor of attitudes toward the police for White participants is police contact (the more negative the police contact, the more negative attitudes toward the police) followed in importance by income (the less income, the more positive the attitudes toward the police).

Table 2

Step Three of the Hierarchical Regression Model Predicting Attitudes Toward the Police

for Aboriginal Participants

Variable	b	SE	β	r
Sex	.11	.29	.05	.04
Age	-.01	.01	-.08	-.09
How Long Residence	.14	.07	.26*	.21
Income	-.11	.07	-.24	.06
Education	-.03	.10	-.05	.09
Fear of Crime	.01	.15	.04	-.34
Negative Police Contact	-.64	.12	-.81**	-.65
Authoritarianism	.25	.25	.13	.14
Ethnic Identity	.13	.11	.16	-.02

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 3

Step Three of the Hierarchical Regression Model Predicting Attitudes Toward the Police for White Participants

Variable	b	SE	β	r
Sex	-.24	.19	-.15	.07
Age	-.01	.01	-.07	-.10
How Long Residence	.02	.05	.05	-.08
Income	-.12	.06	-.27[a]	.08
Education	-.02	.07	-.04	-.09
Fear of Crime	-.14	.09	-.19	-.13
Negative Police Contact	-.47	.08	-.67**	-.56
Authoritarianism	.22	.13	.21	.17
Ethnic Identity	.06	.09	.08	.18

[*]$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

3.6 Logistic Regression Analysis in Predicting Race

Logistic regression was used to predict the dichotomous outcome variable race (White or Aboriginal), from sets of continuous and categorical variables. The first block of the analysis included the demographic variables of sex, age, length of time living in present home, income, and education level; the second block included fear of crime, negative police contact, and attitudes toward police; and the third block included authoritarianism and ethnic identity.

A test of the first model (demographic variables only) was statistically significant, $\chi^2(5, N = 101) = 17.44, p < .01$. The Nagelkerke R square indicated that the first model represents 21.4% of the variability between White and Aboriginal groups. However, the only statistically significant predictor of race was income ($OR = .68$; 95% CI: $.54 - .86$). The second model (demographic variables, FOC, PPA, and ATP) was also statistically significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 101) = 14.30, p < .01$. The Nagelkerke R square for this model indicated that the model represents 36.3% of the variability. For this second model, income was no longer a statistically significant predictor of race. Instead, the only statistically significant predictor was negative police contact ($OR = 2.22$; 95% CI: $1.27 - 3.89$). Lastly, the full model was also statistically significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 101) = 14.30, p < .01$. The Nagelkerke R square indicated that the model represents 54% of the variability between White and Aboriginal groups. In this final block, the statistically significant contributors to predicting race were authoritarianism ($OR = 2.74$; 95% CI: $1.40 - 6.61$), and ethnic identity ($OR = 2.03$; 95% CI: $1.12 - 3.44$). This model was able to correctly classify 83.1% of the White sample and 71.4% of the Aboriginal sample, for an overall correct classification rate of 78.2%.

Table 4 reports the regression coefficients, Wald statistics, odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios for the variables included in the final model. According to this model, a participant is three times more likely to be Aboriginal than White if they score high on authoritarianism, and two times more likely to be Aboriginal than White if they score high on ethnic identity.

Table 4

Logistic Regression Analysis of Racial Group Membership Status as a Function of Demographic and Predictor Variables

Variable	β	Wald Test (z-ratio)	Odds Ratio	95% CI for Odds Ratio	
				Upper	Lower
Sex	-.83	1.93	.44	.14	1.40
Age	.01	.25	1.01	.97	1.05
How Long Residence	.12	.46	1.12	.81	1.53
Income	-.20	1.34	.83	.60	1.14
Education	.02	.01	1.02	.66	1.57
Fear of Crime	-.08	.08	.92	.52	1.63
Neg. Police Contact	.51	2.67	1.67	.90	3.08
Attitudes toward Police	-.43	.90	.65	.27	1.57
Authoritarianism	1.01	5.05*	2.74	1.14	6.61
Ethnic Identity	.71	6.89**	2.03	1.20	3.44

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion

4.1 Overview

This section summarises the results of the study in terms of how they relate to the research questions and hypotheses. The main objective of the study was to gather data on perceptions of police from White and Aboriginal community members so that their responses could be compared empirically. Along with race, other hypothesised predictors of negative attitudes toward police included demographic variables, fear of crime, negative police contact (personal and vicarious), ethnic identity and authoritarianism.

4.2 Examination of Racial Differences across Variables

Responses of White and Aboriginal community members were compared across several variables, including demographic information, attitudes toward police, fear of crime, negative police contact, ethnic identity and right-wing authoritarianism. Predicting race by variable scores and demographic information was conducted by logistic regression analysis. The first model contained the demographic variables, for which only income was a statistically significant predictor of participant race. In the second model, negative police contact became the only significant predictor, eclipsing the previously statistically significant income variable. When the final block was included, the model with all variables had only two statistically significant contributors to predicting race: authoritarianism and ethnic identity. Using this model, 83.1% of the White sample could be correctly classified by race, while 71.4% of the Aboriginal sample could be classified correctly.

Social Identity Theory has been applied previously to research on attitudes toward the police as an explanation of differences in the perceptions of different ethnic groups (Molloy, 2004). Although the theory is relevant here, it is difficult to determine whether the results support the theory because race differences may simply be due to an outgroup bias. One of the goals of this study was to determine whether perceptions of White police officers are different from perceptions of Aboriginal officers. However, the items in the scale that assessed this concept were removed after the factor analysis because they proved too variable across the data set and no substantial conclusions could be made based on their results. Some of these items also decreased the scale's overall reliability.

Considering that the majority of people have no direct contact with the police (Hurst, McDermott, & Thomas, 2005; Murty, Roebuck & Smith, 1990), and there is only a small minority of police officers who are Aboriginal, it is unlikely that participants formed a solid opinion of Aboriginal police officers compared to White police officers. Thus there is not enough evidence to support or refute hypothesis two (participants will have a more positive opinion of police officers of their own race). If indeed it could be shown that Aboriginal people have more negative perceptions of White officers than Aboriginal officers, this finding would provide evidence that it is not police officers as a group that citizen's attitudes are based, but that race of the officer plays a role.

4.2.1 Attitudes toward the Police

The sample mean for attitudes toward the police (N = 120) was 4.0, which on a scale of one to seven is more positive than negative. Other researchers in Canada have found positive attitudes toward police in areas such as Nova Scotia (Clairmont, 1991) and Ontario (Yarmey, 1991). Normandeau and Leighton (1990) found that nine out of ten

people they surveyed were satisfied with the performance of their police officers. Canadians have particularly positive perceptions in the approachability and law enforcement capabilities of their police services (Statistics Canada, 1996). These statistics, however, did not come from studies where participants were compared by race. It is important to recognise that certain groups, especially ethnic minority groups, may not share the opinions of the majority of Canadians (Baker, 2006).

Responses to the attitudes toward police scale were different across race. This finding confirms the first hypothesis (white citizens will have a more positive attitude toward the police than Aboriginal residents), and it is consistent with previous research on minority group perceptions of police. Other studies have shown race to be the strongest predictor (Davis & Miller, 2002; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). It must be considered, however, that variations of the scale produced different outcomes for this variable. Certain items were removed following the factor analysis (items 14, 20, and 21) and this version of the scale is the one used for reporting the results. In terms of race differences on the scale, results were statistically larger when items 20 (The police engage in unfair treatment of Aboriginal people) and 21 (In general, my close friends have negative attitudes toward the police) were included. With both items included, the difference across races was $F(1,118) = 5.73$, $p = .018$. One main objective of this study was to create an empirically valid tool to measure attitudes toward the police, and thus these items were dropped from the final analysis because they reduced the reliability of the measure. Even using the most conservative version of the scale, however, Aboriginal participants had more negative attitudes toward the police than White participants.

Unlike previous research, race was not the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police. There are several possible reasons for this inconsistency with the literature. First, most of the research on attitudes toward police is American and examines races other than Aboriginal or Native American. Research on attitudes toward the police in the U.S. mostly examines the perceptions of African-Americans. Tensions between the police and this group are much more publicised, and have been much more prolific and violent. This group is also substantially larger than the Canadian Aboriginal population and so conflict is more prevalent and widespread. Another factor that could help explain the difference between Aboriginal attitudes and the attitudes of African-Americans is that African-Americans are more noticeable as a minority because they have darker skin. This physical feature could make them more conspicuous and therefore more likely to attract the attention of the police because of their race.

Income was not related to attitudes toward police in this study, inconsistent with hypothesis four (people with a higher annual household income will have a more positive attitude toward the police) and contradicting previous research on this topic (e.g., Holmes, 1998; Thomas & Hyman, 1977). Typically, research shows that people with higher annual incomes have more positive attitudes toward the police, likely because they have less negative contact with the police and experience less crime. One possible reason for not finding statistical significance for this variable is that students were included in the sample, possibly skewing the results for annual household income. As students, these participants would probably have low annual incomes even if they grew up in moderate to high-income households. Their annual income changes when they move away to go to school, however, their attitudes toward police may be consistent with the household of

their parents. It is important to note that although there were no statistically significant differences in attitudes toward the police across income, results from the hierarchical regression analysis showed that annual household income was a statistically significant predictor for attitudes toward the police for Aboriginal participants. It is clear that income does play a role in attitudes toward police at least for this group. Another measure of socio-economic status, level of education, was also unrelated to attitudes toward the police. This is inconsistent with the hypothesis that participants with lower levels of education will have more negative attitudes toward the police.

There was no difference in attitudes toward police by sex. This finding is inconsistent with the first hypothesis that females will have more positive attitudes toward police than males. Although results for sex are not always consistent in the literature (see section 1.2.1), it is largely the case that women have more positive attitudes toward the police than do men, presumably because they have less contact (especially negative contact) with police.

Another hypothesis that was not supported was that people living in their current residence for a shorter period of time would have more negative attitudes toward the police. There were no statistically significant results for this hypothesis. This is inconsistent with previous research (see section 1.2.1) but it may be that participants who have moved more recently did not move from outside the city or country, but within the city. If this is the case, it is likely that their attitudes toward the police have already been formed and they are more trusting than would be residents who have moved to their current location from a greater distance.

Surprisingly, age was unrelated to attitudes toward police, a finding consistent with the hypothesis that older people have more positive attitudes toward the police. Several researchers have demonstrated a link between age and attitudes toward the police (e.g., Brown & Benedict, 2002; Lasley, 1994) but these results were not replicated in this study. The attitudes toward police of this sample were homogenous across age.

Results from the linear regression analysis demonstrate that the combined variables explain 58% of the variance in attitudes toward police in the Aboriginal sample. For the White sample, these same variables explain only 37% of the variance in attitudes toward police. This outcome occurred because the variable that explained the most difference in attitudes toward the police was negative police contact, and the Aboriginal sample experienced more negative police contact than the White sample. For both groups, the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police was negative police contact. For both races, only the block containing this variable made a statistically significant change in the amount of variance explained.

The results of this community survey have provided some interesting insights into racial differences in how citizens view the police in Regina. Race alone, however, cannot be determined to be the cause of these differences. Cause cannot be determined for these results because among other things, White and Aboriginal residents also vary by mean annual household income and by education level. The Aboriginal group scored lower on both income and education level. These variables give an indication of socio-economic status, and it is clear that because both are correlated with race and therefore inextricable from it in this particular study.

4.2.2 Fear of Crime

Fear of crime varied by race. Aboriginal participants expressed more fear of crime on the primary scale, as well as the subscales for behavioural and cognitive response to fear of crime. This indicates that not only do Aboriginal people in the study experience more fear of crime, but they are more likely than White people to change their behaviour in response to this fear of being victimised. Aboriginal participants are also more likely than White people surveyed to think about the extent and risk of crime victimisation with or without the emotional or behavioural responses to it. Williams and Nofziger (2003) also found that for people who have had contact with the police, the quality of contact (positive or negative) affects how much confidence they have in the police.

Fearing crime means that one feels that neighbourhood crime is serious, and that the neighbourhood and even your own home may not be safe (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Considering how high the crime statistics are for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan (Quann & Trevethan, 2000), it is not surprising that Aboriginal participants in this survey express more fear of crime than White participants, and that they think about it more and react to it more as well.

Areas where crime rates are highest also tend to be areas with negative police-community relations (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Fear of crime in this study was associated with attitudes toward the police, but it did not predict attitudes toward police in the hierarchical regression model. Previous research shows a relationship between these two variables (Williams & Nofziger, 2003), but in this study results did not support the hypothesis that people with less fear of crime will have more positive attitudes toward the police.

4.2.3 Police Contact

Aboriginal people are over-represented in the criminal justice system (Ross, 1998; Trevethan, Tremblay, & Carter, 2000) In regard to the negative police contact variable, Aboriginal participants scored higher than White participants for both the personal and vicarious experience subscales. This indicates that the Aboriginal people sampled have much more contact with the police themselves (personal contact) and through people that they know (vicarious contact).

The only finding relating to sex was that males experienced more negative police contact than females. This finding is consistent with previous research that shows that males have more contact with the police (Holmes, 1998). Results were similar for the subscales.

Substantial evidence exists suggesting that minority group members believe they are treated less well than majority group members, and that these differential experiences play a role in the formation of more negative attitudes toward the police (Davis & Miller, 2002). Consistent with these findings, negative police contact was by far the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police in this study across White and Aboriginal samples. This supports the tenth hypothesis, that residents who have experienced less negative police contact will have more positive attitudes toward the police. In the Saskatchewan-based portion of the Samuelson and Strelioff (2001) study, participants were more likely to feel persecuted by police because of their race if they had personally been in trouble with the police. In that study, more than half of the Aboriginal people surveyed reported being in trouble with the police also making the possibility of vicarious contact very likely.

Tyler and Huo (2002) found that police contact had a stronger and more long-lasting effect on attitudes toward police of African Americans as opposed to White Americans. This indicates that more negative attitudes towards police of minority groups may not just be based on the number of incidents of police contact, but that the quality of contact could affect them more than it does White people. Further research on this issue could be conducted where the types and numbers of contacts are evaluated to determine whether there is a difference across race for attitudes toward the police based on the quality of contacts.

These results can be understood in terms of the intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954). Although positive contact with police was not evaluated, the implications of negative police contact are clear as it was the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police. The more negatively contact was evaluated, the more negatively police were evaluated. In order for police community relations to improve, the quality of contact between citizens and the police must improve first.

Although incidents of negative police contact were not quantified (as victim or offender), there were 24 participants who had criminal records and 20 of them were Aboriginal. This was a statistically significant difference across race, and is consistent with the finding that Aboriginal people in this study were more likely to experience police contact, whether personally or vicariously.

4.2.4 Ethnic Identity

It was hypothesised that people with a weaker ethnic identity would have more positive attitudes toward the police. This was not the case. Ethnic identity has not been examined previously as a potential predictor for attitudes toward police, and so the

outcome of this evaluation cannot be compared to research that has already been conducted.

Ethnic Identity scores varied by race, and as predicted, Aboriginal people expressed a stronger ethnic identity than White participants across both subscales of the multi-group ethnic identity measure. This is not surprising for several reasons. The reason is that *White* is a race, but not, arguably, a culture. Ethnic identity as a construct includes identity by racial as well as cultural category (McMahon & Watts, 2002). Although it would be ignorant to assume that Aboriginal culture is homogenous in Saskatchewan, it would also be ignorant to assume that culture and is the same within the *White* group. An individual could be descended from any number of cultural ancestries even though skin colour is the same. Considering that the ethnic identity scale assesses race as well as culture, this construct is likely more salient to Aboriginal people than White people in Saskatchewan.

4.2.5 Authoritarianism

It was expected that people who had higher scores on the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale would have more positive attitudes toward the police. People who have authoritarian personalities typically support the police and other forms of authority such as government (Altemeyer, 1996). However, this outcome was not found in this study. There are several possible explanations for this. First, because the short form of the scale is not divided into subscales like the original 30-item version, it is not possible to delineate empirically between the three major constructs of authoritarianism (conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission). Conventionalism is the facet of authoritarianism that includes support of formal authority.

Because the short form of the right-wing authoritarian scale does not measure conventionalism separately, it is conceivable that the authoritarianism scores are more influenced by the other facets of authoritarianism. This would explain the puzzling finding that Aboriginal people in this study have more negative attitudes toward the police than the White participants, but they are also more authoritarian. Another issue with this finding is that there is no academic literature that exists on authoritarianism and attitudes toward police in Canadian Aboriginal people, therefore there are no results to which this outcome can be compared.

Aboriginal participants are more authoritarian than the White participants, but they may support and uphold the norms of different authorities that are more relevant to their culture such as band chiefs and councils, and Aboriginal leaders. Second, it is possible that other variables such as negative contact with police bear more predictive weight in their evaluations of the police service. In Saskatchewan, as well as other parts of Canada, there have been much-publicized incidents of negative interactions between the police and Aboriginal people. These negative experiences could serve to affect attitudes of this group in spite of personality variables. Another possible explanation for high right-wing authoritarianism and low attitudes toward police is that the scale has not been tested with Aboriginal groups in Saskatchewan and it may be culturally inappropriate in this context. It has previously been documented that survival is a core value in contemporary Aboriginal culture (Nelson & Allison, 2000). The importance of survival to Aboriginal people likely comes from a tradition of having to live off the land. In this kind of society, structure is very important as far as individual roles of group members. The maintenance of this structure is critical for the subsistence life style of the

entire group. This value of survival and role-adherence may contribute to the perpetuation of authoritarian attitudes in Aboriginal people.

Larsen (1968) discovered no sex differences in scores of authoritarianism, but did find a negative relationship between authoritarianism and age. In this study, age and authoritarianism were not associated, but there was a sex by race interaction for attitudes toward police and authoritarianism. White females were somewhat more authoritarian than white males, and Aboriginal males were somewhat more authoritarian than Aboriginal females. The most authoritarian participants were Aboriginal males.

4.3 Limitations

One issue that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of this study is that the data may not generalise to the rest of the population of Saskatchewan. People who do not feel strongly about the police may not agree to participate. In this way, the sample would be biased. The small sample size may have failed to reveal a larger race effect for attitudes toward police.

Due to the method of self-administration of the survey, it is possible that there were participants who did not fully understand the survey items. This is a limitation for this method of data collection, and it must be taken into account when evaluating the results. It is also important to note that there are issues with sampling in the Aboriginal population, such as lower literacy rates, lower education levels, and second language comprehension.

It is also possible that race of the author could have impacted on the responses of participants recruited through direct contact. Attempts were made to minimise the likelihood of this occurring by asking an Aboriginal representative to help with

recruitment but this was not always possible. If participants' responses were affected by the race of the researcher, it could have produced some socially desirable responding.

Another potential limitation of this research is the cultural appropriateness of the scales that were used. Although a few of them were modified to fit the context of racial comparison in Saskatchewan, none of the scales had been validated for culturally relevance with Canadian Aboriginal people.

Finally, this research may not be generalisable to the population of the city of Regina for several reasons. First, the sample collected was not a quota sample by demographic profile of the community. Second, the sample was not matched for comparison by household income. Lastly, random sampling was not employed in the recruitment methods.

4.4 Conclusions

While racial differences in attitudes toward police are well-documented (e.g., Brown & Benedict, 2002; Chandek, 1999; Thomas & Hyman, 1977), less is known about what causes these differences (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). This study addressed this lack of knowledge by assessing several factors that could affect attitudes toward the police. These factors included demographic, experiential, cognitive, and personality variables. In this sample of citizens, attitudes toward the police are more negative among Aboriginal people compared to White people, and this outcome is likely based on negative experiences with the police.

Right-wing authoritarians are submissive to established authorities such as government and the legal system, including the police (Altemeyer, 1998). They support very strongly the social norms of these authorities and aggress against individuals who do

not follow these norms. Individuals who are typical targets of authoritarian aggression include unconventional people and normal victims of aggression like certain visible minority groups (Altemeyer, 1996). Considering these characteristics, it is very interesting that Aboriginal participants, a visible minority group in Regina, scored higher on authoritarianism. The typical finding in cross-race studies on authoritarianism is that White people are more likely to have authoritarian personalities. White people also tend to have more positive perceptions of police and favour more aggressive law enforcement strategies (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004).

There are several ways in which this study could be improved. Namely, following the construction of the survey tool, a broader sample could have been collected for the purposes of generating data from which the results could be generalised to the city population. Ideally, this would be a matched sample by race and socio-economic status. Another way this study could be improved is by hiring people to administer the surveys. These surveyors would be matched by race to the sample from whom they are collecting data. This could reduce the possibility of socially desirable responding.

4.5 Implications

There are several possible implications for this research. Examining the attitudes of Aboriginal Canadians toward the police is relevant because conflict with minority groups is one of the largest problems facing policing today (Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 2004). This research adds to the cross-cultural academic literature on attitudes toward police, authoritarianism, fear of crime, and perceptions of police contact.

There is a need for research in the area of police-community relations because much of what has been done is theoretical as opposed to empirical. It is not enough to

simply take a scale that has already been developed if it is not first validated with a sample of people to be studied. The scale designed in this study can be used by other researchers in Canada and adapted for use in other countries in order to form a solid empirical base of data on attitudes toward the police.

White and Aboriginal participants' attitudes toward the police were best predicted by negative police contact. This cross-section of residents may not be representative of the city of Regina but it is indisputable that their assessments of the quality of service they received contribute more substantially to their perceptions of police than an abstract perspective. This has potential implications for the police service; if contacts are not evaluated favourably, it might affect the overall legitimacy of the police and could also make people less willing to cooperate with them. Public opinion surveys should have consequences at the local level of governance. In response to these findings, further research should examine the quality and quantity of contact that people in this area have with the police to determine if negative contacts are perceived or legitimate.

4.6 Future Directions for Research

Few researchers go into urban Aboriginal communities to closely examine social issues (LaPrairie, 1995). Samuelson and Strelioff (2001) were the only other researchers to empirically test attitudes toward the police of urban Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, however, these researchers did not compare Aboriginal residents to a sample of White residents. This study did compare Aboriginal and White peoples' perceptions of police, but the findings have created more questions about the relationship between Aboriginal people, White people, and the police in Saskatchewan.

The attitudes of Canadian Aboriginal people towards White people have not been examined. A follow-up study could examine attitudes toward police and attitudes toward White people in general to see if there are any differences in these perceptions. If attitudes towards both groups are negative, attitudes toward White people generally would be a confound in determining attitudes toward the police considering that most officers in Canada are White. If the police are viewed negatively, and White people in general are viewed positively, then it would be evident that race is not important in evaluation of the police.

It would also be relevant to study whether Aboriginals' attitudes toward police are more or less positive if the police are also Aboriginal. Because there are not as many Aboriginal officers as White officers (Samuelson & Strelioff, 2001), it would be useful to conduct this study with a correctional population because offenders would be more likely to have had contact with Aboriginal officers than would individuals who have had less or no contact with the police.

Further research could also explore the relationship between authoritarianism and religiosity in Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan by using the full 30-item scale (Altemeyer, 1981) including the subscales for conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission. If it were found that this group was quite religious, that would help to explain the high scores for authoritarianism found in this study. Results from a qualitative study on authoritarianism in Aboriginal Canadians could also help explain the factors that contribute to this personality variable.

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Appendix A: REB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 11, 2006

TO: Carolyn Barnes
Psychology

FROM: K. Arbuthnott
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Re: **Validation of a scale measuring attitudes toward police (09S607)**

Please be advised that the University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed your proposal and found it to be:

☑ 1. ACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. Only applicants with this designation have ethical approval to proceed with their research as described in their applications. The *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* requires the researcher to send the Chair of the REB annual reports and notice of project conclusion for research lasting more than one year (Section 1F). **ETHICAL CLEARANCE MUST BE RENEWED BY SUBMITTING A BRIEF STATUS REPORT EVERY TWELVE MONTHS.** Clearance will be revoked unless a satisfactory status report is received.

☐ 2. ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS (SEE ATTACHED). Changes must be submitted to the REB and subsequently approved prior to beginning research. Please address the concerns raised by the reviewer(s) by means of a supplementary memo to the Chair of the REB. Do not submit a new application. Please provide the supplementary memorandum**, or contact the REB concerning the progress of the project, before **November 11, 2006** in order to keep your file active. Once changes are deemed acceptable, approval will be granted.

☐ 3. UNACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. Please contact the Chair of the REB for advice on how the project proposal might be revised.

Dr. Katherine Arbuthnott

c. Dr. J. Pfeifer, supervisor (Psychology)

KA/ae/ethics2.dot

** supplementary memorandum should be forwarded to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at the Office of Research Services (AH 505) or by e-mail to research.ethics@uregina.ca

UNIVERSITY OF
REGINA

DATE: October 31, 2006

TO: Carolyn Barnes, Jeff Pfeifer
            Psychology

FROM: Katherine Arbuthnott, Chair
            Research Ethics Board

RE: **Validation of a Scale Measuring Attitudes Toward Police (09S607)**

With reference to your memo of October 30, 2006, please be advised the changes have
been approved as outlined.

Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Katherine Arbuthnott

KA/rr

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this study is to determine whether there are differences in attitudes toward the police and police actions across race, sex, level of fear of crime, authoritarianism, and strength of ethnic identity.

EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURE: You will be asked to respond to a series of questionnaires regarding the above topics.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no potential risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to you other than knowledge you may acquire about the research process as well as contributing to our knowledge of attitudes toward police.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA: Your name will not be associated in any way with the data you contribute. Your consent form will be stored separately from the data obtained.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY: Participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS: If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. If you have any questions later, you may call one of the investigators below.

This project was approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina. If research participants have questions or concerns about their rights as participants, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at 585-4775 or by email at: research.ethics@uregina.ca

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THE CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.

Participant Signature: _____   Date:_____

Investigator Signature: _____   Date:_____

Investigator:
Carolyn Barnes
M.A. Candidate
Department of Psychology
University of Regina
Regina, SK
S4S 0A2
Email: barnes2c@uregina.ca
Phone: 306-337-2373

Supervisor:
Dr. Jeffrey Pfeifer
Professor of Psychology and Justice Studies
Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies
Editor, Canadian Journal of Police & Security Services
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Phone: 306-585-4218

Appendix C: Letter to Participants

POLICE ATTITUDES COMMUNITY SURVEY

In this community survey we are asking you to give us your responses to a series of questions on your perceptions of policing in your community. The information being collected is completely anonymous, and it is important that you answer the questions as honestly as possible in order for us to get a complete picture of how you feel about this issue.

Completion of this survey is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. However, if you decide to give this research the benefit of your opinions and perceptions, your contribution will help to ensure continued measures to develop the relationship between police and residents in your community.

Please do not put any identifying information on the questionnaire other than that which is asked. Your answers are completely anonymous and as a result, no individual will be able to be identified.

Thank you again for your valuable input into this issue. Please keep the enclosed gift certificate as compensation for your time, and kindly return the survey in the envelope provided. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, please feel free to contact Carolyn Barnes or Dr. Jeff Pfeifer at the addresses listed below.

Carolyn Barnes
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University of Regina
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306-337-2373

Dr. Jeffrey Pfeifer
Professor of Psychology and Justice Studies
Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies
Editor, Canadian Journal of Police & Security Services
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Appendix D: Survey Tool

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE SURVEY

Part A:

1. The police treat people the same, no matter what part of town they live in.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

2. Most police officers are courteous.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

3. Police do not stop people for questioning because of their race.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

4. The police use more physical force against Aboriginal people than White people.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

5. Most police officers are honest.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

6. The police will only use legal means to combat crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
   disagree   agree

7. Police sometimes stop people to question them without reason.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```

Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

8. The police help people in my community.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

9. The police are doing enough to prevent crime.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

10. Most police officers are fair.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

11. Aboriginal police officers treat everyone the same, regardless of their race.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

12. The police are more likely to pick on young people than on adults.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

13. Most police officers are not helpful.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

14. The police are more likely to use deadly force against Aboriginal people than White people.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

15. Overall, I am satisfied with police services.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

16. White police officers treat everyone the same, regardless of their race.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

17. The city police do a good job of protecting people from crime.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

18. The police always respond promptly when called.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

19. Most police officers would be concerned about my situation if I needed their help.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

20. The police engage in unfair treatment of Aboriginal people.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

21. In general, my close friends have negative attitudes toward the police.

```
      1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                              Very strongly
   disagree                                                                   agree
```

Part B:

1. When I am away from home, I worry about the safety of my property.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

2. Even in my own home, I'm not safe from people who want to take what I have.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

3. I feel safe home alone at night.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

4. I often think about being the victim of a property crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

5. There are some parts of the city that I avoid at night because of fear of crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

6. I feel safe going anywhere alone in my neighbourhood in the daytime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

7. I feel safe home alone during the day.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

8. I worry about my personal safety from crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

9. I take measures to protect the security of my home.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

10. There are some parts of the city that I avoid during the day because of fear of crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

11. I often think about being the victim of a personal (physical) crime.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

12. I feel safe going anywhere alone in my neighbourhood after dark.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

13. I often think about crime incidents in my city.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

Part C:

1. Someone I know has been stopped by the police on the street without good reason.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

2. The police do not use insulting language toward people I know.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly                                                      Very strongly
  disagree                                                            agree
```

3. The police have not used unnecessary force against me.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

4. I have been stopped by the police on the street without good reason.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

5. I have seen a police officer act in a corrupt manner.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

6. The police have used insulting language towards me.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

7. The police often stop people in my neighbourhood without good reason.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

8. The police have used unnecessary force against someone I know.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

9. Police officers use insulting language when talking to people in my neighbourhood.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

10. Police officers use unnecessary force against people in my neighbourhood.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
  disagree   agree

Part D:

1. What is your ethnicity? (Pick one)

    (1) Asian or Asian Canadian, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
    (2) Black or African Canadian
    (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican Canadian, Central American, and others
    (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
    (5) Aboriginal/ Metis
    (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
    (7) Other (write in): _____

If you have identified yourself as Aboriginal, please answer questions 2-6, <u>otherwise, skip to question 7.</u>

2. To which group do you belong?

    ☐ Status Indian
    ☐ Non-Status Indian
    ☐ Metis
    ☐ Inuit
    ☐ Other _____

3. I feel I have a connection to an Indian Band or First Nation.

    1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
    Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

4. I have a good understanding of an Aboriginal language.

    1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
    Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

5. I have a connection to a reserve.

    1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
    Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

6. I attended traditional Aboriginal activities while I was growing up.

    1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
    Very strongly   Very strongly

disagree   agree

Non-Aboriginal Participants continue here.

7. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group (such as its history, traditions, or customs).

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

8. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

9. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

10. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

11. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

12. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

13. I understand what my ethnic group membership means to me.
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
  Very strongly   Very strongly
    disagree   agree

14. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

15. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

17. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

18. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

Part E:

1. Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today.
```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

2. Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
 disagree   agree

3. The "old-fashioned ways" and "old-fashioned values" still show us the best way to live.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

4. Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

5. God's laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, violations must be punished.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

6. Society needs to show openness towards people thinking differently, rather than a strong leader, the world is not particularly evil or dangerous.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

7. It would be best if newspapers were censored so that people would not e able to get a hold of destructive and disgusting material.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

8. Many good people challenge the state, criticize the church and ignore "the normal way of living".

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

9. Our forefathers ought to be honoured more for the way they have built our society, at the same time we ought to put an end to those forces destroying it.

```
1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
```

Very strongly
disagree

Very strongly
agree

10. People ought to put less attention to the Bible and religion, instead they ought to develop their own moral standards.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

11. There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; society ought to stop them.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

12. It is better to accept bad literature than to censor it.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

13. Facts show that we have to be harder against crime and sexual immorality, in order to uphold law and order.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

14. The situation in society today would be improved if troublemakers were treated with reason and humanity.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

15. If society so wants, it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.

1-------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Very strongly   Very strongly
disagree   agree

Part F:

1. What is your sex?   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. What is your age?   _____

3. How long have you lived in your current neighbourhood?

       a) Less than three months
       b) Less than six months
       c) Less than one year
       d) Less than two years
       e) Less than five years
       f) More than five years
       g) I have always lived there

4. Which of the following represents the annual income of your household?

       a) Less than $5,000
       b) $5,000 to $9,999
       c) $10,000 to $14,999
       d) $15,000 to $19,999
       e) $20,000 to $30,000
       f) $30,000 to $34,999
       g) $40,000 and over

5. Do you have a criminal record?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

6. Are you currently a university or college student?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. What is your education level?

       a) Never went to school
       b) Some high school
       c) Completed high school or equivalent
       d) Some college school or vocational school
       e) Completed a vocational training program
       f) Completed a college degree
       g) Completed a graduate or professional degree

8. Do you have a family member that is a police officer?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

9. Do you have a close friend that is a police officer?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. Have you filled out a survey similar to this on perceptions of police in the past year?
☐ Yes ☐ No