



Article

Policing Minority Communities: How Perception of Engagement and Level of “Awareness” Influence Officer Attitudes toward Practice

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Abstract: In the 21st century, policing of all citizens requires officers to have an increased awareness of minority communities. Yet in the wake of public complaints and mass demonstrations regarding police misconduct, it is clear that police bias toward minority communities often negatively influences engagement. To better understand police awareness of minority communities and how officers' levels of awareness and perceptions of policing influence their perceptions of engagement, data were collected from police recruits and protective service officers ($N = 1585$) training at one of the largest police academies in Australia. The results show significant differences in awareness levels and perceptions of engagement of police recruits and protective service officers toward members of minority communities, as well as the factors influencing awareness during police–citizen engagement. These include the police recruit's and protective service officer's gender and sexuality, the frequency of socialization they have with diverse people, as well as the type of social interaction experienced. The results from this study offer suggestions to increase officers' levels of awareness of minority communities, and how this may improve on-the-job performance overtime.

Keywords: police; policing; recruits; officers; diversity; minority; awareness



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1. Introduction

In 2020, following the deaths of United States (US) citizens Breonna Taylor and George Floyd at the hands of the police, uproar and mass demonstrations in support of Black Lives Matter occurred in the US and across the world (Joseph-Salisbury et al. 2020). Showing solidarity with Americans and the Black Lives Matter movement, and to protest against Aboriginal deaths in police custody (such as David Dungay in 2015 and Tanya Day in 2017), as well as the forceful arrests of Aboriginal people in 2020, Australian citizens publicly demonstrated against police brutality and institutional police racism (Mason 2020). In Australia, police misconduct against members of minority communities such as the Aboriginal community, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community, and members of ethnic and religious groups is an ongoing problem (Riley et al. 2020). Racial tension between Indigenous people and police has been a long-standing problem in Australia, as well as ongoing tension between Pacific Islanders and police, Indian and Pakistani residents and police, and Muslim youth and police (Miles-Johnson 2020; Murphy and Cherney 2012). Tension between police and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community has also been problematic, with many complaints made against police relating to homophobia and transphobia (Dwyer et al. 2017; Miles-Johnson and Death 2020). As such, there is an urgency to explore and challenge systemic issues relating to police misconduct within

Australian police organizations and to better understand officers' levels of awareness of minority group members (Miles-Johnson 2020).

By investigating police officers' diversity awareness and improving police training practices, the complex demands of minority communities (i.e., racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities) challenge police organizations to transform their role and adjust their response practices whilst facing the operational complexities of policing in the modern world. This adjustment begins at the academy, where skills enabling officers to meet the multifarious demands of contemporary society can be imparted. Training officers to engage with complex situations and difficult social conditions means academies need to offer strategic and translatable training content, which provides police recruits with the necessary tools to police equally in an increasingly diverse society (Miles-Johnson 2016a). At the police academy, during the training period, and at the onset of their careers, police recruits are highly service orientated and extremely ethical in their approach to policing (Blumberg et al. 2016). According to Basham (2014), excellence in policing and being aware of service provisions begins at the police academy. It is the training programs academies offer (as well as the attitudes of senior officers imparting the knowledge) that are pivotal to this success (Miles-Johnson 2016a). Police training typically emphasizes practical knowledge and applied skills, thereby enabling recruits to function in everyday policing situations (Basham 2014; Jaschke 2010). Yet, over the course of a career, the obstacles officers face, as well as exposure to different situations, may challenge or raise questions about the knowledge and skills they were taught whilst at the academy (see Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b).

If skills and knowledge become a concern over time, then this raises questions about the attitudes of recruits toward police work at the start of their career, as well as the levels of implicit and explicit bias they have toward certain policing situations and contexts and toward different groups of people before interaction begins (Miles-Johnson 2020). Police recruits are not immune to the stereotypes and biases displayed in contemporary society. Although police recruit applicants displaying overtly racist attitudes will most likely be screened out during the hiring process, police recruits possessing subtler, socially driven stereotypes are more difficult to detect (Smith and Alpert 2007). Police bias can influence how an officer treats people from diverse backgrounds in police encounters and during times of victimization, particularly since an officer's authority is highly discretionary and largely unchecked (Smith and Alpert 2007). For example, police officers can use discretion at multiple points throughout the citizen–police encounter. These typically include deciding to stop and search a person or to not intervene; whether to issue citations/warnings; determining how much help a victim of crime needs; and how much response is needed in relation to an individual entering the criminal justice system (Smith and Alpert 2007). Unconscious bias in these situations can disadvantage minority groups, depending on officers' discretion (Miles-Johnson 2016a).

Upon entering the police academy, police recruits are immediately exposed to socialization processes associated with policing culture, as well as narratives regarding police–citizen engagement (Phillips et al. 2010). It is argued that these processes and narratives influence many attitudinal changes in new recruits because they are imparted by senior officers as normative practices and occurrences in policing and applied as generalizations with an assumed outcome (Haarr 2001; Miles-Johnson 2020). This is problematic since recruits who may not have been exposed to members of minority groups or who are not aware of different minority groups may start their policing career with preconceived notions of engagement and expectations regarding the likely outcome or type of interaction that will occur (Miles-Johnson 2016b). Positive levels of diversity awareness, therefore, can enhance perceptions of trust between police and minority communities, particularly when academies facilitate diversity awareness training that includes community relations and problem-solving exercises that specifically build trust between police and minority groups (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010).

From the public's perspective, if a police officer performs his or her duties in an expected way, then the officer will be trusted through the interpretation of their behavior (Hawdon 2008). From the police's perspective, if officers trust all members of the public, they are more likely to effectively perform their role and complete their duties and responsibilities in a competent manner (Miles-Johnson 2016a). When interaction between both groups occurs, this type of reciprocal relationship plays a key role in determining the outcomes of justice. To better understand police recruits' and protective service officers' levels of awareness and their perceptions of policing practice in relation to policing minority communities, this study began with the research question "*How do perceptions of policing practice and levels of 'awareness' of diversity, influence police recruits' and protective service officers' perceptions of engagement with minority communities?*". To answer this research question, an online survey was emailed to general duties police recruits (PRs) and protective service officers (PSOs) employed within one of the largest police organizations in Australia. In Australia, protective service officers (PSOs) have the same operational power as general duties police officers, but they are specifically employed to work in the Transit Safety Division. Entrusted to police citizens in a manner which is procedurally fair and free from bias, recruitment for protective service officers is usually based on the same criteria as police recruits since both divisions have similar powers relating to policing, although PSOs are only allowed to use their power when on duty around designated places such as train stations or areas next to a train station. As such, data were collected from a sample of 1585 police officers comprising PRs and PSOs. Applying an OLS regression analysis, we examine the effects of 19 variables (categorized into two groups—perceptions of policing practice and levels of awareness) to understand how PRs and PSOs perceive perceptions of policing practice with minority communities. We start the paper with an outline of the literature underpinning our research. We then provide a summary of the methods, the survey, and items in the research, as well as data analysis information. This is followed by the results of our study, a detailed discussion, and the conclusion.

2. Background Literature

The literature will point to the importance of counteracting bias within the police through diversity awareness training and the recruitment of members of minority groups into the police force, as well as recognizing the influence formal socialization has on participation in police culture.

There are two types of bias that can affect police treatment of minority groups during police–citizen engagement and during times of victimization: explicit and implicit bias. Spencer et al. (2016) explain that implicit biases can influence judgments through behavioral stereotypes (e.g., linking race/ethnicity to aggression and sexuality differences, such as in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people, to victimization). Intergroup contact, exposure to counter-stereotypic exemplars and stereotype negation are only a few ways to counteract biased policing and police responses, which can all be applied in police training, policies and procedures (Fridell 2016). Multiple factors can reduce levels of police bias within police organizations, such as the recruitment of people from diverse backgrounds into the police force. Many police organizations actively recruit from different racial and ethnic groups and from diverse communities such as the LGBTIQ community. The strategic recruitment of police agencies to not only recruit more culturally diverse people but also to recruit people from specific racial and ethnic groups has meant the numbers of diverse police officers are slowly increasing (Shjarback et al. 2017). In Australia, many police organizations strategically employ people who identify with culturally diverse communities or minority groups such as members of Asian, Sudanese or Muslim communities, as well as people from other diverse groups such as self-identified LGBTIQ people (Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b).

Research by Black (2000) indicates police recruits from diverse communities possessing positive attitudes, balanced temperaments and willingness to consider new ideas are more likely than other recruits to engage professionally with all members of the community

when working in the field. Police organizations are, therefore, conscientiously recruiting officers with communication skills who display a sense of maturity and an ability to interact and engage with diverse groups of people during police–citizen engagement and during times of victimization (Hydén and Ljungberg 2009). Recruitment of the “right sort of person”, however, does not guarantee the ability of an officer to police members of minority communities or to respond appropriately to specifically identified victims of crime. In addition, it does not diminish the importance of the academy and its role in training recruits to police diverse groups of people (Miles-Johnson 2016a).

Numerous police organizations around the world have been disgraced by the identification of misconduct-related incidents when policing minority communities or when responding to victims of crime from minority groups (see Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b; Miles-Johnson and Pickering 2018). Police training, therefore, should include a wider range of specific strategies enabling recruits to understand more ways to engage professionally when policing minority group members. Police training in relation to diversity awareness and minority communities should focus on instilling strong adherence to codes of conduct and operational guidelines (Miles-Johnson 2020). This is important because, as police forces diversify, it is argued that the existence of a single collective traditional cop culture and its associated values will diminish in terms of its effect on police practice and police response in relation to specific groups of people (Paoline 2003). When officers are recruited from minority groups and can contribute diverse life experiences and cultural values to the role, and/or when an officer understands the specific needs of the community being policed, it is likely that incidents of misconduct during citizen engagement will not occur (Miles-Johnson 2020).

Wolfe and Piquero (2011) and Porter and Prenzler (2016) argue that police culture is often cited as an important impediment preventing officers from following codes of conduct, thereby allowing officers to follow informal norms of behavior. The lack of adherence to rules and regulations has resulted in differential treatment of specific groups of people, despite the formal rules and control mechanisms that are implemented by police departments. According to Sato (2003), police recruits learn about police culture through organizational socialization, which is the process of acquiring organizational attitudes, behavior and knowledge whilst training at an institutional (or formal) and individual (or informal) level. Formal socialization at the institutional level within a police academy includes participation in the culture of policing and *collective, formal, sequential and fixed* training programs, as well as learning from experienced field officers during the training stage (Chan 2001, p. 115; see also Sato 2003). It is argued this has a detrimental effect on the way officers may respond to minority group members during times of engagement (Miles-Johnson 2016a).

Schlosser et al. (2015) argue that intervention programs can change the culture of police departments and, in turn, promote community relations and reduce police bias when officers respond to members of minority groups. According to Schlosser et al. (2015), bias is often misunderstood as a matter of individual prejudice. It is, however, entrenched in the culture and functions of society’s institutions and appears “*more covert than overt, implicit rather than intentional*” (Schlosser et al. 2015, p. 117). For example, the “*Policing in a Multiracial Society*” project, administered in the United States to two police recruit cohorts, found that participants encountered resistance to material provided throughout the training period. Evidence of resistance was found when trainers tried to change young recruits’ (as well as veteran officers’) mindsets about minority group policing, and how to respond to diverse groups of people and individuals in different contexts (Schlosser et al. 2015). Multiple studies researching police diversity training indicate “officer attitude” and the ability of an officer to change their behavior when confronted with new training techniques (or operational guidelines) is vital if such training programs are to succeed (see Israel et al. 2014).

Police training that specifically includes awareness training and minority communities, therefore, needs to be offered at the onset of the academy training program (and then

repeated) since it may reduce the long-term aspects of police culture, which could alter the positive perceptions (or enhance negative preexisting attitudes) police recruits may have toward minority communities. Police academy training should also provide recruits with the necessary tools to appropriately police and respond to diverse and minority communities (Miles-Johnson 2016a). Whilst this may not be the panacea to eradicate levels of bias toward minority group members, it may help to diminish stereotypes associated with minority group behavior as well as assumptive notions (or expectations) regarding interaction and the likely outcomes that may occur (Miles-Johnson 2020). Police organizations around the globe are recognizing the need for specialized in-depth training courses that will teach officers to engage appropriately with members of minority groups as they enter the criminal justice system. These training programs equip officers to offer specialized policing services to diverse groups of people when victimization occurs. This need is reflected in mission statements, targets and goals created by many police organizations to meet the needs of minority communities (Miles-Johnson 2016a; Walker and Archbold 2013).

In an Australian policing context, diversity awareness training provides recruits with the necessary tools to police diverse and minority communities identified by “race” and ethnicity, by religion, and by differences in sexuality and gender. Diversity awareness training for officers in Australia is also about raising officers’ awareness of historically difficult police–minority group relations, such as policing of homeless people, policing of people with mental illness in public spaces, and policing of people with disabilities. The premise of most of the awareness training programs is to enable officers to identify specific policing practices (as well as levels of knowledge regarding minority groups) that can be implemented when officers encounter minority group members in specific policing contexts. The problem with diversity training programs for police is that they create a specific type of tension between the need for officers to be aware of the specific needs of minority group members during citizen engagement, and to be cognizant of the specific types of policing practices and services officers should employ when interacting with members of diverse groups, as well as being able to recognize when members of society are in need of specific help or treatment (Grossman 2017). These foci of “awareness”, however, must not inappropriately contextualize members of diverse groups as vulnerable based solely on aspects of identity or on misperceptions of social or structural inequalities or procedural injustices (Grossman 2017).

Although the emphasis on police awareness training should be that police focus on behaviors rather than identity and communities per se, much has been written on this idea of police awareness training in Australia creating further tension between police and minority group members (see Asquith et al. 2017; Grossman et al. 2013; Miles-Johnson and Pickering 2018). The need for police organizations to implement awareness training can actually further contribute to differential power relations between police and citizens if police do not fully understand the needs of diverse groups beyond identity issues and recognition (see Grossman 2017; Miles-Johnson 2020). Problems also arise regarding finding the balance between generalist policing approaches used during citizen engagement with members of majority groups versus specific policing approaches required during citizen engagement with minority group members (Grossman et al. 2013). The regard for human rights, dignity and respect for all community members, however, should underpin all citizen interactions with police (Grossman 2017; Miles-Johnson 2020). If awareness of diverse groups is to have an ongoing impact for all police–citizen engagement and policing practice, an understanding and deeper knowledge of the specific histories, concerns, beliefs and practices of minority communities should be realized across all aspects of police training and not just within awareness training programs (Grossman et al. 2013)

Most Australian police organizations, however, train recruits over a mandatory 33-week training period, and diversity awareness training only comprises a small component of the skills covered (Miles-Johnson 2020). Typically taught in short teaching periods or blocks of time, diversity awareness training incorporates lectures and operational support skills. During training, recruits are expected to understand and then follow

operational guidelines regarding police engagement and response, whilst emulating the experiences of senior colleagues when interacting with members of diverse groups. The way in which training procedures are introduced and administered to recruits by senior officers and police personnel, therefore, influences the success of the intention of the training program (Haas et al. 2015). In an evaluation of police training programs in Victoria, Australia, Grossman et al. (2013) determined that for cross-cultural awareness training to be successful, qualifying instruction programs as well as ongoing professional development of supervisors and managers facilitating police training is required so that appropriate knowledge, skills and an understanding of cultural and community diversity are consistently taught during awareness training sessions.

In another case study examining police socialization in an Australian police organization, Chan (2001) indicated that field training officers in the academy had a direct influence on police recruits' attitudes. Recruits are heavily influenced by the attitudes and practices of supervisors (Haas et al. 2015) and are inundated with explicit stories and implicit messages about unethical behavior regarding police response, or treatment of victims by veteran officers during training (Blumberg et al. 2016; Miles-Johnson 2016b). Research by Haarr (2001) also suggests senior officers encourage recruits to forget everything learnt in the academy once in the field, which has a negative effect on recruit attitudes toward engagement with minority community members. The influence of senior officers on recruits has been widely researched (see Herbert 1998; Weisburd et al. 2000; Westmarland 2005). The literature posits that police organizations exert heavy influence over the behavior of officers and recruits, which may directly or indirectly impact perceptions of minority group members (Miles-Johnson 2016a). The communication between supervisors and recruits raises questions about how the academy can effectively instill strong values during diversity awareness training programs that will enable recruits to adhere to operational guidelines and rules and regulations once in the field (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Ford 2003; Miles-Johnson 2016b).

Studies examining the discourse of officers in open and private settings regarding police–citizen engagement and police response to minority communities are still emerging in much of the policing diversity literature. Yet this is an area which needs further analysis since differences between police talk and police practice in public and backstage contexts must be considered when examining police attitudes toward minority groups (Waddington 1999). It should be noted that many officers do not hold explicit prejudices toward members of minority communities and are willing to respond or engage with minority group members during times of victimization (Fridell 2016). However, implicit or explicit opinions of minority communities may be expressed differently in public or private settings or when interaction with minority group members occurs (Miles-Johnson 2020). Certainly, this has been found in Australian studies examining police awareness training and the need to explore implicit or explicit levels of bias, prejudice, racism and profiling of minority group members in relation to policing of Aboriginal communities, policing of persons with mental health issues, policing of persons with intellectual disabilities, policing of hate crime, policing of the transgender community, and changing police occupational culture regarding policing diverse groups in Australia (see Birch et al. 2021; Clifford 2010; Constable and Smith 2015; Dwyer et al. 2020; Henshaw and Thomas 2012; Miles-Johnson et al. 2018; Miles-Johnson 2020; Panter 2018; Rogers and Wintle 2021; Thomas and Watson 2017).

Some international police training programs, such as the Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) program, have successfully targeted implicit and explicit levels of police bias toward minority community members. These types of programs have trained officers using scenario-based, judgment-training situations in relation to victim response and victim identification (Fridell 2016). The findings from these types of studies suggest that the solution arguably starts in recruits being instructed well in terms of general victim response and specific victim response in a manner that is appropriate to diverse groups (Fridell 2016). It also starts with recruits being given the right mentoring and training whilst at

the police academy, so negative perceptions of minority communities can be diminished (Miles-Johnson 2020).

One of the main criticisms of diversity awareness training programs is that it is often unclear how training will affect police responses in the line of duty (Israel et al. 2014). Critics argue that diversity awareness training programs often lack applicability to the field of policing, in that officers are unable to relate the training back to their everyday work (Rowe and Garland 2003). Critics of diversity awareness training programs also argue that organizational encouragement of recruits to change their habits when policing or engaging professionally with minority communities is not reflected in many police organization operational manuals or guidelines. The lack of consistency regarding relating the specific needs of policing minority groups to general duties or operational policing techniques is often cited as a main factor (Gover et al. 2011; Lonsway and Archambault 2012; Miles-Johnson 2016a; Renzetti et al. 2015; Spohn and Tellis 2012). This idea has been identified in numerous Australian studies examining police training, which determine that one of the main problems affecting the success of police training in practical policing settings is the lack of cognition many Australian police organizations have regarding the cross-application of policing techniques taught at the academy that can be used in all aspects of police training and not just in relation to policing of specific community groups or members of society (see Clifford 2010; Henshaw and Thomas 2012; Grossman et al. 2013; Miles-Johnson 2020).

In addition, critics of police training programs argue that little emphasis is placed on how officers can develop analytical skills or engage or reason with diverse groups of people during times of victimization, or when diverse groups of people enter the criminal justice system (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010). Yet when officers engage in poor policing of minority communities and misconduct occurs, it typically results from a complex mix of adherence to occupational culture, such as codes of silence (encouraging officers to ignore wrongdoings witnessed) or elements of noble cause corruption (whereby officers utilize unethical and sometimes illegal means to obtain a desired result) (Caldero and Crank 2011; Miles-Johnson 2016a). This represents a flagrant breach of trust awarded to police by the communities they serve. This can have wider repercussions for citizens and police organizations alike during times of victimization. Whilst there may only be a small number of officers responsible for a relatively large proportion of incidents of misconduct toward minority communities, the consequences of this can range from violations of citizens' rights to litigation, criminal and civil prosecution, public disorder and irreversible damage to the reputation of police as a legitimate agency (Brandl and Stroshine 2012; Crank and Caldero 2000; White and Kane 2013). In Australia, numerous pieces of research examining misconduct determine that historical and ongoing aspects of police misconduct have a detrimental effect on the way members of minority groups perceive police interaction and citizen engagement, and minority group members are, consequently, generally mistrusting of police (see Beckley and Kennedy 2021; Dwyer et al. 2020; Miles-Johnson and Pickering 2018; Porter and Cunneen 2021; Porter and Prenzler 2012; Porter 2020).

The police academy, therefore, plays a key role regarding police recruit and protective service officer attitudes toward the policing of minority group members. Realizing the importance of police being accountable to the community, many Australian police organizations have refocused their strategic plans to foster community partnerships and offer more *accessible and equitable* police services for minority communities (Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b). In the 21st century, however, the policing of citizens requires officers to possess increased awareness of the needs of all members of society, especially in the wake of public complaints and mass demonstrations regarding police misconduct and improvements to police accountability measures (Lum et al. 2016). Most police work in Australia, however, occurs away from the public eye (this is similar to other parts of the globe) and often constitutes unsupervised police work at the street level. In these situations, officers use discretionary power typically unseen by the organization and, as such, it is vital that

police officers possess positive levels of awareness regarding minority communities so that professional, appropriate interaction can occur.

3. Materials and Methods

An invitation to participate (as well as a link to the online survey containing 100 items) was emailed to all general duties police recruits (PRs) and protective service officers (PSOs) training at one of the largest police organization academies in Australia (de-identified as part of the ethics agreement). Whilst it was not possible to calculate participant response rates (the police organization facilitated the administration of the emails), the final sample comprised 1585 participants. All participants were informed that their responses were anonymous and would not impact their professional relationship with the police organization.

The final sample consisted of more male participants ($n = 1215$) than female participants ($n = 370$), and a larger number of PRs ($n = 922$) than PSOs ($n = 663$). Whilst the police organization could not be identified, the gender characteristics of the police recruits in this research correspond with the gender characteristics of the police organization, since the organization has a larger number of male police officers (77.8%) than female police officers (22.2%). The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 55 years of age (in Australia, those up to 65 years old can be recruited at PSOs), and the average age of all the participants was 29 years of age. Few participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with only two participants identifying as Aboriginal, and four participants identifying as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Although most of the participants identified as Caucasian Australian, a small number of participants ($n = 180$) identified as a member of a minority racial group or as a member of a minority ethnic group ($n = 178$). The racial and ethnic characteristics of the police recruits in this research also correspond with the overall race and ethnic characteristics of the police organization since the organization has a small number of police officers who identify as a member of a minority group identified by race or ethnicity (9.5%). Almost all the participants stated they are heterosexual ($n = 1502$), and a small number of participants identified as lesbian ($n = 27$), gay ($n = 23$), or bisexual ($n = 33$), and the majority of participants stated they were in a relationship at the time of the research ($n = 1180$).

Although applicants over the age of 21 are not required to have completed specific levels of education prior to joining the Australian police organization (and there are no pre-requisite subjects and no specific educational admission requirements needed for entry eligibility), all the participants reported having completed prior education before starting police academy training. Whilst it is acknowledged that the influence of education has been found to influence police perceptions of conduct with specific groups of people (see Paoline et al. 2015), this study was more concerned about whether the level of prior education achieved influences the level of awareness a participant has regarding minority communities, as well as whether it influences their perceptions of policing of minority communities. Preliminary analysis of the results, however, indicated that there were no significant differences between the level of prior education and the participant's responses. As such, "prior education level" was not included in the final analysis. When answering items about religion, almost a quarter of the participants identified as Catholic ($n = 387$); however, many of the participants stated they had "no religion or religious affiliation" ($n = 699$) or responded "other" ($n = 227$). The participants' demographic information for gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, relationship status, education and religion is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information.

Participants		
Gender:	Male	1215
	Female	370
Sexuality:	Gay	23
	Lesbian	27
	Bisexual	33
	Heterosexual	1502
Member minority racial group:	Yes	180
Member minority ethnic group:	Yes	178
Relationship status:	Single	405
	In a relationship	1180
Education:	Part secondary school	54
	Completion of Yr12/Senior	458
	Trade	168
	qualification/apprenticeship	
	Certificate or diploma	462
	Bachelor's degree	335
	Master's degree	92
	Doctorate	2
Other	14	
Religion:	Catholic	387
	Anglican	78
	United Church	59
	Presbyterian	23
	Greek Orthodox	31
	Buddhist	21
	Islam	31
	Lutheran	8
	Jewish	1
	No Religion	699
	Other	227
N = 1585		

3.1. Measures

To determine the overall levels of awareness of PRs and PSOs of diverse people, an awareness of diverse people scale was created from 15 survey items adapted from previous research conducted by [Getty et al. \(2016\)](#), [MacVean and Cox \(2012\)](#), [Miles-Johnson \(2016a, 2016b\)](#), [Miles-Johnson et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Paoline et al. \(2015\)](#). These items asked PRs and PSOs to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how aware they were that the people they mix with socially identify as one of 15 different ethnic groups or alternative sexual orientations. Items were dichotomized and then added to create a total score out of 15 to create the scale "*General awareness of diverse people*" (Cronbach Alpha .89). Higher scores on this scale indicate more awareness of diverse people.

To understand how perceptions of policing practice influence PRs' and PSOs' perceptions of people from minority communities, a range of attitudinal scales were also created. Following previous research that suggests police perceptions of trust, socialization, interaction, attitudes, temperament, perceptions of proper conduct, use of physical force, adherence to rules, living and work choices with members of diverse communities, pride in the job, and the influence of supervisors on officers' perceptions of people from minority communities during professional engagement in general and specific contexts, we adapted items from studies conducted by [Getty et al. \(2016\)](#), [MacVean and Cox \(2012\)](#), [Miles-Johnson \(2016a, 2016b\)](#), [Miles-Johnson et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Paoline et al. \(2015\)](#). All scales were created by first dichotomizing the items and then creating an additive scale for each respondent.

Based on items used within the Group Value Model (Smith et al. 1998), police recruit *Attitude* was constructed as a scale using 10 items from the survey measuring attitudes toward people from minority communities (Cronbach Alpha .81). PRs and PSOs were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale how much they agreed with statements about how minorities should be treated. Higher scores are indicative of more positive attitudes toward people in diverse communities. *Temperament* is based on six items that ask respondents how acceptable, on a 5-point Likert scale, it is for a member of the police force to lose their temper when dealing with individuals from minority groups (Cronbach Alpha .88). Higher scores on the temperament scale indicate greater tolerance to displays of anger.

The *Proper Conduct scale* (Cronbach Alpha .89) consists of six measures that ask the respondent how aware (on a 5-point Likert scale) they are of police codes of conduct for dealing with individuals from various minority groups. Higher scores on this scale represent greater awareness of these codes of conduct. The *Physical Force Scale* (eight items, Cronbach Alpha .91) asks respondents to indicate how likely it is that physical force is necessary to manage interactions with members of minority groups. Higher scores indicate a greater perception that physical force would be used or is necessary. The *Rule Breaking Scale* (Cronbach Alpha .69) utilizes six items that measure the willingness of the respondent to break the rules of conduct and respect when dealing with members of minority groups. Higher scores on this scale indicate a greater propensity to think rule breaking is ok. The *Job Pride Scale* (Cronbach Alpha .71) uses six items that measure the self-reported sense of pride that respondents have in their jobs as police officers. Higher scores indicate a higher sense of job pride. The *Supervisors Influence Scale* (Cronbach Alpha .88) is composed of six items that measure perceptions of how effective supervisors are in relation to detecting and reporting misconduct regarding unprofessional interactions with diverse groups. We also include an indicator for the participant's classification type (either a police recruit (PR) or protective service officer (PSO)).

To understand PRs' and PSOs' level of awareness of minority communities, we include scales measuring various aspects of interpersonal trust and social embeddedness. These are adapted from previous research by Miles-Johnson (2016a, 2016b), Miles-Johnson et al. (2018), and Paoline et al. (2015). A *Trust scale* (Cronbach Alpha .89) uses ten items that measure how much the respondent trusts people from various groups (higher scores indicate higher levels of trust). The *Socializing scale* (Cronbach Alpha .77) uses six items that measure the frequency of socialization with others (higher scores indicate higher levels of socializing). The *Social experience scale* (Cronbach Alpha .92) uses six items that asks respondents to rate a recent interaction with individuals in the community (higher scores indicate more positive experiences). The *Friends scale* (Cronbach Alpha .77) uses six items to ask respondents to indicate how many of their close personal friends are members of various minority groups (higher scores indicate more friends are minorities). Lastly, the *Live/Work scale* (Cronbach Alpha .81) uses six items to measure willingness to live and work with people from minority communities.

Several biographical controls were also used as controls in the analysis. These included the age of the respondent (years), whether the respondent was female (1), whether the respondent identified as LGBTIQ (1), whether the respondent was religious (1), and whether the respondent identified as a racial minority (1), or ethnic minority (1). The survey items used in the scales are shown in Appendix A. The bivariate correlations for the "perceptions of policing practice" variables and the "level of awareness" variables are presented in Table 2. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations for Perceptions of Policing Practice and Level of Awareness Scales.

	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1)	0.417 **	−0.175 **	0.430 **	0.062 *	−0.161 **	−0.184 **	−0.146	−0.187 **	−0.208 **	−0.101 **	−0.142 **
(2)		−0.158 **	0.524 **	0.162 **	−0.076 **	−0.137 **	−0.070 **	−0.136 **	−0.144 **	−0.048	−0.067 **
(3)			−0.248 **	0.272 **	0.283 **	0.590 **	0.094 **	0.120 **	0.136 **	0.104 **	0.097 **
(4)				0.142 **	−0.148 **	−0.236 **	−0.164 **	−0.146 **	−0.220 **	−0.073 **	−0.075 **
(5)					0.090 **	0.541 **	−0.021	0.076 **	0.005	0.078 **	0.024
(6)						0.243 **	0.135 **	0.115 **	0.113 **	0.147 **	0.081 **
(7)							0.104 **	0.141 **	0.165 **	0.085 **	0.081 **
(8)								0.172 **	0.222 **	0.160 **	0.115 **
(9)									0.337 **	0.575 **	0.167 **
(10)										0.310 **	0.192 **
(11)											0.178 **
(12)											

1 = Attitude; 2 = Temperament; 3 = Proper Conduct; 4 = Physical Force; 5 = Rule Breaking; 6 = Job Pride; 7 = Supervisors Influence; 8 = Trust; 9 = Socializing; 10 = Social Experience; 11 = Friends; 12 = Live/Work Choices. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for PRs and PSOs perceptions of awareness of diverse community generally, during times of victimization and entering the criminal justice system.

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach α
General awareness of diverse people scale	3.70	2.28	0	15	.89
Attitude	10.68	3.63	6	30	.81
Temperament	9.57	3.78	6	27	.88
Proper Conduct	24.54	3.70	6	30	.89
Physical Force	12.72	4.80	8	34	.91
Rule Breaking	24.91	3.72	9	40	.69
Job Pride	16.54	2.38	4	20	.71
Supervisors Influence	16.01	2.50	4	20	.88
Trust	29.71	3.77	13	40	.89
Socializing	20.63	3.64	10	30	.77
Social Experience	23.19	3.55	12	30	.92
Friends	17.89	4.09	6	29	.77
Live/Work Others	20.82	4.01	10	30	.81

N = 1585.

3.2. Analysis

OLS regression analysis was used to assess 19 measures (categorized into two groups—perceptions of policing practice and level of awareness). Variables were entered in two blocks. First, measures representing attitudes specific to the respondent’s perceptions of policing practice were entered in model 1, followed by a full model including biographical controls and measures for level of awareness.

4. Results

Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity had affected the final model. Since the study is applied, unstandardized (B) coefficients (with standard errors) are presented. After controlling for the influence of the perceptions of policing practice measures (Step 1), the model explained 5% of the variance of police officers' perceptions and awareness of diverse community members. However, after controlling for the levels of awareness measures, the total variance explained by the model was 37.2%, $F(19, 1564) = 46.73, p < 0.001$. After controlling for all the variables in the final model, the levels of awareness measures explained an additional 32.4% of the variance in perceptions and awareness of diverse community members, with an R squared change = 0.324 and an F change $(11, 1564) = 67.46, p < 0.001$. In the final model, only six of the measures were statistically significant regarding officers' levels of awareness of diverse communities. One of the perceptions of policing practice measures—the classification of the participants (either a police recruit (PR) or protective service officer (PSO)) ($B = 0.38, \text{Std. Error} = 0.11, p < 0.001$)—and four of the level of awareness measures (gender ($B = -0.36, \text{Std. Error} = 0.12, p < 0.01$), sexuality ($B = 0.35, \text{Std. Error} = 0.10, p < 0.01$), friends of the participants "Friends scale" ($B = 0.23, \text{Std. Error} = 0.01, p < 0.001$) and frequency of socializing with others "Socializing scale" ($B = 0.12, \text{Std. Error} = 0.02, p < 0.001$)) recorded higher unstandardized (B) coefficient values than one level of awareness measure (contact experienced with others while socializing "Social experience scale" ($B = 0.07, \text{Std. Error} = 0.01, p < 0.001$)).

Although only a small number of participants identified as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group, the participants' race and ethnicity did not impact any of the participants' perceptions and awareness of diverse community members. The OLS analysis examining PRs and PSOs' level of awareness of diverse community members is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Analysis examining PRs' and PSOs' Perceptions of Policing Practice and Level of Awareness.

Measures	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE(B)	B	t	B	SE(B)	β	t
(Constant)	2.367 ***	0.625		3.789	-4.534 ***	0.951		-4.767
Classification Type	0.820 ***	0.120	0.178	6.858	0.378 ***	0.105	0.082	3.586
Attitude	-0.031	0.018	-0.049	-1.725	0.004	0.015	0.006	0.258
Temperament	-0.027	0.018	-0.045	-1.499	-0.015	0.015	-0.026	-1.035
Physical Force	-0.008	0.015	-0.016	-0.515	0.002	0.012	0.003	0.127
Proper Conduct	0.007	0.019	0.011	0.341	-0.009	0.016	-0.014	-0.551
Rule Breaking	0.003	0.019	0.004	0.134	-0.018	0.016	-0.029	-1.130
Job Pride	0.018	0.025	0.019	0.724	-0.040	0.021	-0.042	-1.965
Supervisors Infl.	0.021	0.033	0.023	0.625	0.021	0.028	0.023	0.771
Trust					-0.005	0.01	-0.09	-0.424
Socializing					0.118 ***	0.016	0.189	7.291
Social Experience					0.074 ***	0.014	0.115	5.116
Friends					0.225 ***	0.014	0.404	15.959
Live/Work Others					0.013	0.012	0.023	1.074
Gender					-0.362 **	0.115	-0.067	-3.157
Sexuality					0.349 **	0.102	0.070	3.429
Member racial group					-0.193	0.108	-0.037	-1.789
Member ethnic group					0.153	0.218	0.021	0.698
Religion					-0.286	0.221	-0.040	-1.293
Age					-0.006	0.010	-0.013	-0.642
R Squared	0.05				0.37			

$N = 1585$, *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

5. Discussion

Around the globe, police organizations have been criticized for their lack of tolerance and fair treatment when policing or professionally interacting with members of diverse communities (Crank and Caldero 2000; Fridell 2016; Miles-Johnson 2016b; White and Kane 2013). In Australia, regardless of variations in power and responsibility, when policing members of minority communities, Australian officers working as PRs or PSOs will invariably conduct unsupervised police work at the street level, using discretionary power (typically unseen by the organization) in similar policing situations and contexts. As such, it is vital that PRs and PSOs are aware of the specific needs of members of diverse communities. Using an OLS regression, our research explored how PRs and PSOs differ in their levels of perception of diverse communities, and in their perceptions of policing practice and levels of awareness of minority communities. Our findings suggest that one of the policing practice measures—the classification of the participants (either a police recruit (PR) or protective service officer (PSO))—and five of the level of awareness measures (gender, sexuality, friends of the participants, frequency of socializing with others, and the contact experienced with others while socializing) have a significant impact on police officers' awareness of people from minority communities. Thus, the findings from this research offer notable outcomes regarding PRs' and PSOs' perceptions of policing practice and levels of awareness, and how they influence their attitudes toward the policing of minority communities.

The classification of PRs and PSOs into different groups suggests that there are significant differences between groups of officers in their awareness of people from minority communities. Whilst this could be related to the diversity of the individuals within each group, the results of this study indicate that the participants' race and ethnicity did not impact any of their perceptions and awareness of diverse community members, and that whilst the sexuality and gender of the participants did significantly shape the results, the overall sample is dominated by male officers and officers who identify as heterosexual. Given that the final sample comprises more PRs than PSOs, it is likely that the significant differences between each group could be related to the number of heterosexuals, male or non-members of a racial or ethnic minority group within the PR cohort. Whilst the majority of participants identified as heterosexual, and not a member of a minority group, it could be that PRs and PSOs may have chosen not to disclose aspects of their identity that related to sexuality, race and ethnicity in the survey. Previous research by Bernstein and Kostelac (2002) and Colvin (2014) suggest that this may happen because police officers often conceal parts of their identity to avoid differential treatment from colleagues or within police organizations.

It could also be that PRs and PSOs received differential levels of awareness training whilst at the police academy, but this is unlikely given that, in Australia, PRs and PSOs are subject to identical training packages that follow a standard curriculum (Miles-Johnson et al. 2018). As previously stated, police organizations have been heavily criticized for the awareness training that is given to officers, particularly in relation to the amount of time police organizations and academies allocate for awareness training, as well as where the awareness training appears in the timetable of the curriculum. Many awareness programs have also been identified as not being able to strike a balance between training officers in generalist policing approaches used during citizen engagement with members of majority groups versus training officers in specific policing approaches required during citizen engagement with minority group members (Grossman et al. 2013).

According to Colvin (2014), Mennicke et al. (2018) and Miles-Johnson and Death (2020), one strategy implemented by police organizations around the globe over and above police officers being instructed in awareness training is to diversify the workplace and personnel of officers. Inclusionary strategies regarding recruitment posit that a police workforce that is representative of the community it serves will help ensure that the interests of all members of a community being policed will be considered during bureaucratic decision-making processes (Bradbury and Kellough 2011; Miles-Johnson and Death 2020; Wilkins

and Williams 2008). It is argued that law enforcement organizations need to reflect the demographics of the communities they serve to adequately respond to and protect all members of society (Miles-Johnson and Death 2020). As such, it is argued that recruiting individuals from minority groups into police agencies may produce positive outcomes regarding police–citizen encounters because the workplace environment in which police operate highly influences officer behaviors (Shjarback et al. 2017). Rowe and Ross (2015) suggest that police minority recruitment has, in many respects, increased trust between minority communities and police and may be an instrumental factor in reducing negative police encounters between members of minority groups and the police. However, whilst international research suggests that increasing representation has been found to improve police engagement and partnerships with members of minority groups (see Dai et al. 2011; Jones 2015; Rowe and Garland 2003; Workman-Stark 2015), the strategic employment of people from minority groups in police organizations in Australia is an area of policing that is under-researched. It is not yet known how effective this will be over time because research examining the effects of strategic recruitment drives by Australian police organizations is still in its infancy (Miles-Johnson and Death 2020).

It is also important to note that recruitment of members of minority groups into policing may not be a panacea that solves all police–minority community related problems (Rowe and Ross 2015). While there is research that suggests the strategic recruitment of officers from minority groups into police organizations may improve police relations with all members of a community (including those from minority groups), it cannot be assumed that officers from minority groups will make better or worse police officers than officers from majority groups, and it cannot be assumed that officers from minority groups will necessarily police members of the community better or worse than other officers (Miles-Johnson 2020). However, the inclusion of officers from minority groups into police organizations will certainly diversify police officers and civilian personnel, and it may better equip police organizations to engage in complex problem solving and tactical thinking regarding police engagement with minority group members (Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich 2013; Miles-Johnson 2020; Panter 2018).

Whilst the results in this study speak toward increasing the representation of minority group members in policing, our findings specifically identify the need for increasing representation of officers from specific groups such as the LGBTIQ community. The final model indicates that participant sexuality has a positive effect on the outcome of the model in terms of the participants' awareness of diverse communities. Stein (2004) argues that individuals within LGBTIQ communities typically bond together and support one another due to the diversity of their expressed sexualities, and this may have influenced the model. In this study, however, only a small sample of participants identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Previous research also suggests that the presence of heteronormativity within police organizations can override any open or public expressions of sympathy police officers could potentially express toward individuals or groups of people identified by non-heterosexual sexualities (Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b). Yet the model indicates that heterosexual-, gay-, lesbian- and bisexual-identifying PRs and PSOs are all aware of diverse people generally, even though most participants identified as heterosexual.

The gender of the participants also had an interesting effect on the model, in that being female had a negative effect on/was negatively related to participants' awareness of diverse communities. Much has been written about the effect the presence of female police officers has on the attitudes of male police officers (see Brown 1998; McCarty and Garland 2007), but the sample in this study included more male than female PRs and PSOs, and the results indicated that males are significantly aware of the general diversity of individuals within the communities being policed. Although the recruitment of diverse police officers is important and also includes the hiring of more female officers, this result indicates that more needs to be done by way of training officers, rather than just relying on hiring the "right sort of person". Given the majority of the sample comprised white male heterosexual PRs and white male PSOs, this is an interesting result since previous

research indicates that white male heterosexual officers are often identified as the culprits of abuse or misconduct directed toward members of diverse community groups (Weitzer 2000), although research examining non-white, non-heterosexual officers and perceptions of minority group members is lacking in the extant literature.

In addition, previous research indicates that male police officers are more likely than female police officers to give negative responses when asked about perceptions of minority group members generally, regardless of the positive influence female officers have on male colleagues (Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b). This result suggests that the ethos of heteronormative masculine behavior typically upheld by police organizations has little effect on PRs' and PSOs' levels of awareness of diverse people. However, how white, male, heterosexual PRs and PSOs respond to members of diverse communities in different situations and contexts whilst enforcing laws and maintaining public order in a professional setting will depend largely on adherence to policies or supervision. It will also depend on the values they uphold, the workplace culture and practices learned over time, as well as individual levels of self-control (see Donner and Jennings 2014). This result has broad relevance since past research shows that police agencies in the United States and United Kingdom, as well as in other nations around the globe, have been criticized for identity-relevant policing of minority groups. This has resulted in members of minority communities being treated in an unfair manner and differentially policed (Miles-Johnson 2016a, 2016b; Miles-Johnson and Pickering 2018).

The findings in this research raise questions about identifying appropriate solutions or strategies to facilitate PRs' and PSOs' ongoing levels of awareness of diversity regarding policing of people from minority groups, since this can contribute to consistent police practice during on-the-job performance (Paterson 2011). It has been argued that ongoing diversity awareness training for police will increase and maintain officers' knowledge regarding the needs of diverse communities in specific contexts, as well as increase awareness of the diversity of citizens within police organizations in relation to updating policing practices and policies (Fridell 2016). Yet previous research also indicates that this may not necessarily have a positive effect on officer attitudes or perceptions of people from minority communities since many police organizations are concerned that officers have negative attitudes toward changes in policy and policing practice. Police organizations are also concerned about the negative attitude officers have toward ongoing police training and occupational competence, especially when training is associated with future interactions with diverse minority communities (Moran and Sharpe 2004). As stated, if police officers are to possess an awareness of diverse groups and their awareness levels are to have an ongoing impact on all forms of police–citizen engagement and policing practices, it is vital that officers have an understanding and deeper knowledge of the specific histories, concerns, beliefs and practices of minority communities, which should be realized across all aspects of police training and practice, and not just within awareness training programs offered to PRs and PSOs at the academy as a competency measure (Grossman et al. 2013).

This raises questions about the different contexts in which PRs and PSOs interact with people from diverse minority groups, as well as how contextual contact affects police officers' perceptions of minority communities. Yet the model indicates that PRs and PSOs are positively influenced in their general awareness of diverse people due to friendships with people from diverse groups, their frequency of positive socialization with diverse people, and the types of social interactions experienced. This raises questions about the frequency of socialization officers have with diverse members of society prior to entering the academy and the policing profession. Research by Birzer and Tannehill (2001), Miller et al. (2003) and Miles-Johnson (2016a) suggests the frequency of exposure of police officers to members of minority communities in both professional and civilian contexts will increase levels of acceptance and awareness between both groups, particularly since training methods, imparted knowledge and skills regarding policing people from minority communities will become obsolete over time. The results in this study, therefore, raise questions about the effectiveness of police diversity awareness training regarding general

awareness of minority communities and how officers should engage and interact with diverse groups of people. The findings also raise questions about the effectiveness of ongoing (long-term) education and the strategies used by police organizations in training programs, such as diversity awareness training programs, to increase the positive ties between PRs and PSOs and people from these groups.

Limitations

Whilst the results of this study demonstrate differences in the awareness levels of PRs and PSOs of members of diverse community groups generally, this study does have several limitations. Police officers beginning police training typically display high levels of integrity and often express overtly positive attitudes toward interaction with members of the public. As such, their focus on doing well and the conscious or unconscious awareness of reporting high levels of awareness regarding diverse people may have influenced higher levels of socially desirable responses in this study. The effects of police culture and how it influences police work throughout an officer's career were also not included in this research. What recruits say and think, as well as how they act, may vary greatly once they are out of the academy and employed full-time as a police officer (Miles-Johnson 2016a). Furthermore, these factors may not impact the measures that influence police officer perceptions of diverse groups of people or individuals during times of victimization, and they also may not impact the measures that influence police officer perceptions of diverse groups or individuals entering the criminal justice system, particularly once operational training ends and professional life begins. As stated, early training and operational skills imparted at the academy is often undone once police recruits graduate from the academy and enter policing as professional police officers. Since policing practices alter over time and are influenced by officers' experiences and positive and/or negative engagement with different, diverse groups of people, it is vital that awareness training is ongoing and not restricted only to academy settings. Replicating diversity awareness training programs during various times throughout officers' careers may overcome these limitations and may also remove any effects of social desirability on the responses to the variables. Furthermore, the survey results are not generalizable since the survey was only administered to a sample of officers (PRs and PSOs) from one police organization in one state within Australia. However, despite these limitations, the single "case study" results from this research may speak directly to the experience of other officers in police organizations across Australia, and in other organizations around the world regarding police officers' perceptions of policing practice and level of awareness, and how this may influence perceptions of engagement with minority communities.

6. Conclusions

A lack of awareness regarding policing minority communities has serious outcomes for police organizations. It diminishes confidence in police and police organizations to effectively engage with all members of society (particularly during times of victimization). It erodes police confidence in their ability to fulfill duties and responsibilities effectively and without citizen complaints and increases the likelihood that officers will not provide the same level of service to all members of the community when citizens engage with, and/or enter, the criminal justice system. Police and citizens alike pay the price when police lack awareness of minority groups. Enhancing police awareness of minority groups requires police organizations to facilitate ongoing diversity awareness training and education, thereby enabling police officers to perform better when working professionally in the field and to maintain awareness of diverse people. Police organizations must focus on updating the knowledge regarding minority communities over a prolonged period and increase officer awareness training in relation to levels of implicit and explicit bias held toward members of minority communities. This may help to address bias and improve on-the-job performance when minority group members are victimized or when they require specific engagement techniques and processes. The results from this study show that

the participants' gender and sexuality, their friends, their frequency of socialization with diverse people, and the type of social interaction experienced with diverse people have a significant impact on police officers' awareness of people from minority communities. These results have not been found in previous Australian studies analyzing PRs' or PSOs' awareness of minority group members or in other Australian studies examining police awareness training and its impact on officers' awareness of minority group members. The results from this study, therefore, offer a unique perspective regarding solutions to better improve PRs' and PSOs' levels of awareness of minority groups. As a solution, increased recruitment of people from diverse groups will certainly diversify the identities of police officers and civilian personnel within police organizations, and may better equip police organizations to engage in complex problem solving and tactical thinking regarding police engagement with minority group members. In addition, ongoing police diversity awareness training should incorporate partnerships and collaborations between members of minority community groups and police organizations. Combining such objectives may enhance or alter police officers' awareness of minority communities and diminish bias, which could result in misconduct or unprofessional policing.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: This study was conducted according to the guidelines of National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)—Updated 2018 and The QUT University Human Research Ethics Committee approval: 1900000652 23 July 2019.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to ethics protocols.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Survey Items Used in Scales

Diversity Awareness Scale

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Black African

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Jewish

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Arab

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Chinese

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi)

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Eastern European

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—European

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Japanese

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Vietnamese

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Indigenous Australian

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Gay man

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Lesbian

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Bisexual

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Transgender

How aware are you if any of your friends (people you mix with socially) come from the following background or identify as—Intersex

Perceptions of Policing Practice

Attitude scale

As a citizen it is OK to be rude when-people from different races, ethnic groups and religions are rude to you

As a citizen it is OK to be rude when-people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different are rude to you

As a member of *** it is OK to be rude when-people from different races, ethnic groups and religions are rude to you

As a member of *** it is OK to be rude when-people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different are rude to you

Being respectful is nearly impossible when you are dealing with-people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

Being respectful is nearly impossible when you are dealing with-people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

Temperament scale

Members of *** can't be expected to keep their emotions in check when-people from different races, ethnic groups and religions are being disrespectful

Members of *** can't be expected to keep their emotions in check when-people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different are being disrespectful

Members of *** can't be expected to keep calm and not react when-people from different races, ethnic groups and religions are being disrespectful

Members of *** can't be expected to keep calm and not react when-people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different are being disrespectful

With certain minority groups such as people from different races, ethnic groups and religions it is more useful for members of *** to be aggressive than to be courteous

With certain minority groups such as people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different it is more useful for members of *** to be aggressive than to be courteous

Physical force scale

Members of *** are often in situations with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions where it is more appropriate to use physical force than to keep on talking to a person

Members of *** are often in situations with people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different where it is more appropriate to use physical force than to keep on talking to a person

Some people such as people from different races, ethnic groups and religions can only be brought to reason the hard, physical way

Some people such as people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different can only be brought to reason the hard, physical way

Sometimes forceful actions are very educational for civilians such as people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

Sometimes forceful actions are very educational for civilians such as people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

If members of *** don't show that they are physically tough they will be seen as weak by people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

If members of *** don't show that they are physically tough they will be seen as weak by people whose gender (transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

Proper conduct scale

The *** rules for proper conduct regarding interaction with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions have been made clear to me

The *** rules for proper conduct regarding interaction with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different have been made clear to me

The *** takes a very tough line on improper behavior by members of *** regarding unprofessional interaction with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

The *** takes a very tough line on improper behavior by members of *** regarding unprofessional interaction with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

The *** recognizes and rewards proper behavior by members of *** when interacting with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

The *** recognizes and rewards proper behavior by members of *** when interacting with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

Rule breaking scale

Members of *** are very respectful in their treatment of people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

Members of *** are very respectful in their treatment of people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

Sometimes you have to break the rules if you have to interact with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

Sometimes you have to break the rules if you have to interact with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

Expecting members of *** to always follow the rules when interacting with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions is incompatible with getting the job done

Expecting members of *** to always follow the rules when interacting with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different is incompatible with getting the job done

Job pride scale

I am proud to think of myself as a member of ***

When someone praises the accomplishments of a member of ***, I feel like it is a personal compliment to me

I tell my friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances that I am proud to be a member of ***

I feel good when people describe me as a typical member of ***

Supervisors influence scale

Supervisors in the *** are conscientious about detecting and reporting misconduct regarding unprofessional interaction with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions

Supervisors in the *** are conscientious about detecting and reporting misconduct regarding unprofessional interaction with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different

The supervisor training of members of *** regarding interaction with people from different races, ethnic groups and religions is very effective

The supervisor training of members of *** regarding interaction with people whose gender (male/female/Transgender) and/or sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.) is considered different is very effective

Levels of Awareness

Trust scale

How much do you trust people from various groups—People in your family

How much do you trust people from various groups—People in your neighborhood

How much do you trust people from various groups—People you know personally

How much do you trust people from various groups—People you meet for the first time

How much do you trust people from various groups—People of another race

How much do you trust people from various groups—People of another ethnicity

How much do you trust people from various groups—People of another religion

How much do you trust people from various groups—People of the same sex as you

How much do you trust people from various groups—People whose sexuality is different to yours

How much do you trust people from various groups—People who are transgender

Socializing scale

How often do you socialize with people—from a different racial community to yourself?

How often do you socialize with people—from a different ethnic community to yourself?

How often do you socialize with people—from a different religious community to yourself?

How often do you socialize with—people who are of the same sex as you?

How often do you socialize with—people who express a different sexuality to you?

How often do you socialize with—people who are transgender?

Social experience scale

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people from different racial communities?

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people from different ethnic communities?

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people from different religious communities?

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people of the same sex as you?

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people who expressed a different sexuality to you?

Thinking about a recent cross community event that you took part in, how would you describe your contact with people who are transgender?

Friends scale

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends do you have-from other racial communities?

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends do you have-from other ethnic communities?

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends do you have-from other religious communities?

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends-are the same sex as you?

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends-express a different sexuality to you?

Thinking about your close friends, how many friends-are transgender?

Live/work scale

If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of your own race or in a mixed-race neighborhood?

If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of your own ethnicity or in a mixed ethnic neighborhood?

If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighborhood with people who were of the same religion or in a mixed religious neighborhood?

If you had a choice, would you prefer to work with only people who were of the same sex as you or with a mixed group of men and women?

If you had a choice, would you prefer to work with only people who expressed the same sexuality as you or with people who expressed other types of sexuality or sexual identities?

If you had a choice, would you work with people who identified as transgender?

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