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Intersection of Indigenous Peoples and Police: Questions about Contact and Confidence¹

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Abstract: Despite much anecdotal, journalistic, and statistical evidence of their oppression by colonial and neocolonial police practices, little is known about Indigenous peoples' attitudes towards the police in Canada. The theory that involuntary police-citizen contacts increase citizens' mistrust, fear, and dissatisfaction and, ultimately, decreases confidence in the police was advanced. Hypotheses arising from this historical-theoretical context were tested with the 2014 panel of Canada's General Social Survey, including 951 Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) and 21,576 non-Indigenous white participants. Indigenous identity and involuntary contacts were both significantly associated with a lack of confidence in police, $p < .001$. As hypothesized, the odds associated with involuntary contacts (odds ratio [OR] = 2.66) were stronger than those associated with being Indigenous (OR = 1.81). While the hypothesized ethnicity by contact interaction was not observed, Indigenous participants (5%) were two and a half times as likely as non-Indigenous white participants (2%) to have had relatively frequent (two or more) involuntary contacts with the police during the past year. Therefore, at the population level Indigenous people are at much greater risk of coming into involuntary contact with the police and of consequently lacking confidence in police. Policy implications and future research needs are discussed.

Keywords: confidence in police, Indigenous, involuntary contact, Canada, General Social Survey

Résumé : Malgré un grand nombre de preuves anecdotiques, journalistiques et statistiques de l'oppression des peuples autochtones par des pratiques policières coloniales et néocoloniales, nous en savons très peu au sujet de leur attitude envers la police canadienne. La théorie voulant que des contacts involontaires entre la police et les citoyens augmentent la méfiance, la peur et l'insatisfaction du citoyen qui, au final, a moins

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confiance en la police a été proposée. Les hypothèses découlant de ce contexte historique théorique ont été testées lors du panel de l'Enquête sociale générale canadienne de 2014 qui comprenait 951 participants Autochtones (Premières Nations, Métis ou Inuit) et 21 576 participants blancs non autochtones. L'identité autochtone et les contacts involontaires étaient tous deux associés de façon significative à un manque de confiance en la police, $p < 0,001$. Comme l'hypothèse le veut, les cotes associées aux contacts involontaires (rapport des cotes [RC] = 2,66) étaient plus fortes que celles associées au fait d'être autochtone (RC = 1,81). Bien que l'hypothèse concernant l'interaction entre l'éthnicité et le type de contact ne soit pas observée, les participants autochtones (5 %) avaient 2,5 fois plus de chances que les participants blancs non autochtones (2 %) d'avoir des contacts involontaires relativement fréquents (deux ou plus) avec la police au cours de la dernière année. Par conséquent, au niveau de la population, les peuples autochtones ont beaucoup plus de chances d'entrer en contact involontaire avec la police et d'avoir moins confiance en la police. Les conséquences sur les politiques et les besoins en matière de recherche sont examinées.

Mots-clés : confiance en la police, autochtone, contact involontaire, Canada, Enquête sociale générale

Relations between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and the police in Canada have historically been marred by colonial practices that have perpetuated a lack of confidence and satisfaction, mistrust, and fear (Brown and Brown 1973; Cao 2014; Cheng 2015; Morgan 1970). Colonizing and abusive practices that have contributed to these deleterious relationships have been long-standing and predate the founding of Canada as a country. One of the early acts by the Government of Canada was the establishment of the paramilitary North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873. The NWMP, the forerunner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), was charged with securing Canadian sovereignty in the west through the pretext of fair trade, intimidation, and force. Clearly, the directive to the NWMP was to quash opposition to national expansion by dominating and controlling resistors, particularly Indigenous peoples (Historica Canada 2019; Brown and Brown 1973). The police, as an extension of and directed by the state, have been and continue to be instruments of colonialism and neocolonialism, aiding in the government's control of and power over Indigenous peoples' lives (Brown and Brown 1973; Comack 2012; Lithopoulos and Ruddell 2011; Nettelbeck and Smandych 2010; Palmater 2016). For example, and demonstrating the power of this colonial discourse, Nettelbeck and Smandych (2010) argued that historical police actions were undertaken based on the understanding that Indigenous peoples needed to be protected, civilized, and assimilated. These narratives were entrenched in the Indian Act and other policies related to Indigenous peoples (Palmater 2014; Tobias 1976). Until as late as the 1930s, a pass system was in place, restricting the movement of Indigenous peoples on and off reserves. The police played a pivotal role in the enforcement of the pass system, along with "Indian agents." Indigenous peoples found to be violating the pass system were subject to arrest and were brought back to their reserve (Monchalin 2016). According to Indigenous scholars Sugar and Fox (1989: 475), "police are for us administrators of oppressive regimes whose authority we resent and deny."

Arguably, colonialism and neocolonialism have also resulted in policies and practices that result in Indigenous peoples being over-policed (Rudin 2005). Thus, as Zimmerman (1992) argued, over-representation of Indigenous peoples throughout the criminal justice system begins with police. Police have the discretion to decide where and who to surveil, who to arrest, when to lay charges, and what charges to lay (Bradford, Jackson, and Stanko 2009; Frank, Smith, and Novak 2005; LaPrairie 1995; Zimmerman 1992). For example, in

Edmonton, Indigenous women are nearly 10 times as likely to be carded (stopped randomly by police) than white women (Huncar 2017). Because police reporting standards are not uniform across the country, it is difficult to quantitatively assess police surveillance and contacts with Indigenous peoples. Although limited, the available evidence suggests that over-policing of Indigenous peoples is occurring. Over-policing leads to mistrust and a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system on the part of Indigenous peoples (Rudin 2005). However, few studies have examined these attitudes on a larger scale.

Abuses of Indigenous peoples by police are also evident in the literature. For example, abuses of Indigenous women and girls by the police in British Columbia were documented by Human Rights Watch (2013). Further, numerous cases of the police verbally and physically harassing, assaulting and forcibly removing, restraining, and transporting Indigenous peoples to the outskirts of cities where they are left to fend for themselves have also been presented in the mass media and academic literature (Comack 2012; Razack 2016). The latter abuses have been referred to as “starlight tours” (Comack 2012; Reber and Renaud 2005). Seemingly, some police officers and organizations arbitrarily deem Indigenous individuals as problematic based on bias as opposed to probable grounds, suggesting the objectification and dehumanization of both the bodies and the activities of Indigenous peoples (Razack 2016). This has resulted in serious emotional and physical harm, including even death, being inflicted on Indigenous peoples (Comack 2012; Human Rights Watch 2013; Razack 2016; Reber and Renaud 2005).

The focus of coroner inquests and police judiciary reviews into these types of injustices tend to focus on individual pathologies of the Indigenous peoples – problematic substance abuse, for example – thus taking these events out of their full contexts (Razack 2016). Given the police responsibility for safeguarding the well-being of individuals who have been detained, this is concerning from a policy perspective. These abuses are not just the responsibility of individual police officers but reflect graver systemic biases, such as was found in a recent report by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (2018) regarding Thunder Bay’s police organization. In their duties as enforcers of law and social order, some police officers and organizations engage in practices that reflect the discourses of elimination, eviction, and assimilation (Comack 2012; Razack 2016). This is arguably a result of mandates directly related to the historical colonization and present-day neocolonial views and treatment of Indigenous peoples. It seems Indigenous peoples have every reason not only to lack confidence that the police will act in their best interests, but also to feel mistrustful and fearful of them. Despite the clear-cut questions concerning the violation of people’s human rights and associated social injustices, there have been few studies of Indigenous peoples’ attitudes towards the police (Cao 2014; Cheng 2015; Weinrath, Young, and Kohm 2012). The results from the few relevant studies are presented below.

Through an examination of public satisfaction with police in Saskatoon, Cheng (2015) found that Indigenous peoples have less satisfaction with police than non-Indigenous people. Examining the interaction effect of Indigenous identity and living in a high-crime neighbourhood on satisfaction with police in Winnipeg, Weinrath et al. (2012) found that Indigenous peoples were twice as likely to be dissatisfied with police than non-Indigenous peoples living in other parts of Winnipeg. This study demonstrates the importance of examining interaction effects and within-group differences across various regions in Canada. Both Cheng and Weinrath et al.’s studies were limited in that they were restricted to urban locales.

A recent scoping review and meta-analysis estimated the link between police contacts and attitudes towards the police to be three times stronger than that of race/ethnicity in North America (Alberton and Gorey 2018). Their study, however, lacked the meta-analytic power to confidently estimate these associations among the few Canadian studies it included. This research synthesis also identified needs for national studies of specific racialized/ethnic groups and specific types of contact with the police. Previous studies have typically aggregated diverse racialized/ethnic groups into one aggregate “visible minority” group and vaguely studied the grouped responses relative to their positive or negative attitudes towards the police. Cao’s (2014) national study in Canada, which included a robust representation of Indigenous peoples, was a notable exception to some of this field’s limits. Cao discovered that Indigenous peoples have significantly less confidence in the police than other Canadians do. However, his study seemed limited in other ways. Its linear regression models emphasized statistical rather than practical significance. Furthermore, contact with the police was not a hypothesized independent predictor. This approach is arguably victim-blaming in that the context of contacts with police is not considered to be of primary importance. Moreover, Cao’s key outcome was focused on the perceptions of local police rather than overall confidence in the police. In this article, we intend to extend the generalizability and the practical significance of Cao’s consequential work. Further, we will apply an intersectional frame of analysis to gain a deeper understanding of how much confidence Indigenous peoples who have had contact with the police then have in police.

Intersectionality, as coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), emerged initially as a mechanism for understanding how individual and social identities, specifically gender and race, interact multiplicatively to affect lived experiences of black women. Since then, intersectionality has evolved to include analyses of not only gender and race/ethnicity but also other social categories of difference. Further, Potter (2013) advocates for the deployment of intersectional criminology to further understand the impact of interconnected identities and statuses of individuals and groups on their experiences with crime, the social control of crime, and other crime-related issues. Existing research related to Indigenous peoples’ attitudes towards police tends to focus on single categories of difference, such as ethnicity, age, or socioeconomic status as predictors. Understanding the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples and police, we hypothesize that there will be a significant multiplicative effect of being Indigenous and having involuntary contacts with police on lack of confidence in police. In other words, we believe that the impact of involuntary contact(s) with colonial authority (i.e., police) will be greater for Indigenous peoples than for white people.

The theoretical and practical importance of understanding the associations between involuntary and negative contacts and attitudes towards the police have been demonstrated for decades (Bradford et al. 2009; Cheng 2015; Cheurprakobkit 2000; Comack 2012; Human Rights Watch 2013; Scaglione and Condon 1980; Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum 2003; Skogan 2005, 2006). Evidence suggests involuntary contacts may be much more problematic than voluntary citizen-police contacts (Bradford et al. 2009; Cao 2011; Ren et al. 2005). The relationship between contact with and attitudes towards the police is clearly complex (Schafer et al. 2003). At the heart of this complexity are aspects of the nature of the contact (voluntary versus involuntary and citizen-initiated versus police-initiated), frequency of contact, and satisfaction with police actions throughout the contact (Tyler, Fagan, and Geller 2014). Although Schafer et al. (2003) did not make a clear distinction between police-initiated and involuntary contact, He et al. (2018) did. They expanded the conceptualization and

suggested that not all involuntary contacts were police-initiated. Consequently, these contacts may include reporting a crime and/or victimization. He et al. (2018) suggested that “involuntariness” is key and that these types of contacts with the police contribute to poorer attitudes by citizens in relation to the police. Appreciating this, we propose to test this notion among contemporary Canadian adults, Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous white people.

Building upon Cao’s observations (2014), the present study aimed to fill key Canadian and Indigenous-specific knowledge gaps identified by Alberton and Gorey (2018). Using the most recent national Canadian data, it examined the relative strength of the associations of Indigenous identity and involuntary contacts with the police on the lack of confidence in the police. The authors’ hypotheses were that there would be a negative association between involuntary police contacts and confidence in the police, and that the negative association between involuntary police contacts and confidence in the police would be stronger for Indigenous peoples. Although a few of the studies reviewed by Alberton and Gorey suggested an interaction of race/ethnicity and contact, none tested this type of relationship in Canada.

Methods

Sample

The study sampling frame was the 28th panel of Canada’s *General Social Survey* (GSS), collected in 2014 (Statistics Canada 2016). It was the sixth panel to collect data on Canadians’ perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system, as well as their experiences of victimization. However, it was only the second cycle that included the ethnicity option “Aboriginal” (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples). The accessible population comprised non-institutionalized Canadian residents 15 years of age or older in any of the 10 provinces of Canada. Data for the country’s three territories were restricted in terms of access by Statistics Canada. Respondents were selected by a new random digit-dialling methodology that incorporated landline and cellular telephone sampling frames and was estimated to include 99% of all Canadian residents (Statistics Canada 2016). The response rate for the national survey was 53%.

Measures

Outcome. Confidence in the police was a single-item measure. The survey question was “How much confidence do you have in the police?” Its response choices were: *a great deal of confidence*, *some confidence*, *not very much confidence*, or *no confidence at all*. For this analysis it was dichotomized: *a great deal of confidence* or *some confidence* versus *not very much confidence* or *no confidence at all*. Benoit et al. (2016) demonstrated the predictive validity of this simple measure of confidence in police in their study of another vulnerable population: sex workers. Five studies of related attitudes towards the police such as satisfaction or “perceived quality of service” also demonstrated the criterion validity and utility of using such single-item measures (Cheng 2015; DeAngelis and Wolf 2016; Dowler and Sparks 2008; Garcia and Cao 2005; Shelley et al. 2012).

Predictors. Four reviews of research on attitudes towards police all found that racialized group status/ethnicity significantly affects attitudes towards police (Alberton and Gorey 2018; Brown and Benedict 2002; Decker 1981; Peck 2015). Three of them found that contacts with the police also have a significant effect on attitudes towards police. Aligned with identified

knowledge gaps and analytic opportunities presented by the GSS, independent variables included individual and contextual predictors. Individual predictors were ethnicity, age, education, gender, marital status, and involuntary contact with the police. Household income was excluded from our central analysis as it was missing for 14% of the respondents and such non-response rates differed significantly between Indigenous (20%) and non-Indigenous white participants (13%), $p < .001$. Contextual predictors included measures of perceived social disorder, perceived neighbourhood crime, and feelings of safety.

Individual predictors. Ethnicity was dichotomized. Those who identified as Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) people are referred to as Indigenous peoples. The second ethnic category was non-Indigenous white people, hereafter referred to as white. All people who identified as members of other visible minority groups were excluded from this analysis. Age was recoded into practically meaningful thirds: older adults (55 years of age or older), middle-age adults (35 to 54), and youths and young adults (15 to 34). Age was treated as categorical as opposed to continuous because the dataset did not disaggregate age to the continuous level. Highest education level achieved was categorized into four groups: university, college or trade school, high school, or less than high school. Gender and marital status were straightforwardly dichotomized. Involuntary contact with the police was measured by the following four survey questions: *During the past 12 months did you come into contact with the police* (a) *for a traffic violation*, (b) *as a witness to a crime*, (c) *because of a problem with your emotions, mental health, or alcohol or drug use*, and/or (d) *because of a family member's emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use*. The involuntary contact summary measure had a score range from 0 to 4. This summary measure was computed by combining the four types of involuntary contact with police. Thus, respondents may have experienced none, one, two, three, or all four types of contact. It should be noted that this is a conservative estimate of contacts because it is possible that a respondent had more than one of any of these types of contacts in the past year. The original variables were dichotomized as yes or no. A similar measure of involuntary contact has been criterion validated through observations of its significant associations with lack of confidence in police and with perceptions of their ineffectiveness in theoretically consistent ways (Cao 2011; He et al. 2018).

Contextual predictors. Perceived social disorder was measured by seven questions. Respondents were asked *how much of a problem* each of the following were in their neighbourhood: (a) *noisy neighbours or loud parties*, (b) *people hanging around on the streets*, (c) *garbage or litter lying around*, (d) *vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles*, (e) *people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour*, (f) *people using or dealing drugs*, and/or (g) *people being drunk or rowdy in public places*. Response choices from the original survey were *not a problem*, *a small problem*, or *a moderate to big problem*. The seven questions relating to social disorder were factor analysed using principal components analysis. It yielded one factor explaining 45.7% of the variance among the entire set of questions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity both indicate that the questions were significantly interrelated. Thus, the summary social disorder index with a theoretical score range of 0 to 14 seemed quite reliable in this context (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$). Cao (2014) found similar evidence of the reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$) of a similar nine-item scale as well as evidence in support of its criterion validity. Perceived neighbourhood crime was measured by the following question: *Compared to other areas in Canada, do you think your neighbourhood has a higher amount*

of crime, about the same, or a lower amount of crime? Feelings of safety were measured by asking respondents: *When alone in your home in the evening or at night, do you feel very worried, somewhat worried, or not at all worried?* Similar measures of crime and safety were significantly and predictably associated with confidence in the police (Cao 2014; O'Connor 2008). Descriptive profiles of the Indigenous and white participants are displayed in Table 1.

Interaction predictor. A multiplicative, two- by three-way interaction term between Indigenous identity and involuntary contact with police was computed. It was included in the full model with all other predictors. The Indigenous identity variable was based on one dummy variable (Indigenous identity) and the reference category (white). The involuntary contact variable included in the interaction term was based on two dummy variables (one or two or more contacts) and the reference category (zero contacts).

Table 1: Descriptive profiles of Indigenous (n = 951) and non-Indigenous white (n = 21,576) participants

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous White	
	Number ^a	Percentage	Number ^a	Percentage
Involuntary Contact with Police*				
None	732	77.0	17,741	82.2
One	176	18.5	3,476	16.1
Two or more	43	4.5	359	1.7
Age*				
55 or older	329	34.6	10,042	46.5
35 to 54	333	35.0	6,770	31.4
15 to 34	289	30.4	4,764	22.1
Highest Level of Education*				
University	138	14.5	5,761	26.7
College or trade school	272	28.6	6,443	29.9
High school	298	31.3	5,924	27.5
Less than high school	243	25.6	3,448	16.0
Sex				
Female	503	52.9	11,539	53.5
Male	448	47.1	10,037	46.5

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous White	
	Number ^a	Percentage	Number ^a	Percentage
Marital Status*				
Married or common law	469	49.3	11,846	54.9
Not married or partnered	482	50.7	9,730	45.1
Social Disorder Index (0 to 14)*				
Not a problem (0)	376	39.5	10,345	47.9
Small problem (1 or 2)	237	24.9	6,135	28.4
Moderate to big problem (3 to 14)	338	35.5	5,096	23.6
Neighbourhood Crime (Compared to Canada)*				
Lower	719	75.6	16,702	77.4
About the same	172	18.1	4,150	19.2
Higher	60	6.3	724	3.4
Feeling of Safety Alone at Night*				
Not at all worried	829	87.2	19,302	89.5
Somewhat or very worried	122	12.8	2,274	10.5
Confidence in Police*				
Some or great deal of confidence	815	85.7	20,147	93.4
None or not very much confidence	136	14.3	1,429	6.6

^a Number of participants in each subsample.

* Ethnic group differences were statistically significant, Pearson's χ^2 test, $p < .05$.

Analysis

Analyses focused on prediction of the discrete outcome, lack of confidence in the police (none or not very much). Recoding of the originally ordinal and skewed outcome allowed for best fitting the data to the most powerful and predictive logistic model. Logistic regressions tested the main predictive effects of ethnicity and involuntary contacts with police, as well as their interaction (two- by three-way and two- by two-way) before and after other individual and contextual factors were entered (Hosmer, Lemeshow, and Sturdivant 2013). The models were built based on a theoretically important interaction and based on evidence from previous studies (Cao 2014; Cheng 2015). The interaction was tested and then removed from the final model. Because of its overlapping variance with the main effects, once it was realized

that the interaction effect was null, we removed it from the model so as to expose the full impact of the main effects themselves: ethnicity and number of involuntary contacts. Their practical and statistical significance were estimated with odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) derived from regression statistics. All variables were coded such that ORs greater than one indicated greater odds of lacking confidence in the police. The initial, uncleaned GSS database included data for 26,102 potential participants. All but two study variables had less than 2% missing data. The perceived safety and social disorder variables, respectively, had less than 5% and 7% missing data. Little's (1988) missing completely at random (MCAR) test found that these missing data were random. The final, cleaned analytic database included 22,527 respondents with valid data on all study variables. The Indigenous sample (4.2%) seemed to well reflect Indigenous peoples' representation in other national samples of Canadians (e.g., 4.9% in the 2016 census; Statistics Canada 2017). Finally, the large available subsamples of 951 Indigenous and 21,576 white participants ensured analytic power. These analyses had ample power ($1 - \beta = .99$) to detect anticipated large between-group differences with much confidence (ORs of 2.00 or larger within 95% CIs [two-tailed α of 0.05]; Faul et al. 2009; Fleiss, Levin, and Paik 2003).

Results

Bivariate analyses revealed that all between-ethnic group differences except gender were statistically significant (Table 1). Of central interest, Indigenous peoples reported substantially more involuntary contacts with the police than did white people. In fact, Indigenous peoples were more than twice as likely to report two or more such involuntary contacts with police during the past year (4.5% versus 1.7%). Further, and consistent with existing research, the Indigenous participants were much more socio-demographically vulnerable than the white participants (Palmater 2014). They were younger, more likely to be unmarried or otherwise unpartnered, and much more likely to have not completed high school (25.6% versus 16.0%). Alternatively, the white participants were quite advantaged. For example, they were nearly twice as likely to have been able to achieve a university degree (26.7% versus 14.5%). Finally, the contextual variables together seem to depict greater perceived neighbourhood-level vulnerability among the Indigenous participants as well. Essentially, they expressed significantly more fear of living in neighbourhoods that they believed were more fraught with delinquency and crime. And Indigenous peoples nearly twofold more prevalently perceived the crime rate in their own neighbourhoods as higher than the rest of Canada's (6.3% versus 3.4%).

Regression-based findings are displayed in Table 2. Model 1 included only one predictor, ethnicity. It estimated that the odds of an Indigenous person lacking confidence in police was 135% greater than for a white person. Model 2 included only one predictor: involuntary contact with police. It estimated that the odds of a person who reported relatively frequent (two or more) involuntary contacts with the police also lacking confidence in police were 295% greater than among those who had no involuntary contacts. This general pattern of findings was maintained after accounting for other individual and contextual factors in Models 3 and 4. In Model 4, which included all variables, the strongest predictor of lack of confidence in the police remained two or more involuntary contacts with the police (OR = 2.66). Further and hypothetically supportive, the odds of identifying as Indigenous and lacking confidence in the police remained nearly twice that of those who identified as white (OR = 1.81). After the influence of each predictor was adjusted for the influences of

Table 2: Binary logistic regression models estimating predictors of lack of confidence in police (n = 22,527)

	Models 1 & 2 ^a				Model 3				Model 4			
	B	SE	OR	95% CI	B	SE	OR	95% CI	B	SE	OR	95% CI
Ethnicity** (White)												
Indigenous	0.86	0.10	2.35	(1.95, 2.84)	0.69	0.10	1.99	(1.64, 2.42)	0.59	0.10	1.81	(1.48, 2.21)
Number of Involuntary Contacts with Police** (None)												
One	0.58	0.06	1.79	(1.59, 2.03)	0.47	0.06	1.60	(1.41, 1.81)	0.40	0.07	1.49	(1.31, 1.69)
Two or more	1.37	0.13	3.95	(3.07, 5.08)	1.18	0.13	3.24	(2.50, 4.19)	0.98	0.14	2.66	(2.04, 3.46)
Age** (55 and older)												
35 to 54					0.38	0.07	1.47	(1.29, 1.67)	0.29	0.07	1.33	(1.17, 1.52)
15 to 34					0.59	0.07	1.81	(1.58, 2.06)	0.49	0.07	1.63	(1.43, 1.86)
Education** (University)												
College or trade school					0.31	0.08	1.37	(1.17, 1.59)	0.36	0.08	1.43	(1.23, 1.67)
High school					0.42	0.08	1.52	(1.30, 1.77)	0.48	0.08	1.61	(1.38, 1.88)
Less than high school					0.48	0.09	1.62	(1.36, 1.92)	0.57	0.09	1.77	(1.48, 2.11)
Sex** (Female)												
Male					0.48	0.05	1.62	(1.46, 1.80)	0.58	0.06	1.78	(1.59, 1.98)

	Models 1 & 2 ^a				Model 3				Model 4			
	B	SE	OR	95% CI	B	SE	OR	95% CI	B	SE	OR	95% CI
Marital Status** (Partnered)												
Not married or partnered					0.27	0.06	1.31	(1.17, 1.46)	0.22	0.06	1.24	(1.11, 1.39)
Social Disorder** (Not a problem)												
Small problem									0.28	0.07	1.32	(1.15, 1.51)
Moderate to big problem									0.70	0.07	2.02	(1.77, 2.31)
Neighbourhood Crime** (Lower)												
About the same									0.32	0.07	1.38	(1.21, 1.56)
Higher									0.90	0.10	2.46	(2.01, 3.02)
Safety** (Not worried)												
Somewhat or very worried									0.48	0.08	1.62	(1.39, 1.89)

Notes: *B* = unstandardized coefficient; *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval; *OR* = odds ratio. Baseline for each category is indicated in respective brackets.

^a Unadjusted, single predictor models.

** All regression coefficients were statistically significant, Wald's χ^2 test, $p < .001$.

all the other predictors, their associations with lack of confidence in the police remained practically large (ORs most typically 2.00 or larger), precise (consistently narrow CIs), and highly significant (all $p < .001$). The pattern appears to be related to a convergence of systemic oppressions that place people at risk within neighbourhoods that are poorly resourced and rundown. Specifically, those at greatest risk tend to be young, less well-educated men residing in high-crime and otherwise disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Finally, we attempted to enter the interaction of Indigenous identity and involuntary contact with the police into the final model. It did not significantly enter the model ($p > .05$). So interestingly, the large effect of involuntary contacts with the police was observed to be similar for both Indigenous and white people. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that ethnicity does not matter here. The large main effect of being Indigenous notwithstanding, recall that Indigenous peoples were more prevalently exposed to the risks of such, relatively frequent, involuntary contacts with the police (4.5% versus 1.7%).

Discussion

By applying an intersectional frame of analysis, this study aimed to predict the practical and statistical significance of the associations between Indigenous identity and involuntary contacts with the police on confidence in the police in the provinces of Canada. The main predictive effects of Indigenous identity and involuntary contacts with the police, as well as the multiplicative interaction effect of being Indigenous and having involuntary contact(s) with the police, were tested using logistic regression models. Descriptively, Indigenous participants were much more demographically and socio-economically vulnerable than white participants. Our findings also suggested greater perceived neighbourhood-level vulnerability among Indigenous participants. These findings are consistent with other contemporary descriptions of Indigenous peoples' vulnerability and marginalization in Canada (Palmater 2016; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRCC] 2016).

Analytically, the strongest predictor of lack of confidence in the police was having had two or more involuntary contacts with the police during the past year. The odds of those with two or more involuntary contacts lacking confidence in the police were nearly threefold greater than the odds among those without any such contacts. Accounting for all other study factors, those who reported Indigenous identity still had nearly twice the odds as their white counterparts of reporting lack of confidence in the police. Interestingly, income did not enter an exploratory regression, and despite its forced entry all other variables remained statistically and practically significant. Thus, socio-economic status or social class does not seem to explain much, if any, of this study's Indigenous-specific findings.

Finally, the multiplicative interaction of Indigenous identity by involuntary contact with the police was not significant in any of the models. So, contrary to our hypothesis of a significant interaction, the large association of involuntary contacts with the police was observed to be similar for Indigenous and white people. In other words, the effect of involuntary contact with police did not differ significantly between Indigenous and white people. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that ethnicity, or Indigenous identity, does not matter. The attribution of risk at the population level is a function of three factors of which the effect size or strength of association (e.g., OR) is only one. It is also important to consider the size of the population at risk and the prevalence of exposure to the risk factor being studied (Northridge 1995). In this instance, the central exposure or risk factor is a

social one, involuntary contact with the police. The large main effect of being an Indigenous person notwithstanding, Indigenous peoples – who are 1 of every 20 Canadians – were also much more prevalently exposed to the risk of relatively frequent, involuntary contacts with the police (5% versus 2%). These findings strongly suggest that Indigenous peoples have substantially more involuntary contacts with the police and, consequently, much less confidence in the police than white people do.

The intersection of policing and Indigenous peoples brings us to a juncture of trying to make better decisions and employ promising policies and practices regarding the relationships between the police and those they engage with. All have a vested interest as stakeholders in the safety and security of the public. Unfortunately, the us versus them mentality fosters behaviours that adversely affect the public's confidence in the very people – police – who should be trusted to serve and protect them. In the same vein, the public's anticipation that the police are not trustworthy and/or are out to get them contributes to a shared culture fed by anxiety, fear, indifference, avoidance, and disengagement. Not surprising then, stereotypes abound, victim blaming flourishes, and finger-pointing proliferates. The intersection of being Indigenous and being subject to involuntary contacts with police likely profoundly affects the lives of those who embody these experiences. As such, this study explored the potential interaction of Indigenous identity and involuntary contacts with the police. Intersectionality, including the analysis of interaction effects, accounts for the assumption that oppressive societal discourses and institutions are interconnected and thus their effects should not be assessed singularly (Crenshaw 1989; Reitmanova and Henderson 2016; Smith 2005). Despite the insignificance of the interaction effect with this dataset, the findings of the present study quantitatively support Sugar and Fox's allegation that "police are for us administrators of oppressive regimes whose authority we resent and deny" (1989: 475). However, the findings also point towards anti-oppressive solutions.

Furthermore, in many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, attitudes towards authority figures who are in positions of power and have the ability to influence and exercise control over the lives and liberties of Indigenous peoples are complex and decidedly different from those of the Western world (McCue 2018). Authority, power, and control are not absolutes for Indigenous peoples as they are for others. Thus, authorities may simply see a refusal, either by passive or active resistance by Indigenous peoples, as a challenge and/or a rejection of the content of what they are attempting to accomplish, and they often respond accordingly. This reaction may be accurate in some instances, but arguably in an overwhelming number of instances when the relationship or interaction goes wrong, Indigenous peoples, based on their unique worldviews and experiences of oppression, are reacting to the authority and power and less to the content of the encounter. However, Griffiths and Clark (2017) found that in the aftermath of several devastating events involving Indigenous peoples and the police, significant positive changes to the dynamics between First Nations communities and police occurred because of collaborative initiatives. These authors concluded that systemic changes within large police forces such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are possible and cited the changes in Yukon as a result of collaboration between police and First Nations communities as a case in point.

Limitations and future research needs

This study's external validity was limited by its exclusion of the three Canadian territories. These are geographically, socio-economically, and culturally unique places where many Indigenous

peoples live. How people envision and experience the world, coupled with where they live, affects their contacts with the police as well as their resultant attitudes towards the police. For example, imagine the possibly different life space experiences with the police of Indigenous peoples living in urban versus rural and remote places, or of Indigenous peoples residing on or off reserves. Moreover, one may legitimately wonder about relevant differences between First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples generally and their identification as unique peoples with distinctive cultures and communities. Presently, the Canadian census and other routine national surveys, such as the GSS, lack such publicly available ethnic and geographic detail. If we are to advance understandings about important commonalities and the diversity of Indigenous peoples' experiences in Canada, we need to ethically engage Indigenous peoples and their community leaders as collaborators in participatory research to advance understanding and co-create promising practices, policies, and laws that are in the best interest of the people most affected.

We hypothesized, but did not observe, a significant ethnicity by involuntary contact interaction. This is not necessarily a limitation, but we think that it might be related to a limitation of our contact measure. This field's historical-theoretical context has centrally dichotomized citizen–police contacts as involuntary or police-initiated versus voluntary or citizen-initiated. But there are other potentially important concepts that may be confounded by those dichotomies, including procedural justice (Tyler et al. 2014). For example, in this study's four-item measure of contact, the citizens' roles were all involuntary. However, these contacts ranged from facing criminal accusations and being witness to a crime to being involved with the police because of one's own or a family member's mental health concerns, including problematic substance use. These varying encounters, as well as how procedurally just they were perceived to be (Tyler et al. 2014), may confound the involuntary-voluntary conceptualization as it relates to confidence in police. Such conceptualizations are well worth exploring in future studies, especially when related to Indigenous peoples. Further, it is undeniable that regardless of Indigenous peoples' perceptions of these encounters or confidence in police, they are over-represented in what are categorized as involuntary contacts with police.

Perhaps another avenue of future study is to explore the complex, intersecting sites of oppression experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada and how these contribute to their over-representation across involuntary contacts with police. For example, future research might look at the multiplicative, two- and three-way interaction effects of Indigenous identity by gender, by socio-economic status, and by neighbourhood (census tract) poverty levels on involuntary contacts with police. This would advance knowledge in this important field from structural and intersectionality perspectives. It would also help to inform criminal justice and larger social practices and policies, with a focus on the impact of oppressive societal structures as opposed to individual pathologies. This seems convergent with the call of intersectionality theorists for more complex study of interlocking systems of oppression and privilege (Bowleg 2012; Hulko 2009; Potter 2013). Understanding the intersecting sites of structural oppression that are contributing to Indigenous peoples' higher rates of involuntary contacts with police might help tailor more specific interventions to advance trust and confidence between the police and certain Indigenous peoples living in particular places. Further, future research should employ mixed methods to facilitate the examination of interaction effects across all levels of social organization.

In conclusion, this study strongly suggested that the number and nature of contacts between citizens and the police are more influential than the racialized group status or ethnicity of

citizens in affecting relative senses of trust or mistrust between them, and ultimately, in shaping citizens' relative perceptions of confidence or lack of confidence in the police. Given the observed importance of citizen–police contacts, policies designed to more positively affect those contacts, especially contacts between Indigenous peoples or members of other racialized or ethnic minority groups and the police, could positively affect each group's attitudes towards the other and so have large preventive impacts. First, one may envision myriad multicultural awareness interventions in the recruitment, screening, and training of police officers designed to affect cultural adaptations on the job– adaptations, for example, that would diminish the relative risks of Indigenous peoples being stopped at random or for suspicions of traffic, alcohol/drug-related, or any other violations or offences. Second, one may envision the probably great preventive impacts of bringing the police and citizens, especially Indigenous peoples, together in other than the very contentious and stressful circumstances of law enforcement. Classic examples are community policing initiatives and public safety gatherings where the police interact with people in their own environments. Such ought to be more prevalently offered and evaluated. Third, for the police to be more effective in their relations with Indigenous peoples, a greater effort must be made to educate officers and police organizations about the differing concepts of power and authority and how and why Indigenous peoples often react negatively when confronted by those in positions of power and authority. This whole issue has been exacerbated by residential schools, where power and authority exercised by those in charge of the schools was absolute, with little recourse available on the part of the victims (TRCC 2016). The reaction by Indigenous peoples, either survivors or their heirs, to the abuses of power and authority in residential schools adds an additional layer to the multiplex account for their cultural attitudes towards power and authority. Finally, in addition to policies that might positively affect interactions between all citizens and the police, but especially between Indigenous peoples and the police, policies that ensure equitable educational and related labour market and economic opportunities for all Canadians ought to be advanced. This study also observed that a large socio-economic divide persists between Indigenous and white people and so between the neighbourhoods in which we live. Social and political actions should be taken to eliminate neocolonial social policies that serve to maintain any such injustices. These policies and practices ought to be replaced with anti-oppressive policies and practices, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all vestiges of oppression across every facet of Canadian society.

Note

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