

Research re Barriers to Reporting Hate Crimes to the Police

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Canadian studies:

Asian-Canadian community tackling difficulties in filing hate complaints in other languages - The Globe and Mail

- Irfan Chaudhry - Director of MacEwan University's Office of Human Rights, Diversity and Equity:
 - While a phone call makes the most sense if an urgent matter occurs, increased demands on police services across the country means there may not be an immediate response. Having the option of whether a phone call to 911, follow up with the hate crime police officer or an online space [...] are ways that can supplement.
 - Be able to provide other options for at least documenting and providing people a space to report. At least people know there's a space that these things to get taken seriously [by the police] and that these experiences, as unfortunate as they are, will get validated through different community networks of support.

Policing hate crime in a Multicultural society observations from Canada - Barbara Perry

- Page 129:
 - Typically, only 15-20% of such victimizations are ever reported to police largely because the victims anticipate either lack of concern, or some form of secondary victimization (hostility, further abuse, or inaction).
 - This disempowers victims. They perceive themselves to be without legal redress. Conversely, it empowers perpetrators, by signifying the validity and acceptability of their actions. Police abuse and police neglect are enabling; they communicate to the public at large that, by virtue of their racial transgressions, people of color forfeit civil protections. Like other marginalized groups, people of color are implicitly and explicitly designated "assailable" by agents of the law.
- Page 134/135:
 - Without uniform data on hate crime, we are left with a limited understanding of the distribution and dynamics of hate crime in Canada. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to then develop a unified approach to the problem. What we have is a patchwork of data, with some regions underreporting or not reporting at all."
- Page 139:
 - Efforts at policing hate crime must, first and foremost, centre around improving community perceptions of law enforcement. If police are to be

effective in responding to hate crime, citizens must be willing and able to trust them. In short, this means building enhanced relationships between the police and the diverse communities they serve.

Chinese Canadians' experiences of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism: implications for identity, negative emotion, and anti-racism incident reporting

- Page 4:
 - Under-reporting racism incidents contributes to the perpetuation of racism, as perpetrators face few consequences and the public is not made aware of the prevalence of the issue
 - Those who perceive that their ethnic group is not accepted by the larger society (foreigner objectification) express concern that reporting can cause negative consequences and perceptions, such as harassment, discrimination, loss of social status
- Page 9:
 - Study finds that for every one point increase in perceived foreigner objectification (on a 5 point scale), the likelihood that they report to authorities decreases by 1.8 times to authorities. Hence, those who do not feel accepted as Canadians are less likely to report incidents to avoid further discrimination and psychological harm
- Page 13-14:
 - Widespread awareness is a first step in creating a social norm of resisting racism
 - Social support that supports inclusion and asserts Chinese Canadians in Canadian society could facilitate reporting racism incidents
 - Provide a support system for minority members to report using different platforms that ensure accessibility. An example includes the ["responding to hate toolkit" of the Chinese Canadian National Council](#)
- Page 14
 - Given the prominence of discrimination and racial harassment during the pandemic, researchers and government should become more proactive in identifying strategies to address racism (cf. Bourhis, 2020), such as greater inclusion and representation in media to reduce perpetual foreigner objectification, normalization of reporting racial harassment, and making reporting more accessible are essential to alleviate the effects of this crisis.

International studies:

Responding to hate crime: Escalating problems, continued failings - Niel Chakraborti (UK)

- Page 392/393:
 - The process of reporting can in fact exacerbate existing concerns on the part of the victim, rather than provide the necessary levels of reassurance. Although some victims could take a degree of comfort from sharing experiences with friends or family members, the overwhelming majority across all strands of victims would have welcomed the opportunity to tell the police or another authority figure if the barriers to reporting did not feel so insurmountable.
- Page 396:
 - Rather than being hard to reach, many members of minority communities in this research paper felt that the method of engagement taken by the police/government was not effective.

Hate crime reporting barriers: why are victims reluctant to report? - Tackling Hate

- Often, victims undertake a [cost-benefit analysis](#) when considering whether to report a hate incident. Victims often feel that the reporting process is time-consuming, emotionally draining, and unlikely to yield a positive outcome. Thus, the investment needed from the victim to report and the high personal costs far outweigh the benefits of doing so. The result is a sense of apathy and the feeling that there is little point in reporting hate crime.
- Victims may decide to not report if the reporting mechanism is not easily accessible to them. Inaccessibility may occur due to inadequate location or poor wheelchair access of reporting centres, or when the victim is unfamiliar with 'digital' methods of reporting or has limited access to the internet or a phone.
- Language limitations - some victims from ethnic communities and immigrants who are not proficient in English or are not able to speak English at all may not feel confident that they will be understood if they report. Those with a disability may not be able to articulate what happened or have difficulty understanding the questions they are asked. Language limitations create a barrier when the reporting systems fail to adjust their procedures to some victims' special linguistic or communication needs.

Why is it vital that we have an online reporting option for hate crimes? - US Case Studies

- Though the studies cited are US-based, we may argue that policing in Canada is decentralized, as it is in the US. Therefore, the studies shed light on how local law

enforcement agencies in Canada can better develop and implement their approach to police hate crimes.

- Decentralization means that although law enforcement agencies share common federal and state laws, each agency is autonomous in terms of how it orients to the law, develops policy to enforce the law, and actually enforces the law. Such autonomy grants the agency significant freedom and opportunity to create and implement (or not) its own approach to crime control based upon its assessment of the nature of its specific community problems and its organizational commitments to addressing such problems (Crank 2003).

- First:

With a survey of law enforcement officers from a stratified national sample in the US, Balboni and McDevitt (2001) asked officers how important they believed several factors were in whether a victim decided to report an incident of hate crime. Rated most important for victims were "afraid of police contact" (65.6% rated this moderately to very important), "victim embarrassed" (63.5%), and "afraid the police won't take it seriously" (62.4%). According to the police, then, the most salient factor is the police/victim interaction. Therefore, by improving the community/law enforcement relationship, the police can simultaneously assuage the victimization process and improve hate crime reporting processes.

This research mostly argues that departments could overcome barriers to reporting "through enhanced community interaction," such as speaking at community meetings, communicating with people through direct mailings, and identifying the assigned officer for a particular area. We may argue that while enhanced community interaction remains an important step in encouraging hate crime victims to contact the police, providing an online report option for hate crimes could be a more efficient way to ease the victims' tension and help overcome the barriers in hate crime reporting.

- Second:

Research has shown that the effect of adopting a hate crime policy is not evenly distributed across law enforcement agencies and the communities in which they reside (Grattet & Jenness, 2008). The magnitude of the effect of having a policy is contingent upon the local enforcement context. Community-agency integration shapes the effects of policing policies such that agencies that are more saturated in their communities are more likely to see policies translated into instrumental outcomes (Grattet and Jenness 2008, p.518). To combat anti-Asian hate crimes and achieve our shared goal of making Vancouver/ BC/ Canada a safe and welcoming city/ place for all, we need community-agency integration, which can start from having an accessible online hate crime reporting system in English and other Asian languages that is inclusive of the entire Asian community.

- References:

- Balboni, J., & McDevitt, J. (2001). Hate Crime Reporting: Understanding Police Officer Perceptions, Departmental Protocol, and the Role of the Victim: Is There Such a Thing as a Love Crime? *Justice Research and Policy*, 3(1), 1–27.
- Crank, J. P. (2003). Institutional Theory of Police: A Review of the State of the Art, *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 26(2), 186–207.
- Grattet, R., & Jenness, V. (2008). Transforming Symbolic Law into Organizational Action: Hate Crime Policy and Law Enforcement Practice. *Social Forces*, 87(1), 501–527.

Similarities with issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community

[LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions - Neil Chakraborti & Stevie-Jade Hardy, University of Leicester](#)

- Page 31:
 - The findings from this project suggest that many victims are unlikely to share their experiences of targeted hostility because of the perceived amount of time and emotional stamina required to report a hate incident and because these factors were often underappreciated by statutory and voluntary organisations. Many participants also spoke of being unfamiliar with and confused by existing reporting mechanisms. In order to break down these barriers the police and other relevant organisations should evaluate their own reporting processes in consultation with people from LGB&T communities, and take steps to simplify them.
 - Research evidence shows that generic assumptions are often made about why victims do or do not report, without accounting for differences across backgrounds, cultures, ages and prior experiences of victimisation. This project found that decisions around reporting hate crime could be influenced by age, ethnic and religious background, and how confident or comfortable someone is with their own sexuality or gender identity. Consequently, organisations should avoid using a 'one-size fits all' approach to reporting and instead tailor different reporting pathways to meet the needs of specific groups.