Community Perceptions of Victoria Police: Implications for Legitimacy, Satisfaction and Cooperation

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Abstract

Previous research has suggested that satisfaction with the police is connected to public willingness to cooperate with police. A key indicator of satisfaction with the police is that they are perceived to wield legitimate authority. Therefore, it is important that the police behave in ways that can be judged by communities to be fair and honest enabling them to maintain legitimacy. In policing research, legitimacy is conceptualised in terms of normative factors – process-based measures such as how the police treat people – and instrumental factors, which are outcome-based, such as how effective the police are perceived to be. Acceptance that the police are legitimate increases trust, forming the basis of a partnership between the police and communities. As well as making the job of policing easier, this approach contributes to the resources allocated for policing going further.

This study investigates the legitimacy of the Victorian state police in one Police Services Area in Melbourne, Australia - the Monash Local Government Area (LGA). Through six focus groups, 18 interviews and one email response, a total of 31 individuals' general perceptions of Victoria Police among the communities in Monash LGA were collated. These were then analysed in the context of their implications for satisfaction with police and community propensity to cooperate with police. This LGA was chosen as Monash had seen declining results in the official government survey in the areas that assess police legitimacy over a period of about a decade. It was anticipated that more detailed qualitative data would illuminate why this might be the case, as it was not able to be gleaned from the survey alone. Most research in this field is undertaken quantitatively which makes the current study a rare example of an in-depth approach yielding rich data through qualitative research.

Three main themes emerged: (1) Change versus stagnation, (2) Legitimacy and (3) Trust. There had been many changes in Monash LGA over the preceding decade including rapid urban development and increasing ethnic diversity in the population. It was believed that police infrastructure had not been invested in appropriately and law and order was not able to meet the challenges fraught by the changes which had impacted public perceptions of Victoria Police. In relation to legitimacy, there was both positive and negative feedback from participants concerning how their local police were performing. Overall, most participants thought that there were several areas where the police could improve, which had implications for legitimacy. Some of these areas lay within the police's control such as responsiveness and reassurance, whereas others (such as the media and the law itself) were not factors that the police could necessarily do anything about. The final theme, trust in the police in Monash LGA, was also demonstrated to be a phenomenon that was impacted by many factors. It was evident that trust in the police was dependent upon there being a relationship between Victoria Police and the communities in Monash. Thus, a relationship model of legitimacy of authority was demonstrated to be highly relevant.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.
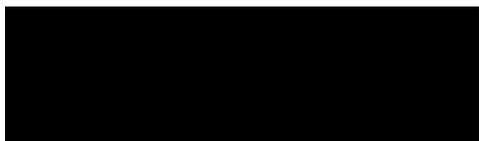
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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Introduction

Public perceptions of the legitimacy of the police are closely connected to community willingness to comply and cooperate with police (Tyler 1990). Police work is easier, and cheaper, if the police attain the support of communities and satisfaction is sustained. Given the emphasis in contemporary policing on public management concepts, cost effectiveness and financial efficiency are key tenets of maintaining a modern force (Raymond & Julian 2015). Public support for the police also has particular contemporary relevance in relation to intelligence and information-gathering, for example, in counter-terrorism strategies. In addition, contemporary societies comprise diverse values which means that interpretations of police actions can also be diverse. It is crucial that the police behave in ways that can be judged by a majority of the community to be fair and honest, enabling them to maintain credibility and maximise levels of satisfaction. Widespread acceptance that the police are legitimate in this way, increases trust and allows the police to carry out their role in partnership with communities with associated implications for police resources and even community cohesion. Measuring public satisfaction with the police is, therefore, vital. Currently, most research in this area – on the part of the police, governments and academically – consists of large-scale, predominantly quantitative surveys. The present study employs an in-depth, qualitative approach to examining perceptions of the police (and the factors that influence them) in the Monash Local Government Area (LGA) in Melbourne, Victoria. The detail that this qualitative study contributes will enrich police legitimacy research, enlivening the current canon and areas of debate.

1.2   Background

The Monash Local Government Area is situated in the South-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, in the Australian state of Victoria, approximately 20 kilometres from the central business district (CBD). Its population makeup is heavily influenced by both historical and recent migration with 44.7% of residents born overseas, 39.2% of whom originate from a non-English speaking background (Community Profile 2014). Thus, Monash LGA is above average in terms of ethnic diversity within the Melbourne metropolitan area. In terms of socio-economic status, Monash LGA is also above the Victorian average, ranking 14th out of 80 on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage for Victorian LGAs, meaning it is a relatively economically-advantaged area (Community Profile 2014). From a law enforcement perspective, Monash is serviced by the Glen Waverley, Oakleigh, Clayton and Mount Waverley Police Stations. Currently, each Police Services Area (PSA) in Victoria is surveyed quarterly by the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP). A portion of this survey is dedicated to gauging community perceptions of and satisfaction with local police (The Social Research Centre 2017). Results from these sections of Monash PSA's surveys have seen a slight decline over the past decade in areas that contribute to normative measures of police legitimacy, notably in the areas of

perceptions of police honesty and the notion that the police treat people fairly and equally (Victoria Police 2015, pers. comm. 3 March).

1.3   Theoretical framework and literature

Underpinning this thesis are the concepts of legitimacy, trust, procedural justice, ethnicity and cultural context. In order that authority be accepted in society, those with responsibility must be perceived as legitimate (Tyler 1990; 2004; Sunshine & Tyler 2003). It is imperative that people voluntarily cooperate with the demands of authority, thus enabling authorities to carry out their functions effectively without exceeding their capacity in terms of resources (Tyler 2004). The police exemplify such authority. The success of contemporary policing is dependent upon public legitimacy (Tyler 1990; 2004; Skogan & Frydl 2004). If society views the police as a legitimate authority, the literature suggests there is greater satisfaction with the police and communities are more likely to accept that their actions are fair and valid (Tyler 1990; 2004; Sunshine & Tyler 2003). Importantly, generalised support for the police leads to increased likelihood of voluntary compliance and cooperation. Therefore, fewer resources are required to ensure successful execution of duties (Tyler 2004).

Legitimacy of authority is linked to the concept of trust. Trust facilitates contemporary relationships between institutions and individuals or groups in society. It provides the basis that a transaction undertaken will be honoured by both parties against the same set of conventions, reducing the risk for each and assuring that, as a norm, individuals can go about their business assuming authorities will act in the way they expect (Giddens 1990). Furthermore, Bradford and Jackson (2010: 2) describe the mechanisms of trust in public institutions in terms of 'institutional trust' which relates to the way the public feel about an institution overall - not generally subject to large degrees of change over time. 'Encounter-based interpersonal trust', on the other hand, refers to public responses to an institution's reliability based on actual incidents where they may have met with representatives of that institution such as police members. This latter type of trust is subject to fluctuation and can, thus, be influenced by the behaviour of individual police members, such as how a member of the public perceived their treatment during a police encounter. Clearly, the level of trust in an institution like the police affects how legitimate they appear to the public as they are unlikely to be perceived as legitimate if they are known to be untrustworthy; a component integral to procedural justice approaches to policing. The concept of procedural justice encapsulates normative approaches to police legitimacy.

Police legitimacy is defined in terms of instrumental factors – for example, police effectiveness at fighting crime – and normative factors, such as treating all members of the public equally and with respect (Tyler 1990; Sunshine & Tyler 2003). These paradigms are also known as the accountability versus reassurance models of policing (Skogan 2009) or the outcome versus process-based approaches (Van Craen & Skogan 2014). Normative (reassurance or process-based) factors refers broadly to the way the police are perceived to act towards the public and treat people (Tyler 2004; Skogan 2009). For instance, procedural justice is the idea that dealing with citizens in a manner that is interpreted as fair in

its mechanisms will lead to greater cooperation with police demands and voluntary compliance with the processes of law and order as well as greater satisfaction with the police overall (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler 2004). Procedural justice enhances perceptions of police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012), although, there is also research that suggests that procedural justice may not be as important with regard to satisfaction with police in all cases. For example, in some studies diverse ethnic groups have been shown to value evidence of police effectiveness (an instrumental factor) more highly (Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013; Van Craen & Skogan 2014).

Contemporary Australian society is multi-ethnic and multicultural in its composition. Research to date has demonstrated that so-called 'ethnic minorities' (Van Craen & Skogan 2014) in Western societies, like Australia, have historically experienced a fragile relationship with the police (Skogan & Frydl 2004; Cherney & Hong Chui 2009; Meredyth, McKernan & Evans 2010; Reiner 2010). Indeed, issues around ethnicity have consistently been demonstrated to be a key element in influencing attitudes towards and perceptions of the police in Australia (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Sivasubramaniam & Goodman-Delahunty 2008; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Therefore, studies of police/community relations – including this research – must necessarily account for the context of multiculturalism in which modern police work is undertaken in Australia. Ethnicity as a factor in perceptions of the police is connected to another theme that will inform this study: the cultural context of policing.

From 'broken windows' (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008) and 'zero tolerance' (McLaughlin 2013: 496 & 497) to The Macpherson Inquiry (Reiner 2010) and footage of the Los Angeles police's treatment of Rodney King (Skolnick & Fyfe 1994), police are high-profile and newsworthy, never more so than in the current age of the 24-hour news cycle and digital media (Jewkes 2015). The contemporary Australian context, to illustrate, involves balancing anti-discrimination agendas (Caldwell 2014) with counter-terrorism operations that appear to target certain cultural groups (ABC News 2014) - with the media both friend and foe when it comes to successes and failures in all these areas. Similarly to ethnicity, context is a key component of the theoretical framework in a study of police/community relations. Cultural context provides a backdrop to the local experiences that provide detailed data for this project. In a global, digital media age, the wider picture impacts upon local lives and local affairs do not emanate from a cultural vacuum.

1.4   Main contributions to field

This study offers rare qualitative research in a discipline dominated by quantitative studies. This is valuable because of the level of detail and potential for enrichment of knowledge that qualitative research can provide (Wright & Bouffard 2016). This project demonstrates the value of a qualitative approach in an area dominated by quantitative research, with the level of detail able to be gained from qualitative interviews and focus groups offering new insights into the topic areas below.

This thesis also builds on research concerning ethnicity as a factor in perceptions of the police. This is important due to Australian society becoming increasingly ethnically diverse, including the Monash

LGA (Community Profile 2014). Counter-terrorism policing provides just one occasion when police relations with ethnically diverse communities can make a tangible difference to safety outcomes for the whole of society (Gardner 2017). Therefore, the police need to have up to date knowledge about the best way to ensure ethnically diverse communities are on side.

Significantly, it is a subject of debate in the field as to whether procedural justice approaches to policing are as effective at increasing positive perceptions of the police amongst ethnically diverse communities as they appear to be with populations more generally (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013; Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). Therefore, as emphasised above, providing more detailed data in this area is timely. Although this study will be area-specific, it will provide a framework of factors that should have relevance elsewhere.

The present study will also contribute to the debate around encounters in policing research. Skogan's well-known studies (2006; 2009; 2012) offer evidence that encounters between the public and the police almost always have negative results concerning perceptions of the police. Other authors, such as Tyler (1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008), argue that encounters can be beneficial for police/community relations as long as the police operate under the auspices of a procedural justice approach. The current study contributes to this discussion at the same time as providing evidence in relation to the procedural justice framework itself.

The findings of this study will inform recommendations to assist the police in one Melbourne LGA to be more effective both in gauging community opinion and acting upon any concerns revealed; thus, being more responsive generally to the needs of their area. While there is a specific focus on the Monash LGA, it is nevertheless expected that the data generated by this study will prove applicable to Victoria and Australian police practices more generally and provide useful data to inform police policy and practices.

1.5   Research aims

Therefore, this research has four main aims:

1. To generate knowledge as to why the NSCSP results for Monash PSA may be declining.
2. To document the Monash LGA communities' perceptions of their local police.
3. To understand the factors that influence positive and negative perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA.
4. To highlight areas where improvements could be made as well as aspects of their role Victoria Police are perceived to be doing well.

1.6   Thesis focus

With these aims in mind, this thesis explores the way that the Monash LGA communities perceive Victoria Police and what influences these perceptions. This research also attempts to determine whether the rapid change and growth in Monash LGA over the past decade has had an impact on public perceptions of law

enforcement in that district. Furthermore, the study examines whether the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities are being met by police at the present time and assesses current levels of police legitimacy in the area. Lastly, this study seeks to ascertain whether residents of the Monash LGA have positive or negative impressions of Victoria Police in terms of levels of trust.

1.7   Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research design consisting of 18 in-depth interviews and six focus groups (comprising 2-3 people) with 31 individuals in total, each of approximately 1-1.5 hour's duration. The participants are individuals who live, work or study in Monash LGA, including community leaders representing, among others, some of Monash's ethnically diverse communities.

Participants were recruited via the Monash LGA Community Directory Online[1], existing contacts in the Australian Football League Masters competition and supervisor contacts within Monash's multicultural representative organisations. These methods were supplemented by applying a snowballing technique.

Ethics was approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). Project number **CF15/985 - 2015000456**

1.8   Thesis structure

The following synopsis describes the contents of the remainder of this thesis chapter by chapter:

Chapter 2 contains the literature review and is organised in two parts.

Part One deals with the literature around two key theoretical concepts underpinning this research: legitimacy and trust. This section defines legitimacy in the context of authority and explains its extensive utilisation in policing research. Definitions by Weber (1968) and Beetham (1991) are provided, supplemented by the concept of 'eudaemonic' legitimacy (Holmes 1997: 44). Recent theory by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) – who encourage a 'dialogic' conceptualisation of legitimacy – is also introduced. Trust is then defined, with reference to Giddens (1990) and Bradford and Jackson (2010). The link between legitimacy and trust is clarified and their role in policing studies explained. At this stage, the concept of policing urban disorder and its implications for police legitimacy is raised. The topic of urbanisation is substantiated by Jacobs' urban theory (1961), discussion of community policing (Fleming 2010; Virta 2013) and the broken windows hypothesis (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008).

Part Two of the literature review focuses on police legitimacy. Organised thematically, it begins with processes of legitimacy (the normative and instrumental perspectives), followed by extensive discussion of the procedural justice literature, referencing the significance of Tyler's (1990) work and the perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013; Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). The

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[1] https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Services/Community-Directory

role of encounters is discussed, illustrated by key studies in the area, notably those conducted by Tyler (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008) and Skogan (2006; 2009; 2012). Lastly, studies exploring other factors affecting perceptions of police legitimacy are introduced. Themes in this section include interpretation, the media, the vicarious experience perspective and ethnicity.

Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative research methodology used in this research study. Firstly, the post-positivist research approach using human perceptions as data is discussed including advantages and limitations of this approach to generating knowledge. In addition, because the majority of previous studies in this field have been quantitative, this chapter highlights the need for qualitative approaches to this topic particularly taking into account the aims of the study and the research questions. The process of undertaking in-depth interviews with Monash LGA communities is subsequently described. Finally, a description of the process of thematic analysis undertaken to interpret the interview and focus group data is provided.

Chapter 4 addresses the first subsidiary research question: Has the rapid change and growth in the community of Monash LGA over the past decade had an effect on public perceptions regarding law enforcement? Urbanisation was a major theme that emerged during the interviews. The changes have been particularly significant during the last ten years over the time that the NSCSP results for Monash LGA have indicated a decline in satisfaction with the police. In this first analysis chapter, urbanisation is considered in terms of three sub-themes: community change, structural change versus stagnation and increased cultural diversity. Apparently linked to changes in the community's population, there appeared to be a perception amongst longer term residents that they were not as safe in their community as in the past. Some residents described a heightened fear of becoming victims of crime and many respondents also described an accompanying decline in 'community spirit'. Therefore, some of the mechanisms for moderating urban change and repairing some of the structures of community that may have been eroded by this change were themselves not as strong as they once were. Conversely, law enforcement infrastructure in the area was not perceived to have been invested in appropriately, with the perception that it had failed to keep up with the rapid development in the Monash LGA.

Chapter 5 responds to the second subsidiary research question: Are the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities met by police and what are the implications for police legitimacy? This chapter presents the findings on how the communities of Monash LGA view Victoria Police. First, a snapshot of positive and negative views is provided, followed by three sections: processes of police legitimacy in Monash LGA, the challenges of 21st century policing in Australia and contextual factors. The underlying theme of this chapter is police legitimacy: Are the police in Monash LGA viewed as legitimate and what factors appear to influence this. In the literature, police legitimacy is commonly discussed in the context of normative or instrumental factors (or a combination of both) and, indeed, this framework is relevant to the findings of this research also. This chapter draws conclusions about police legitimacy in Monash LGA, its current state and the potential for its maintenance into the future.

Chapter 6 presents the remaining findings under the theme of 'Trust in Victoria Police in Monash'. This chapter attends to the third subsidiary research question: Does the community in Monash LGA trust Victoria Police representatives in their area? Chapter 6 presents evidence that demonstrates that trust in the police is more likely if the police are perceived to have built a relationship with the communities they serve. Factors that contributed to the furthering of this relationship are revealed: named police members, continuity, contact, a procedural justice approach and visibility. Characteristics of policing that are detrimental to positive relationship development are also highlighted: lack of resources, short-staffing, ingrained police organisational culture and racism. The chapter concludes that the Monash LGA communities do have adequate levels of trust in the police. Nevertheless, these levels are not consistent across the different multicultural communities and, furthermore, all participants thought that at least small improvements could be made to policing in Monash LGA which would benefit both the police and the public in relation to trust and improving relationships.

Chapter 7 reiterates the background to the project, the aims and the main contributions this research makes to the field of police legitimacy studies. The concluding chapter contextualises the findings set out in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in light of their implications for police legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation with police in the Monash Police Services Area (PSA). To this end, the chapter reminds readers that the dissertation overall is a response to one main research question: How do the communities in the Monash Local Government Area perceive Victoria Police and what influences these perceptions? Subsequently, the implications of the findings around each subsidiary research question are explored in turn. Therefore, the themes of change, police legitimacy and trust are all examined further to discern the significance of the findings for community perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA and what the findings might mean for policing in Monash as a whole. A brief reflection on the experience of undertaking qualitative research in this field is included next, followed by several key recommendations regarding police practice in Monash, based on the study's findings. The limitations of the project and suggested directions for future research complete the thesis.

1.9 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has established where this thesis is situated within policing research and why studies around police legitimacy remain highly relevant in relation to multicultural societies; given increasing concerns regarding policing terrorism, for example. Background to the study area of Monash LGA was provided, establishing Monash LGA as an ethnically diverse, relatively affluent part of Melbourne, Victoria which has experienced declines in its NSCSP results regarding satisfaction with the local police over the past decade. The theoretical foundations of this research were outlined next which demonstrated where this work is positioned within the existing police legitimacy literature. The key contributions this thesis makes to this body of literature were then clarified, followed by the research aims and thesis focus. At this juncture, the qualitative methodology was also briefly described. Finally, the thesis structure was set out to provide a synopsis of what is to come.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

If communities regard the police as a legitimate authority, they will be more likely to trust them, obey the law, comply and cooperate with police in ways such as information-giving (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler 2004). As an agency of the state, the police are restricted in terms of resources and thus rely on a majority of the community voluntarily cooperating in order that they can concentrate their resources to areas where people may not voluntarily cooperate (Meares 2000; Tyler 2004; Reiner 2010). Simply put, legitimacy makes the job of policing much easier and many other benefits arise because of this. For example, communities may be more willing to accept less favourable outcomes in relation to policing if they believe the system overall is legitimate and feel that they are being treated fairly and honestly (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler 2004). Studies to date have shown that if the police are perceived as legitimate, a greater level of satisfaction in the police also ensues, promoting a greater level of compliance and cooperation amongst communities (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Blader 2003; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler & Fagan 2008; Murphy & Cherney 2011). The literature indicates that police legitimacy results either from the way that people are treated by the police – normative factors – or how well the police are perceived to be doing their job - instrumental factors (Tyler 2004; Murphy & Cherney 2011). Undoubtedly, legitimacy is a foundational concept in policing research. Trust is also very important. But trust in an institution like the police is only possible if they are perceived as a legitimate authority in the first place.

This chapter presents a review of existing literature in the policing legitimacy field. Part One defines two key theoretical concepts – legitimacy and trust – and outlines some of the most influential philosophical ideas to date regarding legitimacy of authority. Part Two reviews previous work on police legitimacy including ideas around the normative and instrumental processes of legitimacy, procedural justice, encounters, contextual factors that impact the legitimacy of the police and the significance of ethnicity as a factor affecting individual and community perceptions of police legitimacy and trust in the police. The chapter concludes with a summary of the contributions this study makes to the wider field of police legitimacy studies, leading into the research questions.

2.2   Max Weber

Max Weber's work is a key influence on ideas around legitimacy of authority and is widely cited by influential contemporary police legitimacy scholars (Holmes 1997; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler 2004; Murphy, Hinds & Fleming 2008; Tyler & Fagan 2008; Murphy & Cherney 2011). Weber proposes that groups or individuals submit themselves to systems of power based on a combination of fear, self-interest, cost/benefit analysis, ideology and habit (Weber 1968; Titunik 2005). Significantly, Weber contends that none of these factors – even in combination – are enough to sustain a system of power over the long term (Weber 1968). Rather, the group or individuals in question have to believe in the legitimacy of the authority for it to successfully maintain control over them (Weber 1968). In effect, an authority must convince those it seeks to subjugate of its credentials. According to Weber, there are three types of legitimate authority: Rational-legal, traditional and charismatic.

Rational-legal authority refers to having laws and regulations governing the exercise of power (Weber 1968; Holmes 1997). Democratic governments underpinned by bureaucracy are an example of this system. Indeed, rational-legal is generally understood to be the closest of the three types to what is recognisable as a contemporary model, partly because one of the laws/regulations in question is that the population has a say in who has authority over them (Holmes 1997). Nevertheless, Weber's theory argues that true democracy is not a form of domination, as it is premised on everyone in society being equal (Titunik 2005). Therefore, Weber's ideal types are not directly translatable to modern democracies, although elements of all three can be found in many contemporary systems.

Weber's second type of legitimate authority is traditional. Traditional authority attains legitimacy by appealing to custom and 'established belief' (Weber 1968) within a social order that is well-established over time. This model has a traditional ruler, such as a monarch, who is assisted in administrative matters by elites drawn from a ruling class (Holmes 1997). Rituals and practices in the society serve to perpetuate the narrative behind the ruling class's right to maintain their privileged position, for example, that their status is endowed by a higher power or god (Holmes 1997).

The third type of legitimate authority in Weber's classification is charismatic, which endows legitimacy based on a belief in the supra-human qualities of a leader. This type of authority is illustrated in religious authority such as Christians believing that Jesus Christ is the personification of a divine god. Political examples of this ideal type include Nazi Germany where political ideas were given impetus in part due to the capacity of Adolf Hitler to impart an impelling narrative about Germanic superiority, most notably in his speeches to mass gatherings (Giddens 2009). An alternative example of a charismatic leader could be a revolutionary such as Mahatma Gandhi (Holmes 1997).

Weber's theory of legitimacy of authority allows for there being more than one way that a system could achieve legitimacy, reflecting that societies themselves are different in their structure and ideologies (Weber 1968). Indeed, most societies have elements of all three types. Nevertheless, Weber's framework has been criticised for its emphasis on beliefs as the defining factor in assessing whether a system is legitimate. Critique of Weber's theory of legitimate authority is best encapsulated in the work of David Beetham (1991).

2.3   Critique of Weber

Despite the pervasiveness of his ideas on the topic, it is widely acknowledged that Weber's framework regarding legitimacy of authority has limitations (Holmes 1997). One of the best-known critics is David Beetham (1991), for instance, who argues that Weber's definition can be reduced to purely his 'belief in legitimacy' (Weber 1968). Beetham is highly critical of this notion and contends that, if all a regime must do to become legitimate is to encourage those within its sphere to believe that the power is legitimate, it becomes a simple case of public relations. Beetham goes on to explain that Weber's theory means that, to get the population to think the authority is legitimate, they do not actually have to *be* legitimate by any objective measure, such as a legal framework (1991), an authority has only to come up with a convincing narrative for their claim to power. Consequently, Weber's definition is highly subjective and encourages moral relativism; that any system can be legitimate as long as people believe it is (Beetham 1991).

Beetham ultimately concedes that legitimacy can have a relationship to people's beliefs, but not in the way that Weber describes (1991). Instead, Beetham suggests that an authority is not legitimate simply because people believe it is, although people can use beliefs as a way of justifying the legitimacy of an authority. For example, an authority can be viewed as legitimate because it is synonymous with wider societal norms (Zelditch 2001). In reality, both Weber and Beetham's theories have value and contribute to formulating a workable definition of legitimacy of authority; Weber by bringing the issue of beliefs to the fore, Beetham by clarifying how beliefs might fit in to the concept in practice. In addition, Beetham charges Weber with ignoring other factors that may have been involved in making an authority legitimate such as legal frameworks (1991). In fact, Weber (1968) does appear to allow for there being a range of factors – that is the purpose of the three ideal types – whilst his framework does not preclude that legitimate authority can encompass aspects of more than one type.

As well as critiquing Weber's theory, Beetham contributes his own framework which is expanded on below. Other critics of Weber's theory of legitimate authority, however, include Holmes (1997) whose contribution in relation to legitimacy of authority is explored later in this chapter. Holmes describes Weber's work on this subject as 'seminal but limited' (1997: 43). This description encourages contemporary scholars to broaden their scope when defining legitimacy of authority. This is the approach that has been taken in this thesis. Following Beetham's own contribution which comes next, additional ideas around legitimacy of authority are described including how they can augment a

definition in relation to police legitimacy. As well as Holmes (1997) and Beetham's (1991) own contributions to defining legitimacy, this discussion includes Titunik's recent re-reading of Weber (Titunik 2005) and Bottom's and Tankebe's concept of 'dialogic' legitimacy (2012: 119).

2.4   David Beetham

In his model, Beetham acknowledges the 'multi-dimensional' (1991: 15) nature of legitimacy of authority (similarly to Weber) allowing for elements of different models of authority within one system (1968). Beetham also underlines the role of independently-agreed regulations governing authority, aligned with the norms and values of the society they pertain to (1991). This latter aspect also aligns with Weber's rational-legal authority. Notably, Beetham highlights the significance of behaviours that demonstrate the consent of the governed (1991). This last element introduces ritual into the paradigm. The role of ritual is to convince the actors that by performing certain behaviours, they affirm the norms that they are subscribing to, in turn, making those norms more convincing (Geertz 1973). Hence, it is via rituals such as voting in an election, swearing to tell the truth in court or being cautioned in an arrest, that legitimacy of authority becomes embodied (Beetham 1991). As this thesis is specifically concerned with police legitimacy, the performance of legitimacy is highly relevant. The performance of legitimacy by actors such as those representing the law or law enforcement is an important component in making the public believe a system of authority is legitimate and they are justified in submitting to it (Mack & Roach Anleu 2010; Roach Anleu & Mack 2015). The way that legitimacy is performed by all representatives of the justice system, including the police, impacts upon the legitimacy of the entire system (Mack & Roach Anleu 2010; Roach Anleu & Mack 2015). Therefore, ritual behaviours are included as a central element in a definition of legitimacy of authority in this case.

2.5   Titunik's synthesis

Acknowledging the contributions of Weber (1968) and Beetham (1991), Titunik (2005) encourages a cautious reading of Weber whilst still acknowledging his contribution. The definition of legitimacy of authority adopted in the present study espouses a similar approach. Titunik contextualises Weber's ideas regarding legitimate authority by reminding readers that they are not meant to be applied to modern democracies (Titunik 2005). This is because Weber does not consider democracy to be a mode of domination, as it is based on the theory of everyone being equal, so authority does not need to be justified in any way such as using the three types (Titunik 2005). The three types of legitimate authority are necessities of an imperfect system where inequalities exist and, therefore, must be justified by those in power. Weber (1968) himself concedes that his systems are aspirational frameworks that would not exist in isolation.

In fact, Weber's ideas assume greater significance because he conceptualises authority as a relationship between the leader, the regime and the people, rather than a characteristic of leadership per

se (Bancroft, Rogers & Stapley 2010). In practice, this means that a leader has to convince the people of their legitimacy - whether they do that by rational/legal, traditional or charismatic means or, most likely, a configuration of all three. Notwithstanding, an authority has to convince citizens of their legitimate right to that authority and this is accomplished by means of a relationship or exchange. This latter idea has implications for the police regarding convincing communities of their legitimacy and indicates a place for engagement and locally-emanating methods of law enforcement. Bottoms and Tankebe also describe legitimacy of authority as 'dialogic' (2012: 119), building on Weber's traditional ideas around legitimacy of authority with contemporary criminological applications in mind.

2.6   Dialogic and eudaemonic legitimacy

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) contend that approaches to legitimacy based on the characteristics of that authority, such as police legitimacy emanating from police actions and behaviours, are incomplete. These authors give equal attention to the reaction to an authority; in this paradigm, '…legitimacy is *dialogic* [their emphasis], involving claims to legitimacy by power-holders *and* responses by audiences' [my emphasis] (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012: 120). Therefore, if a community or society responds positively to an authority, for example by willingly complying, cooperating and assisting them, this acknowledges the legitimacy of the authority. Harkin points out, however, that a dialogic model is slightly misleading as it glosses over the superior resources generally accessible by power holders that can be mobilised to persuade audiences of their legitimacy (2015). Nonetheless, Bottoms and Tankebe's model implies that more attention should be given to the way that Weber conceptualises legitimacy of authority as a relationship (Bancroft, Rogers & Stapley 2010).

Before briefly discussing measurement, there is one more relevant component to add to a definition of legitimacy. 'Eudaemonic' legitimacy (Holmes 1997: 44) literally means an authority is perceived as legitimate if they get the job done. Therefore, eudaemonic legitimacy applies in the case of police legitimacy if they are seen to keep the peace, fight crime effectively and make citizens feel safe, cornerstones of the police's role. Holmes utilises the term 'eudaemonic' legitimacy (1997: 44) as it related to Legitimation Crisis Theory (Holmes 1997: 42). Legitimation Crisis Theory explains the fall of communist regimes in the late 1980s/early 1990s, suggesting that these regimes gradually lost their legitimacy, hence, the end of communism (Holmes 1997). Holmes extrapolates ten modes of legitimation by which communist authorities sought to achieve legitimacy (1997). Eudaemonic legitimacy is one of these ten modes and Holmes describes it as when the communist regime was able to claim that they were 'delivering the goods' (1997: 44) and, therefore, had a legitimate right to rule. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word 'eudaemonic' as meaning 'conducive to happiness' (Holmes 1997: 44). In relation to communist governments, eudaemonic legitimacy often meant delivering the goods on the economic front - having enough items in the shops for people to buy and steady economic growth; factors that affected everyday quality of life (Holmes 1997). In relation to

police legitimacy, this concept can also be very useful in that it captures the phenomenon of police effectiveness, in other words, the police being able to effectively enforce the law.

2.7   Measuring legitimacy of authority

The factors presented above as components of legitimacy of authority depend to some extent on measurement, that is, individuals having some means of judging whether an authority can be perceived as legitimate either as compared to norms in society, for instance, or related to that authority's standing in a community. French and Raven (1959) explain this aspect of legitimacy of authority in terms of referents. These authors emphasise that legitimate authority should invoke a referent against which individuals can decide whether exercise of power is justified (1959). Such referents include cultural mores and social norms, or that the authority in question has obtained their power by another method already perceived to be legitimate, for example, via the popular vote in an election (actions/ritual). Alternatively, an authority can be judged as legitimate as measured against a set of agreed laws that provide checks and balances on power. This last element also appears in the definitions already discussed.

2.8   A definition of police legitimacy

Legitimacy of authority is a complex, multi-faceted concept (Beetham 1991). The method by which power is wielded must be appropriate to the wider social norms, beliefs and values of the society in which it is exercised (Weber 1968; Beetham 1991; Zelditch 2001). In Western democracies like Australia, this includes ideals such as equality, due process and accountability. To complement the above ideals, processes of legitimate authority must be enshrined in a legal framework with recourse to an independent authority, should disputes arise (French & Raven 1959; Weber 1968; Beetham 1991). Moreover, ritual has a role; actions that re-affirm beliefs that an authority is legitimate (Beetham 1991). Legitimate authority is also achieved by means of a relationship between the authority and the subjugated (Weber 1968). This last aspect highlights the importance of engagement between authority and communities in order to achieve legitimacy of authority (Bancroft, Rogers & Stapley 2010; Bottoms & Tankebe 2012). In addition, whether an authority is 'delivering the goods' (Holmes 1997: 44) should also be considered, especially in relation to the police. Indeed, effectiveness is one of the key measures of police legitimacy in Australia (Hinds & Murphy 2007). As well as legitimacy, the police also rely on maintaining the trust of the communities in which they operate.

2.9   Trust

Giddens defines trust within his work on modernity. The structures of modern societies give rise to an increased necessity for trust relationships which replace relationships of exchange based on traditional, family, kinship or community ties (1990). Therefore, trust is an important facet of contemporary social relationships, including those between individuals or groups and institutions such as the police (Giddens

1990). Trust facilitates these social relationships by providing the context for exchange and ensuring each party is able to have faith that the other will act according to expected norms and standards (Giddens 1990). Integral to the development of trust, are shared norms and values between those seeking to display trust and the object of that trust, so that each party is assured that an endowment of trust is not abused (Bradford & Jackson 2010). In this framework, trust mediates the relationship between communities and law enforcement.

2.9.1 Two types of trust

Bradford and Jackson delineate 'institutional trust' and 'encounter-based interpersonal trust' (2010: 2). Institutional trust is the general opinion a person holds about the integrity of a societal institution such as the police. As a rule, such feelings are not subject to significant degrees of change over time. On the other hand, encounter-based interpersonal trust encapsulates trust in societal institutions founded upon actual experience with people who represent that institution. Interpersonal trust fluctuates according to the nature of experience or encounters, treatment and outcomes resulting from contact with the institution in question (Bradford & Jackson 2010).

One of the ways to define trust in the police, therefore, is to say that it encompasses how fair and effective people perceive them to be (Bradford & Jackson 2010). This perception is based on a range of factors, varying for each person or group, such as whether one perceives the police share your values and whether an individual's experience leads them to expect the police to be effective in their role (Bradford & Jackson 2010). As such, trust provides the basis for compliance and cooperation with the police. It also impacts upon whether police are perceived as effective and whether communities are satisfied with the police. The factors that encourage community trust in the police are highly complex (Bradford & Jackson 2010) and are explored in the analysis chapters.

2.9.2 Trust and legitimacy

Trust in the police is closely related to legitimacy. Essentially, legitimacy of authority is a pre-requisite for trust in that authority - legitimacy provides the circumstances for trust to evolve. It has also been shown that:

> …trust is influenced by the procedural justice with which authorities are perceived to wield their powers, and so it would appear to be susceptible to enhancement through improvements in the procedural justice with which police act. (Worden & McLean 2017: 42)

Procedural justice as a factor in police legitimacy is discussed more extensively in Part Two of this chapter.

Finnane suggests that the police occupy a unique position in society because they are permitted to use force to achieve the objective of preserving social order (1994). As a result, the police relationship with communities has the potential to be an unequal, coercive one. The principles of legitimacy that have been outlined in the first part of this chapter, however, are premised upon trust and fairness - a due process model. Therefore, maintenance of legitimacy can be fraught with difficulty for the police. In addition, some of the characteristics of contemporary society can make maintaining legitimacy problematic for the police.

2.10 Urbanisation

The rapid urbanisation, population growth and demographic change that characterise many contemporary cities, including Melbourne, provide a challenge for law enforcement to continually adapt and remain effective. In her ground-breaking anatomy of a city, Jane Jacobs (1961) contends that the way cities are developed must be conducive to community forming, over and above the concrete structures. The idea is that such a community encourages both formal and informal methods of policing and crime prevention[1]. In Jacobs' schema, cities should be designed or developed in a way that the individuals and institutions that comprise the new communities all have a clear role in ensuring maintenance of order within that community, including the police force. If these relational modes of both formal and informal policing are not able to operate optimally, for example due to building development not promoting community evolution or inadequate law enforcement infrastructure, a community soon descends into disorder. An indicator that this is happening is that the streets in a community are perceived to be unsafe and people do not want to use them (Jacobs 1961). The police, thus, struggle to keep order which impacts perceptions of the legitimacy of the police.

Linked to the design of cities facilitating formal and informal policing is the notion of community policing. This paradigm brings the police and communities together in a partnership approach to policing (Virta 2013) which prioritises community involvement in addressing the social issues that lead to crime and disorder (Virta 2013). Essentially, community policing embodies the relational aspect in theories of legitimacy of authority (Weber 1968; Bottoms & Tankebe 2012). Indeed, community policing has been demonstrated to improve police/community relations, public perceptions of the police, trust in the police

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[1] The terms 'community' and 'communities' are used throughout this thesis both to refer simply to the people that reside in the Monash Local Government Area and, in a more 'imagined' (Anderson 1983: 6) sense, to refer to a group of people who believe they share a level of 'comradeship' with others around them even if they do not know them personally (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 2006). This latter 'imagined community' is variously based on self-identified characteristics of commonality such as ethnicity, age or even the amount of time a person has lived in the area. Therefore, it is a highly complex, contested and politically loaded term in this latter incarnation. Despite this complexity, it has, nonetheless, been used not least because it was a term invoked by many of the participants themselves and indeed appeared to hold a great deal of meaning for them in both of the senses described above.

and police legitimacy (Virta 2013). As a concept, community policing is very broad and, accordingly, is occasionally criticised as meaningless (Fleming 2010). Nonetheless, whether under the umbrella of a formal framework or not, in Australia, there are many aspects of contemporary policing which have a community focus and can, therefore, be captured under the auspices of community policing (Fleming 2010). Most notably, this includes the focus on community engagement that has increased in importance with the evolution of counter-terrorism policing. Contemporary police forces know that one of the best ways to combat terrorist threats is by maintaining effective relationships with the communities who are particularly affected by this increasing focus (Gardner 2013). Fundamentally however, community policing is about ensuring that people's communities are safe and pleasant places to live where residents need not be afraid to use their streets, parks and other urban spaces.

The issue of urban spaces and order is also at the centre of the broken windows theory (Wilson & Kelling 1982). Broken windows theory states that, in an urban space, if structures appear abandoned, they are soon targeted by vandals who assume no-one cares about what happens in that space. The culmination of this is that perpetrators wanting to commit more serious criminal acts, note the lack of care and assume this urban space to be the ideal place for more serious criminal activity to be perpetrated unhindered (Wilson & Kelling 1982). Therefore, allowing petty crime to occur unchecked leads to 'urban decay and fear' and 'a potential spiral into decline' (Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008: 8) with ramifications for police legitimacy and trust in the police as law enforcement is perceived to have done nothing to stop the process.

2.11 Counter-terrorism

Counter-terrorism strategies also provide an example of where cooperation between the police and communities is absolutely vital in successful community safety outcomes (Cherney & Murphy 2013; Gardner 2017). Nonetheless, the police have the complex role of needing to maintain legitimacy but also being charged with duties that some communities will not like. This mandate can make them unpopular and possibly even illegitimate to some. Evidence of this is provided by recent anti-terror operations across Australia's major cities (Bachelard 2015; Bucci 2015; Dowsley *et al.* 2015). On the one hand, it is the role of the police to respond to perceived threats to public safety posed by any group or individual. On the other hand, it can sometimes appear that the police disproportionately target certain communities (Pickering, McCulloch & Wright-Neville 2008; Tyler, Schulhofer & Huq 2010). Moreover, police engagement activities with ethnically diverse communities such as partaking in *Eid al-Fitr* celebrations with Melbourne's Islamic communities (*News Desk* 2015) or participating in multicultural community food festivals (Ly 2015) are often not given the front-page media coverage commanded by anti-terror raids and the like.

2.12 Police corruption

Further complicating police legitimacy is the suggestion that police members might take advantage of their position to pursue other agendas, a problem captured by the notion of police corruption. Corruption involving the police may take many forms including accepting free food and drink in return for a tacit agreement to favour certain businesses, to more complex examples where the police themselves become involved with organised crime for their own benefit (Punch 2009). This latter scenario often becomes the subject of wider investigations illustrated by the case of former Assistant Director of the New South Wales Crime Commission, Mark Standen, who epitomised the 'bent cop' by using his prominent position and contacts to profit from the organised crime he was supposed to be combatting (Wilkinson 2011).

Corruption undermines police legitimacy by implying the police may be dishonest in their dealings with the public. Cases such as Standen's have the potential to put doubt in the minds of the public as to how widespread police corruption is and can affect the whole organisation negatively. Conversely, it may also be that the nature of police work necessitates that policies and procedures are not always precisely followed for the police to make arrests, locate offenders and ensure successful prosecutions (Punch 2009) - a quandary explored further in the next section. If a level of deviance from the rules is sometimes a requirement to get results, it is not surprising that such behaviours become the norm for some police. This phenomenon may also be of relevance if official police policies and procedures are not suitable for the way that policing operates in practice. Whilst police command may have good intentions with regard to conduct that promotes police legitimacy, rank and file members may not prioritise this aspect of the police role over the main aim of apprehending offenders (Punch 2009; Main 2013).

2.13 The 'official paradigm' versus the 'operational code'

Punch describes the 'official paradigm' versus the 'operational code' (2009: 2 & 3) to capture the discrepancy between theories of policing and the practice of how police work is carried out on the street. Punch also describes how, in terms of legitimacy, this situation creates an 'impossible mandate' (2009: 2) for police authority. In line with the definition of legitimacy of authority set out earlier in this chapter, the police have policies and procedures to follow which are geared towards accountable, legitimate policing. Yet, police work involves a human element which makes it innately complicated. Situations may arise where it is not obvious whether a practice justifiably oversteps the line of what is legitimate for the police and, if it clearly does, whether that may still be justified by the outcome or in terms of the greater good.

The issue of legitimacy is more nuanced for police than simply providing a set of principles for representatives to adhere to and auditing compliance. The next section reviews the literature on police legitimacy in the context of perceptions of the police. The complexity of police legitimacy as a topic is revealed by the variety of studies in the field. Despite the wealth of studies, close examination also reveals areas where further research is required, some of which this thesis aims to address. The section

begins with an introduction to processes of legitimacy for the police. These processes are explored in detail, categorised as the normative and instrumental perspectives. Following this, a significant conceptual area is introduced - the procedural justice approach to policing. The relevance of encounters in relation to police legitimacy is then examined culminating in the final section which focuses on the cultural context in which police legitimacy is negotiated.

2.14 Processes of legitimacy

In the *Chicago Study* (1990), Tyler examines the impact of both normative and instrumental factors on people's tendency to obey the law, including complying with the police. Utilising telephone interviews over two phases of 1, 575 respondents followed by a sub-set of 804 participants, Tyler (1990) explores the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, aiming to find out whether respondents' feelings towards institutions of the law (including the police) affect the way they behaved. Did a positive attitude towards the police mean it was more likely respondents would assist the police? Tyler found that people's attitudes ultimately do matter. The way respondents perceived the police in terms of treatment and the fairness of the process (components of a procedural justice approach) were the predominant factors in assuring compliance and cooperation with the police and other institutions of the law (Tyler 1990). This classic study demonstrates that normative factors, encapsulated in procedural justice approaches, are more important than instrumental factors (such as effectiveness of the law in dealing with criminals) in influencing cooperation with the law.

Sunshine and Tyler (2003), in another two-part study, used a paper-based questionnaire to survey random New Yorkers pre-the September 11, 2001 terror attacks (9/11), followed by telephone interviews post-attacks with another random sample. The first aim of this study was to compare the importance of police legitimacy versus instrumental measures in the community's support for the police. The second aim was to determine what factors influenced legitimacy of the police in the first instance. The pre- and post- 9/11 benchmarks were used to test the hypothesis that the era of counter-terrorism policing that evolved post- 9/11 had led to the public being more concerned with police effectiveness (instrumental measures) than police process (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). The results of this study indicate that this was not the case, showing strongly the salience of process-based measures in community judgements about police legitimacy and affecting their willingness to give support to the police (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). Indeed, across the two surveys (pre- and post- 9/11), it was demonstrated that legitimacy is a significant determinant of public responses to the police. Furthermore, procedural justice when exercised is a strong indicator of whether the police are perceived to be legitimate. If the police deal with the public according to normative principles, such as by exercising procedural fairness, legitimacy is enhanced and communities are more likely to cooperate with police. Tyler and Fagan's 2008 study in New York City also replicates these findings in relation to encounters with the police.

In the Australian context, Murphy, Hinds and Fleming show that hitherto United States (US)-centric models of procedural justice policing also have relevance to the Australian setting (2008). Their

study demonstrates that perceptions of police legitimacy are enhanced by a procedural justice approach in Australia, with the same positive implications for cooperation and compliance as was previously demonstrated in the US. Another important Australian exemplar is the Queensland Community Engagement Trial (QCET) (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012) which tested the effects of a procedural justice approach to policing on specific – based on one encounter – and more general perceptions of the police. They too found that 'a little bit of being nice goes a long way' (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012: 55). They discovered that the way the police treat people has critical implications for police legitimacy both per specific encounter and more generally. Undoubtedly, the job of policing is easier if the public are cooperative. Moreover, compliance with the law enables scarce public resources to go further, an aspect also demonstrated by the *Chicago Study* (Tyler 1990).

As well as support, compliance and cooperation, there are additional benefits for the police if they are regarded as legitimate. For example, Goldsmith explains how trust in the police facilitates legitimacy, leading to greater cooperation with the police, thus, increasing their capacity to be effective (2005). Furthermore, Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney's 2013 Australian study found that both trust in and cooperation with the police results from a procedural fairness approach. Importantly, the results from this latter study also emphasise that – despite the wealth of literature pointing to the importance of normative factors in promoting police legitimacy – at least in the Australian context, instrumental factors should also be heeded particularly with reference to policing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). The studies described above strongly suggest that being perceived as legitimate is a worthy goal for the police. Nevertheless, the exact way in which police should aim to achieve and maintain legitimacy continues to be a core debate in policing research. These processes of legitimacy are commonly categorised as either normative or instrumental approaches (Murphy & Cherney 2011).

2.14.1   Normative processes

According to the normative perspective, police are viewed as legitimate if they treat people well. Normative processes refer to approaches to policing practice that foreground the way the public feels about an institution, the way they are treated by it and perceived fairness and honesty in both treatment and decision-making. Normative measures of legitimacy, therefore, include whether the public perceive the police as being responsive to their concerns regarding crime and whether communities feel that the police treat them in accordance with the principles of procedural justice. Tyler's *Chicago Study* concluded that normative factors were more important than instrumental factors in public obedience towards the law (1990). Sunshine and Tyler's research also supports a normative framework for enhancing police legitimacy and, thus, public satisfaction with the police (2003); conclusions replicated by Meares (2000), Tyler and Huo (2002), Jackson *et al.* (2012) and Mazerolle *et al.* (2012). The latter two studies further demonstrate that the results from US research supporting procedural justice can be extended, at least to include the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. Further research by Van Craen

(2012) and Van Craen and Skogan (2014) give precedence to a normative model for police legitimacy in the rest of Europe as well.

Advantages of a normative approach to police legitimacy include that the chance of getting caught and punished for low-level crime is too low for deterrence (an instrumental factor) to be enough of a reason for people to cooperate with the police most the time (Tyler 2004). It is more effective if individuals retain inner moral motivations (normative reasons) to obey the law so that most people choose to comply with the police even when the risk of being sanctioned for an offence is low (Tyler 2004). Intrinsic normative motivations are based on moral values and stimulate self-regulatory, law-abiding behaviours which expend fewer police resources than an instrumental approach. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is more sustainable as it is not a product of circumstances so remains constant across different situations and outcomes (Tyler 2004).

Another advantage of a normative approach to police legitimacy is that it is not outcome-focused (Van Craen & Skogan 2014). The public comply with the police because they view them as generally fair and honest even if there is no obvious, material advantage in doing so (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). In addition, as the police are not always able to ensure the outcomes people want, they can control how they conduct themselves and treat the public (Tyler & Huo 2002; Sunshine & Tyler 2003). That being so, normative models of police legitimacy put legitimacy back in the control of the police. Also advantageous with regard to normative models, is that they prioritise a social contract style of policing rather than a power struggle between 'us and them'. This strategy potentially promotes a safer environment for the police to work in and communities to live in (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). There are also benefits for the police budget (Tyler 1990) in terms of having community members who are proactive in the fight against crime who are self-motivated to obey the law with minimal police intervention.

Ultimately, communities are more likely to be accepting of police tactics and behaviour – giving them the benefit of the doubt when incidents do occur – if the police are perceived as fair and honest (Tyler & Huo 2002). Therefore, a side-effect of the emphasis not being on effectiveness (instrumental factors) but rather on the process (normative factors) may well be increased effectiveness for the police. Procedural justice is an important strand of normative approaches to policing, embodying the idea that dealing with citizens in a fair and honest manner leads to greater cooperation and compliance with the law. The principles of procedural justice often comprise the basis of normative studies regarding police legitimacy, including some of those already cited (Tyler & Huo 2002; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Jackson *et al.* 2012; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012; Van Craen 2012; Van Craen & Skogan 2014). Overwhelmingly, the academic literature on police legitimacy is dominated by the significance of process-based or normative models. In contrast, governments and policy-makers often prioritise instrumental factors in law enforcement strategy as they are more amenable to measurement and, hence, policy interventions. A summary of the extensive literature on procedural justice follows the discussion of instrumental processes.

2.14.2   Instrumental processes

Under-researched in comparison to normative approaches, instrumental processes of legitimacy accentuate the effectiveness of an institution. As such, the police are viewed as legitimate if they are seen to be effective at fighting crime. Other instrumental judgements about police legitimacy may be based upon the deterrence effect of sanctions against breaking the law, that is, the likelihood that the police will solve a crime, find the perpetrator and initiate the force of the law (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). Instrumental measures of legitimacy may also be predicated on crime and victimisation statistics or whether the public feels that calling the police will result in something getting done when crime occurs. In the same way as normative, instrumental judgements can shape whether or not it is in the public's interest to comply and cooperate with the police and obey the law more generally.

Despite the prominence of normative approaches in the academic literature about police legitimacy, researchers in Australia have shown that both normative and instrumental perspectives should be seriously considered as ways to enhance the legitimacy of the police. Hinds and Murphy's large postal survey (n=2611) (2007) tested whether US results showing the salience of process-based approaches to policing regarding legitimacy could be translated to the Australian setting by asking questions about satisfaction with policing, police responsiveness, police effectiveness, fear of crime and community safety. Mirroring US findings, these authors determined that procedural fairness was indeed a factor to consider as an influence on community perceptions of the legitimacy of law enforcement in Australia (Hinds & Murphy 2007). That said, they also found that instrumental factors were highly relevant. In particular, the results from this Australian study show weaker correlations between procedural justice and legitimacy than in comparable US studies and a stronger link between police performance and perceptions of police legitimacy (Hinds & Murphy 2007). These authors demonstrate that communities are also interested in issues such as police effectiveness and perceived success in fighting crime (Hinds & Murphy 2007).

Building on these findings, Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney (2013) introduce the issue of ethnicity, finding that often it is CALD communities who are more concerned with instrumental issues regarding police legitimacy. Their study utilises data from Wave 3 of the Australian Community Capacity Survey (ACCS) and its in-built Ethnic Community Sample (ECS), encompassing samples from the general population as well as Vietnamese and Indian-speaking migrant groups. The result is a comparison of the measures contained within the survey pertaining to cooperation with the police, trust in the police, procedural justice and police performance (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). The authors discover that, in spite of the findings for the general population sample supporting findings that normative processes were the most important factor influencing perceptions of the police, the way processes of legitimacy played out varies for different ethnic groups in Australia. Specifically, that so-called 'ethnic minorities' – represented in this study by Australians of Vietnamese and Indian backgrounds – are more likely to foreground instrumental processes when compared to a sample of the general population (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). The reason for this is surmised to be that the members of the

minority sample identified less with mainstream society. Therefore, being treated with procedural justice (which affirms people's right to belong to a group according to the group value model which is explained below) had less effect on them (Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler & Lind 1992). As a result, they are generally more concerned with effectiveness. These findings demonstrate the need for culturally-specific studies in this area of policing research as well as the need for further research on the role of ethnicity in informing perceptions of the police.

It is not surprising that both normative and instrumental processes appear to have an impact on how and if police acquire legitimacy. Most studies have found that normative approaches, in the form of procedural justice policing, appear to have positive ramifications for police/community relations which is likely connected to the public's judgements about police legitimacy (Tyler & Huo 2002; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler 2004; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that a basic level of effectiveness is central to impressions of police legitimacy at least in developed democracies. Certainly, local research has shown that both normative and instrumental factors are important with regard to the police maintaining legitimacy in Australia (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Equally, procedural justice models of policing appear to have a particularly significant role to play in maintaining the legitimacy of the police as studies from the US, UK, Europe and Australia illustrate.

2.14.3   Procedural justice

Procedural justice, also known as procedural fairness, is a highly significant factor in police legitimacy and a key component of the normative perspective. In the scholarly literature, the work of US professor of psychology and law, Tom Tyler, is the seminal work in this area of criminological research. Four components encompass a procedural justice approach to policing, utilised in studies by Tyler (1990), Tyler and Huo (2002) and Mazerolle *et al.* (2012). Firstly, participation in the process by the individual concerned is crucial so that members of the public do not feel that decisions are being imposed upon them without them being able to have their say. Secondly, neutrality is a key element of a procedurally-fair approach to policing. Police should be seen to treat all parties in a situation equally and not take sides themselves. Thirdly, dignity and respect should be evident in the police's manner towards victims, suspects and the public. Finally, police should appear to act from trustworthy motives. This last aspect also involves treating all parties equally. Moreover, the police should not be seen to have anything personal to gain from a situation being resolved in a particular way - otherwise they risk being associated with corruption (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler 2004; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012).

In the Queensland Community Engagement Trial (QCET), researchers operationalised the above four elements and incorporated them in a pre-arranged script for the police to follow when carrying out routine traffic stops. A follow-up questionnaire was also carried out to assess whether deliberate deployment of this approach affected people's perception of the police either at the time or more generally (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). The hypothesis of the research was that treating people in a procedurally fair manner enhanced the legitimacy of the police which then led to greater cooperation

from the public in everyday policing. In the QCET, it was concluded that using a procedural justice approach did have a positive effect on peoples' perceptions of the police both at the time and also in the longer term (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). A procedural justice approach like the one used in this trial is based on two psychological frameworks: the group value and group engagement models.

2.14.4   The group value and engagement models

The group value model (Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler & Lind 1992) encapsulates the idea that humans are naturally pre-disposed to gather together in groups. Within these social groupings, members are constantly looking for recognition from other group members that they belong and are valued. Recognition takes the form of the way members of a group are treated by the others. If members feel they are well-treated and respected, they derive a sense of belonging and solidarity with the group. If they think they have been unfairly treated or disrespected, they feel excluded - as if they do not have proper standing within that group. The mechanisms of how a group functions are known as 'procedures' (Tyler & Lind 1992: 134) and can be both formal and informal. The way a group's procedures evolve sends out messages to group members – both those directly affected by them and those on the periphery – about their status in the group. Therefore, a group's procedures are an important symbol as well as a practical aspect of group or social life. Procedures indicate inclusion or exclusion from the group. The group value model shows that when procedures are seen as fair by group members, members not only feel that a situation has been handled well but, in addition, they also identify more strongly with the group (Tyler & Lind 1992).

The police represent the dominant social group. If people feel they have been treated fairly by the police, they derive a positive sense of identity with mainstream society which has implications for social cohesion. The reverse also holds true if people feel they have been unfairly treated by police. In 1998, Smith *et al.* demonstrated this model in a quantitative study which showed that procedural fairness could significantly impact a group's identity with mainstream society through their perceptions of those in a position of authority, such as the police, according to whether that authority was perceived to be acting in a procedurally fair way. In this regard, police behaviour has major ramifications for inclusion/exclusion (Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). The more recent group engagement model expands upon the framework of the group value model.

The group engagement model (Tyler & Blader 2003) is also premised on the idea that if individuals feel well-treated by group mechanisms and procedures, they are more likely to feel a positive sense of identification (inclusion) with that group. This model predicts that the feelings of inclusion engendered by an impression of fair, equitable treatment also result in behavioural change, specifically, a greater sense of engagement with that group. Engagement of this nature manifests itself in 'mandatory' or 'discretionary' group behaviours (Tyler & Blader 2003: 353). Mandatory behaviour describes functions of a group punishable by sanctions if they are not displayed. Discretionary behaviours, however, are not compulsory but promote group cohesion. Volunteering in the community is an example of this latter

behaviour type. Discretionary group behaviours are stimulated by internal values such as the individual identifying with the group and wanting to reciprocate. Discretionary behaviours create bonding social capital (Tyler & Blader 2003) and are vital for strengthening the fabric of a group. Cooperating with the police to tackle crime could be described as a discretionary behaviour.

Recently, Australian and UK researchers revisited the framework of the group engagement model in relation to social identity in Australia. Bradford, Murphy and Jackson (2014) discovered that procedural justice policing improved police/community relations in two ways. Fundamentally, a procedural justice approach makes the police look fairer and communities trust them more, which leads to enhanced police legitimacy in the public's eyes. The improved police/community relations that result also lead to greater confidence in the police and a greater likelihood that the public will cooperate with the police. This study also demonstrates how a procedural justice approach by police members gives those having an encounter with them a reinforcement of worth and positive self-identity with dominant group norms and values, hence, a feeling of belonging. Therefore, the individual experiences heightened self-esteem and positive feelings about the police and the society which the police represents. Procedural justice methods may accordingly be seen as positive for enhancing police/community relations in the sphere of identity and belonging. In sum, procedural justice in policing is important in two key ways. On the one hand, a procedural justice approach ensures the police appear fairer, thus, increasing their legitimacy with implications for public cooperation and satisfaction with the police. On the other hand, group engagement theory implies that a procedural justice approach to policing also contains inclusion/exclusion implications for communities, ultimately impacting wider social cohesion.

2.14.5   Procedural justice and CALD communities

In some studies, results have shown that procedural justice policing has less of an impact for ethnically diverse communities' relationships with the police (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Possible explanations for this include a lower baseline sense of identification with mainstream Australian society amongst ethnically diverse communities in the first instance. In this situation, not being made to feel included by police practices has less of an impact on feelings of inclusion. In contrast, US research did not reveal a significant disparity between minority and majority group members regarding positive reactions to procedural justice policing (Sunshine & Tyler 2003). As a result, Australia's specific brand of multiculturalism policy has been suggested as the reason for the lesser effects of procedural justice policing in Australian jurisdictions amongst ethnically diverse populations. Australia's version of multiculturalism has historically encouraged migrants to identify with their home cultures as well as becoming Australian, which may mean some community members are not accustomed to identifying wholly with the so-called mainstream (Murphy & Cherney 2011). Conversely, other studies have not shown significant difference in reactions to procedural justice approaches within CALD communities in Australia (Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). These latter authors do acknowledge, however, that if an individual feels a much stronger sense of identity to a societal subgroup than mainstream society,

then procedural justice policing does not achieve its aim (Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). Despite the profile of process-based approaches to policing in the literature, as an approach procedural justice has been the subject of criticism.

2.14.6   Criticism of the procedural justice model

Skogan (2006; 2009; 2012) undertook research into the effects of encounters with the police and concludes that, notwithstanding the manner in which they are carried out, encounters are almost always negative as regards police legitimacy and public perceptions of the police even if procedural justice principles are employed. Skogan's work indicates that the negative effects of having a bad experience in an encounter with the police far outweigh any positive effects of having a good experience; or one mediated by procedural justice principles (Skogan 2006). Consequently, the procedural justice model should be regarded as a tool of mitigation, no more, and not the solution to police/community relations. The implications of Skogan's work are highlighted in the next section on encounters.

Two other criticisms have been raised in relation to the procedural justice approach to policing. Firstly, that there has not been sufficient research to show definitively whether procedurally-just encounters with the police only affect views of the police pertaining to a single encounter or whether they also influence more generalised perceptions of the police (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). This is an area that Mazerolle and her team address in the QCET, uncovering some evidence that the procedural justice model of policing does have effects on people's perceptions of the police both within and beyond the specific encounter where the principles are employed (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). Yet, this is an area of procedural justice research that requires more attention. Secondly, Waddington *et al.*'s work (2015) highlights the way that police actions and behaviour are open to interpretation by the public. This study is described more fully in the final section on perceptions of the police, but of relevance here is that sometimes the police may act within the parameters of the procedural justice model but their actions may still be interpreted according to preconceptions of the police held by the public (Waddington *et al.* 2015), neutralising the effect of a procedural justice approach.

Despite these limitations, the benefits that could transpire from a process-focused approach – such as the police having control over the process and the moral obligation for the police to behave decently and treat the public well – go some way towards mitigating any concerns. Procedural justice policing is a worthy goal in its own right with its proven relationship to perceptions of police legitimacy and the public satisfaction with the police that ensues (Hinds & Murphy 2007). Even so, the role of encounters with the police is a debate that deserves further scrutiny inasmuch as it affects police legitimacy.

2.14.7   Encounters

Many studies of police legitimacy have looked at how encounters with the police influence public perceptions of the police (see especially Skogan 2006; 2009; 2012). This section introduces the two

most influential viewpoints regarding the effect of encounters on perceptions of police legitimacy. Theorists in the Tyler School espouse the merit of encounters as long as they are carried out using a procedural justice approach (as described in the previous section). Studies in this vein include Tyler's own work (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008) and research inspired by Tyler's model (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko 2009; Jackson *et al.* 2012; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). This perspective demonstrates overwhelmingly that encounters with the police where the police employ procedural fairness enhance public perceptions of them and increase their legitimacy (Tyler & Fagan 2008).

The other main perspective is based around Skogan's research on encounters (2006; 2009; 2012). Although Skogan acknowledges the value of normative approaches to policing in relation to confidence in the police, his studies demonstrate that encounters usually reduce satisfaction with the police (Skogan 2009). According to Skogan, positive encounters with the police – or those where the police demonstrate procedural fairness – make little difference to public perceptions of the police (Skogan 2006; 2012). Skogan also describes a 'negativity bias' (2006: 106) whereby not only do positive encounters have little positive effect but negative encounters – where individuals feel unfairly treated – have a disproportionately significant effect on perceptions of police legitimacy and trust which leads to reduced satisfaction with the police (Skogan 2006). Skogan (2006) claims that the repercussions of these negative encounters far outweigh any positive public relations the police attempt during routine business, like that trialled in the QCET (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). Furthermore, Skogan extends his framework and suggests that perception of an encounter as negative may depend not just on the encounter itself and the behaviour of the police personnel at the time, but also on preconceptions of the police that the public bring to the encounter; factors based on wider phenomena such as the media and ethnicity (2012). In addition, the police are only able to control these latter aspects to a limited extent (Skogan 2012; Waddington *et al.* 2015).

Tyler dismisses Skogan's asymmetry hypothesis as a product of Skogan's study design regarding the way that terms are defined. In Skogan's work, for example, a positive encounter encompasses both procedurally fair treatment as experienced by a research subject – and as defined in most procedural justice research – and/or the outcome to the encounter being one that the subject perceives as positive such as the situation being resolved in their favour (Tyler & Fagan 2008). As the police are not always able to resolve situations to produce the outcome that individuals consider positive, many situations are categorised by this framework as negative encounters. Notwithstanding, perhaps the real significance of Skogan's work is that it encourages questioning of the dominance of the process-based framework regarding police legitimacy and indicates that more research is needed on this topic. Furthermore, Skogan's conclusions also accentuate the role of public preconceptions in assessing encounters with the police and it is this phenomenon which will be the focus of the final section of this literature review.

2.15   The cultural context of police legitimacy

The mechanisms by which legitimacy of authority operate are highly complex. Despite the evidence for a procedural justice approach to law enforcement, it should not be assumed that all the police must do is practice within this framework to ensure they will achieve legitimacy with the public. Cultural factors also create the context for police legitimacy and these include interpretation, vicarious experience and ethnicity.

2.15.1   Interpretation

This important aspect affecting perceptions of police legitimacy involves considering how the public interprets police actions, whether via their own direct experience with the criminal justice system or by vicarious experience (see below). When it comes to interpretation, individuals often do not have their own experiences through which to form conclusions about the legitimacy of the police. As a consequence, police actions are interpreted broadly based on societal discourses relevant to law enforcement. For example, interpretation of police actions and behaviours may be based on discourses relevant to the ethnicity of both the police member and the member of the public, or the migrant status of the community member. The relevance of ethnicity and migrant status in creating the context for police legitimacy is elaborated on below (2.15.3). To illustrate how this phenomenon works, in this section the role of the media is introduced with a view to exploring how the media can disseminate discourses that affect public interpretations of the legitimacy of the police. Two examples of legitimatory discourses are then provided: policing in relation to national identity and the 'Dirty Harry' discourse of law enforcement. The discussion of interpretation concludes by describing the study by Waddington *et al.* (2015) that demonstrates how complicated it can be to reliably predict public interpretations of police actions and behaviours.

2.15.1.1   The media

The media has a significant influence on perceptions of the police (Jewkes 2015). The police can utilise the media to their advantage, for example, to keep the public informed of the progress of investigations. High-profile incidents reported in the media involving the police both at home and globally can also have an effect on public perceptions (O'Malley 2015) - both positive and negative. Furthermore, it has been found that fictional portrayals of police in the media may also inform public preconceptions (Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015). Public discourses around policing are constantly shifting and the media plays an important part in that process. The police only have a small element of control over the way the media influences the wider discourses that inform the climate in which they operate, whereas, the media's influence of perceptions in contemporary society is disproportionately large. With regard to legitimacy, the media has a central role in the formation of discourses that inform public perceptions of the police. Both examples presented below rely on the media for their dissemination.

2.15.1.2   National identity

Unlike the British police who, despite controversies throughout their history, have managed to retain strong positive links with British national identity – demonstrated by portrayals in shows such as *Dixon of Dock Green*[2] (Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015) – the police in Australia evolve from a more contested space. There is no equivalent image in the Australian imagination to the traditional British 'Bobby on the beat', equally effective in a community service role as when keeping the neighbourhood free from crime, a comforting image and one that is continuously perpetuated by portrayals in contemporary British police procedurals such as *Midsomer Murders* (Reiner 2010). The police have historically occupied a different position in the Australian narrative (Moore 1991). Whether accurate or not, in Australia, the police have often been portrayed as representing state authority which is the antithesis of the interests of the common person in an anti-authoritarian narrative which foregrounds the larrikin as the Australian folk hero (Moore 1991). This image of the police influences the way police actions are interpreted in the contemporary policing landscape, meaning that the police are not always seen as being representative of the wider community with implications for legitimacy.

2.15.1.3   'Dirty Harry' policing

This term, popularised by Robert Reiner (2010: 101), describes a narrative of policing that justifies the expansion of the traditional boundaries of police practice according to a perceived threat or crisis in society. Like a political state of emergency, this discourse has the effect of justifying police actions that may at other times be considered heavy-handed but, in a climate of risk and fear, are rebranded as the lesser evil in comparison to the perceived threat - which could be terrorism or major social unrest. The 'Dirty Harry' (Reiner 2010: 101) discourse of policing has resulted in concrete changes to policing practice such as the increasing militarisation of policing in Western countries since the 1980s (McCulloch 2001).

In *Blue Army* (2001), Jude McCulloch describes how the establishment of quasi-military specialist units within the police since the early Eighties – especially in areas such as counter-terrorism, organised crime and crowd control – have led to a cultural shift within the police away from policing by consent to a more coercive style, including in Australia. The concern is that if policing moves away from a social contract model, there are serious repercussions for police legitimacy. The police risk being perceived as antagonists rather than keepers of peace and order. Moreover, police/community relations suffer as a result of a more military culture in the police force because the key ideal of the '[s]trategy of minimal force' (Reiner 2010: 101) is no longer in place. Ultimately, police legitimacy suffers with consequences for the community's propensity to cooperate with policing efforts. The two examples described above show how the discursive environment affects people's everyday interpretations of police practices

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[2] Classic British police show from the 1950s-1970s in which PC George Dixon epitomised the police as the 'good guys' whose presence not only caught the crooks, but also held the fabric of British society together.

regarding legitimacy. Further complicating matters, the way the public chooses to interpret police actions is not always predictable.

2.15.1.4 Unreliability in public interpretations of police actions

Research from the United Kingdom (Waddington *et al.* 2015) underscores the complexity of the processes by which the police seek to attain legitimacy and highlight the role of interpretation. Waddington *et al.* (2015) used excerpts from a reality television series about traffic policing to imitate encounters with the police. The study population was diverse, in an attempt to replicate the social and cultural diversity of the region. Focus groups made up of representatives from key communities viewed the encounters and subsequently assessed them in relation to the behaviour of the police. The key finding of the study was the level of disagreement, even within relatively homogeneous groups, about whether police actions were legitimate, whether the police had treated the member of the public fairly and whether the police were ultimately effective in carrying out their role (Waddington *et al.* 2015). The study concludes that processes of legitimacy involve perceptions and interpretations based on a wide range of factors such as past experience and the level of trust held for the police to start with (Waddington *et al.* 2015).

Although the police are able to control some aspects of whether they are perceived to be legitimate, it is evident that the process is complex with no clear-cut guarantees as to what works. Also notable with regards to Waddington *et al.*'s (2015) study, is that it provides a rare example of qualitative research in the police legitimacy field. This is a point discussed further in Chapter 3, but the lack of qualitative police legitimacy studies and the enrichment that qualitative data can provide to this field was one of the inspirations for the present study.

2.15.2 Vicarious experience

Vicarious experience describes individual perceptions of the police based on the experiences of others. Vicarious perceptions are transmitted by community hearsay, word of mouth or the media as highlighted above. These second-hand experiences influence individual perceptions of the police (Mazerolle *et al*. 2012). For example, Weitzer and Tuch's study compares demographic versus non-demographic factors in community perceptions of the police and shows that, across cultures, the vicarious experience perspective is a pertinent consideration regarding police legitimacy (2005). Vicarious experiences, however, form only part of the complex cultural context in which the police must attain legitimacy. Another key facet of the cultural landscape that has proven consistently relevant in the field thus far is ethnicity and the part that this demographic element plays in perceptions of police legitimacy.

2.15.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a highly prominent topic that has been shown to influence perceptions of police legitimacy. Studies to date have attempted to isolate the part played by this factor (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy

& Cherney 2011 and Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013 are relevant Australian examples). Poor historical relationships between police and so-called ethnic minorities in countries such as Australia continue to affect the way that these communities regard the police and also the way that the police approach CALD, or ethnically diverse, communities. Negative preconceptions on both sides can affect the way policing happens in such communities and, ultimately, whether compliance and cooperation with the police happen when required. In police legitimacy studies, there are two themes that dominate in relation to ethnicity and police legitimacy: racism and cultural expectations of the police by migrants.

2.15.3.1 Racism

With regard to racism, an important historical determinant of police legitimacy in Australia is their colonial roots. This is evident in early police policy towards Indigenous peoples at the inception of the Australian colonies (Finnane 1994; Haldane 1995). From the outset, Australian police forces practised 'frontier' policing (Anderson & Killingray 1991: 6), which included controlling and subjugating Indigenous people for the benefit of settlers. Furthermore, early police forces co-opted 'native police' (Finnane 1991: 40) to assist with Imperial objectives of land acquisition (Finnane 1991). These units consisted of Aboriginal men recruited into the police partly for their tracking abilities and partly as an exercise in assimilation (Moore 1991). Such units, under the command of European officers, were then used to enact raids against other Aboriginal groups in the early years of the Australian colonies contributing to Indigenous cultural decline and the eventual demise of Indigenous societies (Finnane 1994; Haldane 1995).

Because of these early experiences, the police in Australia represent colonial authority and subjugation of Indigenous Australians and Chinese gold prospectors, among others. From such a beginning, it is perhaps not surprising that racist policies are a heritage that the Australian police struggle to distance themselves from. It is likely that such a heritage has significantly influenced the police's capacity to develop legitimate standing amongst all members of a diverse Australian society even today. Historically problematic relationships, such as those between the police and Indigenous Australians (Hinds & Murphy 2007), remain a problem for the police in terms of legitimacy. This is because suspicion of the police can prevent genuine community engagement on the part of the police from happening; engagement which can facilitate a reduction in crime in *all* communities. Furthermore, Murphy and Cherney (2011) show that procedural justice policing can sometimes be less effective in ethnically diverse communities due to poorer historical relationships between these communities and the police. Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney's study (2013) also demonstrates a difference in ethnic minority groups' reactions to procedural justice policing based on their experiences in Australia, but also based on their experiences from their country of origin. Cultural expectations of the police are also a key component connecting ethnicity and perceptions of police legitimacy.

2.15.3.2   Migrant expectations of the police

Negative experiences with police in the past can influence current perceptions of the Australian police for migrants. It is possible that this phenomenon may also contribute to a reduced level of trust in the police from within migrant communities. Murphy and Cherney (2011) highlight this possibility in their large-scale national survey assessing the effectiveness of procedural justice policing amongst ethnically diverse, migrant Australians. This study concludes that prior experiences influence migrants' perceptions of the police in Australia to the extent that procedural justice policing may not have the effect of bolstering police legitimacy in the way that it does for non-migrant, non-ethnically diverse Australians (Murphy & Cherney 2011). This is certainly an area that warrants further research, particularly given the increasingly multicultural nature of Australian society. The current project provides some much-needed, qualitative police legitimacy research centred around an ethnically diverse area of Melbourne. This important work enhances the available quantitative studies around police legitimacy, procedural justice policing and policing ethnically diverse communities. The research questions emerging from the literature are presented at the end of Chapter 2.

2.16   Conclusion

This chapter presented pertinent themes from the literature around the concepts of legitimacy of authority and trust, demonstrating their relevance to policing research. The chapter was presented in two parts.

Part One examined legitimacy of authority beginning with the contributions of Max Weber (1968) and David Beetham (1991). 'Dialogic' legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012: 120) and 'eudaemonic' legitimacy (Holmes 1997: 44) were introduced to enrich the definition of legitimacy and its applicability to the police. Measuring legitimacy of authority was explored and the theoretical contributions to legitimacy of authority were then amalgamated into a definition of legitimacy for this thesis. The concept of trust was then defined (Giddens 1990; Bradford & Jackson 2010), differentiating between 'institutional' and 'encounter-based interpersonal' trust (Bradford & Jackson 2010: 2). Lastly, the relationship between trust and legitimacy of authority was clarified.

Part Two focused on the police legitimacy literature, bringing together the concepts of legitimacy and trust within a specific policing context. Firstly, challenges the police may face in maintaining legitimacy and the trust of communities were explored, illustrated by several contemporary examples including urbanisation, counter-terrorism, police corruption and the relationship between policing theory and practice. Secondly, processes of legitimacy (the normative and instrumental approaches) were examined followed by a discussion of procedural justice including the group value and engagement models (Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler & Lind 1992). The debate about the relevance of encounters was discussed next, comparing Tyler (1990; 2004) and Skogan's studies (2006; 2009; 2012). Finally, the cultural context for police legitimacy was explored. Contextual factors comprised interpretation – including the role of the media – national identity, the 'Dirty Harry' narrative (Reiner 2010),

inconsistency in public perceptions of the police and the vicarious experience perspective. To conclude, the contextual factor of ethnicity was discussed. Ethnicity had been shown in previous research to be especially relevant in influencing public perceptions of the police. The discussion in this chapter focused on the two main topics in ethnicity/police legitimacy research to date: racism and cultural expectations of the police by migrants based on past experience from their countries of origin.

Exploration of the literature has exposed deficiencies in the existing police legitimacy scholarship. For instance, most previous research in the discipline has been quantitative. This project demonstrates the way qualitative data can be used to enrich the value of large scale survey studies by collating detail around the issues that communities believe to be significant. Furthermore, although ethnicity is well-recognised as a prominent factor in relation to perceptions of police legitimacy and the effectiveness of different approaches to policing, it is clear from existing work that ethnicity is a complex phenomenon and what the police need to do to respond accordingly is unclear. Given global migration flows and increasing diversity in Australian cities like Melbourne, it is vital to know more detail about this area to optimise the effectiveness of police practice. In addition, whether encounters between the police and the public do more harm than good or can be an opportunity for the police to conduct public relations is a key debate in police legitimacy studies. The question also remains whether it is the way encounters are carried out that makes the difference to perceptions of the police and, if so, whether the previous preoccupation of researchers with procedural justice approaches can be justified. The current study contributes data to this debate, attempting to make sense of the effect of encounters and exactly how that effect works. The above contributions are enshrined in the following research questions:

2.17   Research questions

2.17.1   Main research question

How do the communities in the Monash Local Government Area perceive Victoria Police and what influences these perceptions?

2.17.2   Subsidiary research questions

1. Has the rapid change and growth in Monash LGA over the past decade influenced public perceptions regarding law enforcement?

2. Are the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities met by police and what are the implications for police legitimacy?

3. Does the community in Monash LGA trust Victoria Police representatives in their area?

Chapter 3   Research Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Qualitative research does not conveniently align with predetermined paradigms and procedures; there is an inevitable expectation of complexity (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Providing a true and full account of the methodology is vital so that judgements can be made about the calibre of the contentions contained within. The objectives of this chapter are to introduce the research area and participants, outline the philosophical approach to collecting and analysing data, recognise the inherent theoretical assumptions in the methods and describe the processes undertaken to collect and analyse data.

To begin, a demographic overview of the Monash Local Government Area (LGA) is presented. Once the research area has been established, the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP) survey is introduced - one of the key existing methods by which nationwide data on police practices and performance is gathered. The NSCSP is discussed in the context of the Monash LGA and how increasingly poor results in the NSCSP led to the formulation of this study on perceptions of the police. The paucity of qualitative research in the field of police studies to date is then discussed, including why it is important that this be addressed. Proffering Waddington *et al.* (2015), Wright and Bouffard (2016) and Harkin (2015) as rare examples, qualitative research's role in criminological theory is conceptualised as one of enhancement and supplementation. The subjective nature of human attitudes and perceptions as data is also acknowledged, emphasising the potential nuance qualitative research can bring to this topic area.

The subsequent section explains the naturalistic epistemological approach employed, including explanation of what constituted data in this research and the roles of grounded theory and interpretation. Having established the approach, methods of data collection including recruitment, representation of diversity in the research population and the process of undertaking the interviews and focus groups are described in more detail. A description of the process used to analyse data follows. Above all, the purpose of this chapter is to create the transparency which is imperative to ensuring quality in qualitative research (Silverman 2010).

3.2   The Monash Local Government Area

The map below (Figure 3.1) situates the Monash Local Government Area within the South-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Monash LGA has a convenient location, around twenty kilometres from the centre of Melbourne and is well-served with road and rail transport links in and out of the CBD.
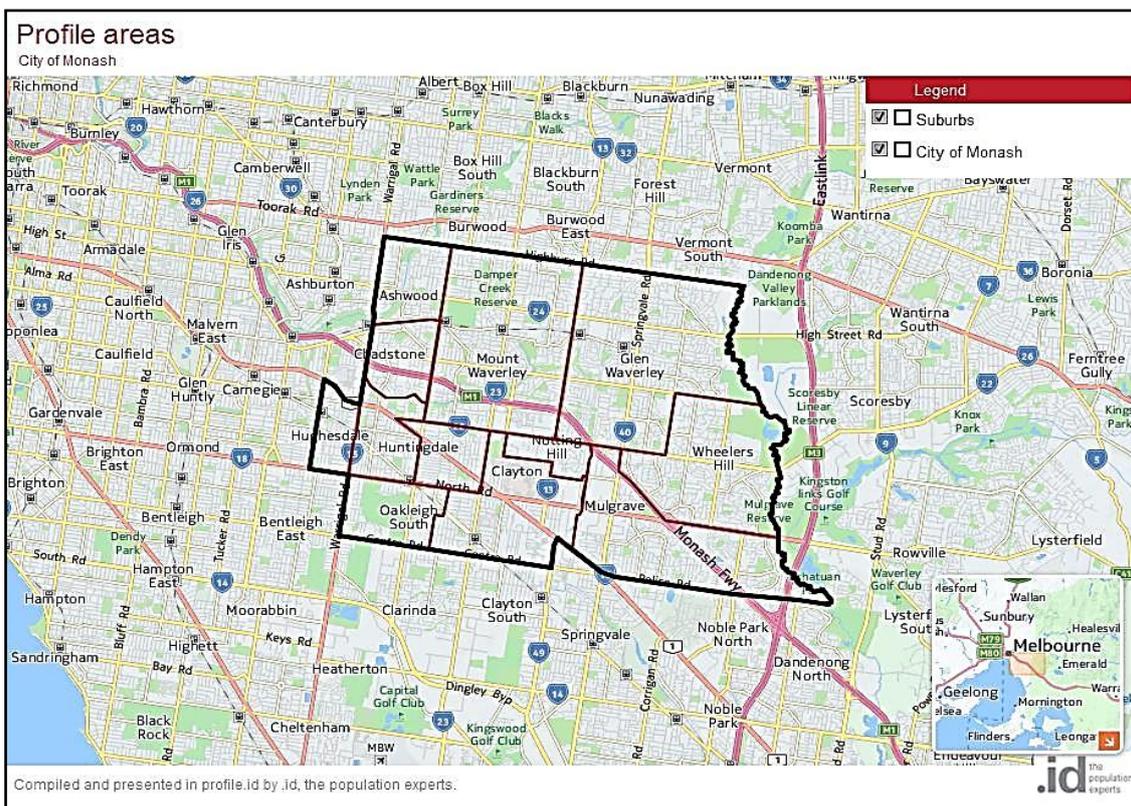
Figure 3.1   City of Monash

This material was compiled and presented by .id, the population experts. www.id.com.au accessed at http://profile.id.com.au/monash/about

The Monash LGA has experienced strong population growth of approximately 25, 000 persons in the last decade (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1   City of Monash population change 2006-2016

Population	2016	2006	Change
Estimated Resident Population	192,850	167,010	**+25,840**
Enumerated Population	181,838	160,033	+21,805
Usual Resident Population	182,618	161,239	+21,379

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id , the population experts. (Usual residence data)

The population of Monash is also ethnically diverse with almost half the residents born overseas, many from non-English speaking backgrounds (Community Profile 2014). As Figure 3.2 illustrates (below), the number of residents from East and South Asian backgrounds has greatly increased in recent years. The Monash LGA ranks 14th out of 80 on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage for Victoria (Community Profile 2014). Therefore, Monash is a comparatively affluent area, although there are pockets of entrenched social disadvantage. There are currently four local police stations in Monash. Glen Waverley and Oakleigh Police Stations are the largest and boast the most services for the community including multicultural liaison, which is based at Oakleigh Police Station. Mount Waverley and Clayton Police Stations are smaller and have more restricted opening hours. The dynamics of the area's four stations are discussed further in Chapter 4.
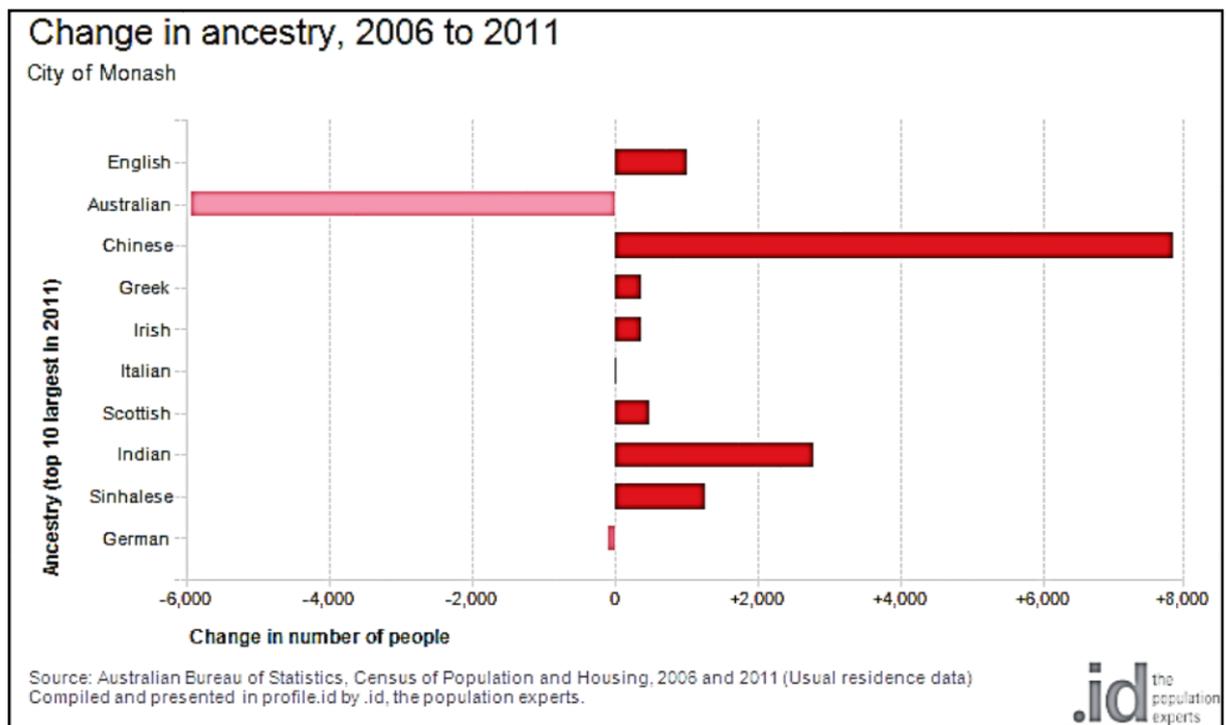
Figure 3.2   Change in ancestry

This material was compiled and presented by .id, the population experts. www.id.com.au accessed at
http://profile.id.com.au/monash
This material is a derivative of ABS Data that can be accessed from the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics at
www.abs.gov.au, and which data can be licensed on terms published on the ABS website.

3.3   Assessing police performance - the NSCSP survey

The National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing or NSCSP (The Social Research Centre 2017) is a quarterly, quantitative survey assessing aspects of police performance including satisfaction with the police. The results are used by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to benchmark police practices and guide resource allocation. Participants in the NSCSP are chosen using a randomly generated landline phone number sampling technique. Each police services area (PSA) in Australia has a sample allocation of approximately 150 surveys which are subsequently adjusted to more accurately reflect jurisdiction demographics. At the time this study was conducted, The Social Research Centre had the responsibility of carrying out the NSCSP on behalf of all police forces in Australia (The Social Research Centre 2017).

The ethics and integrity measure is the section of the NSCSP which measures satisfaction with policing. It contains four statements:

1.   I think the police perform their job professionally

2.   Police treat people fairly and equally

3.   Police are honest

4.   I do have confidence in the police

In relation to this project, two of these areas had seen a decline in Monash LGA since 2007 compared to the Victorian state average (Victoria Police 2015, pers. comm. 3 March):

1. Perception of police treatment of people as fair and equal

2. Perceptions of police honesty

Early discussions with senior Victoria Police members in the Monash PSA (Victoria Police 2015, pers. comm. 3 March), suggested that the communities' perceptions of Victoria Police needed to be more fully appraised. Therefore, a qualitative research design was the most appropriate method for gathering the detailed views that were now sought:

> It is these qualitative areas in social life – the backgrounds, interests and broader social perceptions that defy quantitative research – that qualitative research addresses. Qualitative research does not pretend to solve the problems of quantitative research, but does not see them as constraints. Rather than finding ways to reduce the effect of uncontrollable social variables, it investigates them directly. (Holliday 2013: 5)

This project was fundamentally concerned with community perceptions of Victoria Police. Consequently, it was decided that a community-based, qualitative study of public perceptions using focus groups and in-depth interviews would make an important contribution to the literature and also provide highly valuable information for all stakeholders including the police and the wider communities. The project would also be novel for there is little qualitative research in this topic area, a void that is discussed later in the chapter. This project presented the opportunity to undertake purely qualitative research about police legitimacy.

3.4 The value of qualitative data in policing research

Qualitative studies in policing research are the exception, with most studies around procedural justice and satisfaction with the police employing quantitative methods such as large-scale surveys. Authoritative examples of quantitative approaches in the discipline include Tyler (1990), Sunshine and Tyler (2003) and Mazerolle *et al.* (2012). Chapter 2 contains more detail around these and other relevant studies. Certainly, there is much merit to a quantitative approach in terms of garnering the views of large numbers of respondents, bearing in mind time and cost constraints. Through studies such as those cited above, policing research has become well-established as a sub-discipline. Nevertheless, it is timely that alternative approaches became part of the canon. Qualitative data could complement established knowledge and provide further insights into the complex area of police/community relations. Notable examples of qualitative research in criminology more broadly are found in the work of Waddington et *al.* (2015), Wright and Bouffard (2016) and Harkin (2015).

Waddington *et al.* (2015) described in Chapter 2, used focus group discussions to investigate whether a participant's social background impacts upon how police actions and behaviours are interpreted in different situations. Wright and Bouffard (2016), on the other hand, discuss the benefits

that qualitative analysis of individual criminal cases could have for the advancement of criminological theory more broadly. The latter authors argue that such approaches were common at the advent of the discipline, but have been recently overlooked in favour of the larger numbers that can be captured by quantitative data sets (Wright & Bouffard 2016). Indeed Harkin, whose approach to studying police legitimacy involves a qualitative, ethnographic approach to examining police/public consultation forums, also argues that use of novel methods in criminology could yield more nuanced answers to some of the core debates in the discipline - especially in relation to police legitimacy and procedural justice (2015). Hitherto, the greater ease with which research based on quantitative data sets can be translated into the policy setting has also contributed to their precedence, especially in research relating to law enforcement. However, Wright and Bouffard argue that quantitative research has clearly established utility in criminology (2016). Therefore, supplementing quantitative research with qualitative studies where appropriate, enriches the discipline further leading to fresh theoretical developments as well as a deeper understanding of the complexity of human behaviour in relation to law enforcement and crime (Wright & Bouffard 2016). Their research also provides an example of how this can successfully be achieved (Wright & Bouffard 2016).

The NSCSP surveys provide Victoria Police with quantitative data around satisfaction with policing in Monash LGA (The Social Research Centre 2017), whereas, the in-depth, qualitative interviews undertaken for this study contribute a rich supplementation of detail. The interviews and focus groups were an opportunity for the Monash LGA communities to more fully describe what was happening in their community regarding the police, give their opinions regarding satisfaction and explain the reasoning behind their views. Through this process, as is demonstrated in the analysis chapters, it is possible to ascertain the state of police/community relations in the area and theorise why the NSCSP satisfaction results were declining in the Monash LGA (Victoria Police 2015, pers. comm. 3 March).

A pertinent question in relation to qualitative research is the disputed transferability or generalisability of findings (Silverman 2010; Bryman 2016). In the present study, this relates to whether the findings for Monash LGA can be translated to other PSAs and whether the findings will prove useful regarding policing research and theory more broadly. Unquestionably, the findings from this study are most applicable to Monash LGA and to the communities that voiced them; indeed, individual views may not be more broadly applicable even within, let alone beyond, Monash LGA. To account for this, it was important to interview as diverse a sample of participants as possible to represent the views of the many different communities that make up the Monash LGA. It was anticipated that this would at least result in a diversity of opinions about any problems facing Victoria Police and any potential solutions too.

Despite the conclusions of this study being unable to be generalised in the same way as quantitative findings, there will be lessons to be learnt from the findings of this research because it provides insights into processes that may be happening in other contexts (O'Leary 2004; Bryman 2016). Indeed, understanding social processes in all their richness and complexity is a central goal of qualitative research and, as such, illumination of the social process involved in negotiating police/community relations is one of the key strengths of this thesis. After all, human attitudes, actions and behaviours are

highly complex phenomena and it would be reasonable to assume that numbers and statistics may not be adequate to fully describe or explain them (Holliday 2013). A truly comprehensive explanation of the factors that inform communities' perceptions of law enforcement would likely involve insights gained from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Moreover, if more qualitative studies were carried out, it would become clearer how transferable their findings were.

3.5   Research approach

In this research, the data consists of people's perceptions about the behaviour and actions of the police. Members and representatives of communities were asked about their perceptions and encouraged to talk about the topic in detail, giving examples and elaborating with personal experiences as appropriate. This method is known as a naturalist, qualitative approach; community members describe their opinions as comprehensively as possible and these observations are documented with minimal researcher interference (Silverman 2010). The objective in naturalism, based on post-positivism, is to gather as many perceptions and views as possible to construct a broad narrative of events, in this case, a narrative based on the views of different members of a community. This approach allows for the findings to represent personal, subjective views and for comparative analysis with those of others in the community to construct a representative portrayal of events community-wide. As O'Leary explains: 'Post-positivists see the world as ambiguous…and multiple in its realities - what might be 'truth' for one person or cultural group may not be 'truth' for another' (2004: 6).

In a naturalistic approach, the researcher interprets the data according to their own interests and biases; in this case, to answer prescribed research questions. One of the drawbacks of naturalism is the false impression that there is no interpretation or construction occurring at the boundary of the data and its presentation (Silverman 2010). In fact, at best one can hope to allow themes to emerge from the data and subsequently use them as a guide to compile a narrative of the situation in a community, in relation to law enforcement in this instance. It is important to acknowledge, however, that biases are ever-present in the process despite the goal of trying to be guided as much as possible by the data. Letting the data guide the evolution of the research in this way is a process known as inductive or grounded theory which complements a naturalistic approach (Babbie 2010).

Grounded theory describes the qualitative research practice of deriving themes and patterns from data as they emerge and building theories to answer the research questions based on those themes. This contrasts with the positivist practice of starting with a hypothesis derived from theory and then testing it (Babbie 2010; Bryman 2016). An inductive approach is reflexive and allows the data to lead the researcher as much as possible and the study to unfold based on that data. Reflexivity also encourages flexibility of design in qualitative studies rather than the rigidity that often characterises quantitative research (Bryman 2016). One problem with grounded theory, however, is that previous knowledge about the topic area is impossible to erase from the process. This issue must be acknowledged because it affects what themes are interpreted to be emerging from the data (Bryman 2016). Practically, in the case of this

study, there were also several feedback sessions with interested community groups planned. This mechanism ensured that the narrative that emerged from the data fairly represented what the participants had said and, if it did not, the participants were given the opportunity to correct the record.

Interpretation is implicit, even necessary, in qualitative research (Holliday 2013). A naturalistic approach aims to minimise the researcher's voice, but the practicality of completing a research study necessitates, for example, giving meaning to certain observations and not others based on the research questions. The process of interpreting data in a way that results in a coherent overall narrative is ultimately based on the researcher's own beliefs and norms. Theoretical assumptions that underpin an approach such as this are summed up by Holliday:

> The qualitative belief that the realities of the research setting and the people in it are mysterious and can only be superficially touched by research which tries to make sense is interpretive. It maintains that we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality. Interpretation is as far as we can go. (2013: 8)

A last point regarding the research approach is that this study was ultimately concerned with perceptions. Although some community members' views may not have always reflected numerical 'reality' – for example, that the community was becoming less safe according to the official crime figures – if that was the perception, it was still considered to influence their views of the police and their community. Ultimately, this research approach accepted participants' views at face value and attempted to make sense of them in the context of the rest of the data.

3.6   Data collection

Data collection for this project comprised focus groups and interviews with a research population who lived, worked or studied in Monash LGA. Discussion was encouraged about policing in the wider community setting, information that was not possible to glean from the limited indicators within the NSCSP survey. The participants were generally law-abiding citizens. Therefore, the focus of this research is everyday contact, encounters and opinions, rather than the perspective of a population that has been in trouble with the law and experienced multiple serious encounters with police.

The initial method of recruitment was email via the Monash Community Directory online; a local council-compiled list of contacts for community organisations in Monash LGA (https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Services/Community-Directory). Researcher details were included in the recruitment email and potential participants were encouraged to make contact if they were interested. The advantage with the online directory is that it includes a wide variety of community groups including organisations representing senior citizens, religious organisations, business groups, local government, sporting and social clubs, multicultural communities, Neighbourhood Watch[1] and residents who had

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[1] Neighbourhood Watch is a not-for-profit, community-based crime prevention program with the aim of building safe and confident communities. For more information see www.nhw.com.au

demonstrated previous interest in policing issues through their support for campaigns in their area (such as a petition for a 24-hour police station at Mount Waverley). The participants that were recruited by this method represented several of the diverse ethnic groups in Monash LGA, although they were mostly either European[2]- or Asian-Australian[3]. Seniors (a term that denotes participants over 60 years of age for the purposes of this study) were well-represented too, possibly because they had more spare time to participate in community activities generally. This latter group perhaps also prioritised community-related issues, as all were already members of at least one other community organisation, hence being contactable via this method. Several of the participants had children in their early 20s. During their interviews/focus groups these participants agreed to try and persuade their children to take part in the research because it would lend balance to include the views of younger Monash residents who may give a different perspective on policing in their area. In spite of following this up for several weeks afterwards, it was not successful at yielding candidates and eventually it was decided that it was no longer appropriate to chase people up who had already given freely of their time. Recruiting through Monash University Clubs was also attempted which proved ultimately unsuccessful. In a final attempt to recruit a younger cohort, younger colleagues at Monash University distributed recruitment flyers amongst their networks, again to no avail. Therefore, the recruitment strategies that proved successful meant that many of the participants were older and already members of other community groups, so they all possibly had a more engaged, community outlook than other residents would have done. This could have translated to them having a more positive perspective on the police too. Nonetheless, all participants ultimately offered both positive and negative comments about Victoria Police.

In addition to the Community Directory, further recruitment was facilitated through contacting multicultural and primary health care communities in the Monash LGA. Research contacts previously established in the local Masters AFL (Australian Football League) were also utilised, yielding several interviews and further contacts. Once contacts in the Monash LGA communities had been established, snowballing also proved to be an effective recruitment technique. Snowballing describes the process of established participants sharing a researcher's contact details with other individuals who may also be suitable as participants (Bryman 2016). These individuals subsequently contact the researcher if they are willing to participate. Snowballing can be a highly effective method because the original respondent recommends participation in the study to their acquaintances and, if necessary, reassures other participants about the process. It also enables access to networks that may not otherwise have been penetrable for the researcher. Most initial participants in this study recommended participation to at least one other person. The culmination of this process was 31 individual participants who were canvassed by way of six focus groups, 18 individual interviews and one email response. Demographic information for the respondents can be found in Table 3.2.

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[2] The terms 'European-Australian' or 'Euro-Australian' will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis to refer to Australian residents of European, often but not exclusively British, ancestries.

[3] The term 'Asian-Australian' will be used throughout this thesis to refer to Australians of all East Asian backgrounds including Chinese, Singaporean and Malaysian-Australians.

Table 3.2   Informer demographics

Interview/Focus Group Number & Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Based In	Notes
Interview 1 - Roz	60+	F	European Australian	Mount Waverley	British migrant, in Australia since childhood, in Monash since her early 20s
Focus group 2 - Richard	60+	M	European Australian	Chadstone	British migrant, came to Australia as a young adult, constantly moving locations due to job
Focus group 2 - Francine	60+	F	European Australian	Chadstone	Born in Australia, had lived in Monash for 10+ years
Focus group 2 - Ben	50+	M	Sri-Lankan Australian	Chadstone	Migrated to Australia from Sri-Lanka 40 years ago, had lived in Monash all that time
Interview 3 - Ray	70+	M	European Australian	Mount Waverley	Born in Australia, lifelong Monash resident
Interview 4 - Mike	60+	M	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, in Monash 20+ years
Focus group 5 - Bob	60+	M	European Australian	Mount Waverley	Born in Australia, moved to Monash as young adult
Focus group 5 - Dennis	60+	M	European Australian	Mount Waverley	Born in Australia, moved to Monash as a young adult
Interview 6 - Ben					See focus group 2
Focus group 7 - Ian	50+	M	European Australian	Clayton	Born in Australia, 5th generation Clayton resident
Focus group 7 - Tricia	50+	F	European Australian	Clayton	Born in Australia, had lived in Monash all her life
Focus group 8 - Pat	70+	F	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, had moved from Adelaide to Monash as young adult (when newly married to Athol)
Focus group 8 - Athol	70+	M	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, moved from Adelaide as young adult

Interview/Focus Group Number & Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Based In	Notes
Interview 9 - Rhonda	50+	F	European Australian	Clayton	Born in Australia, had lived in Monash all her life
Interview 10 - Rachel	30+	F	European Australian	Clayton	Ex-Victoria Police member, born in Australia, had worked in Monash for past 2 years
Interview 11 - Anita	50+	F	Singaporean Australian	Mount Waverley	Indian cultural background, migrant from Singapore, in Australia for 14 years all in Monash
Interview 12 - Jeff	30+	M	Singaporean Australian	Oakleigh	Chinese cultural background, migrant from Singapore, in Australia 14 years all in Monash
Focus group 13 - Dave	40+	M	European Australian	Mulgrave	Born in Australia, lived in St Kilda as a child. Moved to Monash as young adult 20 years ago
Focus group 13 - Tom	20+	M	European Australian	Mulgrave	Born in Australia, lifelong Monash resident (son of Dave)
Interview 14 - Tony	50+	M	European Australian	Oakleigh	Born in Australia, lifelong Monash resident
Interview 15 - Awena	50+	F	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, had lived in Monash 30+ years
Interview 16 - Roger	60+	M	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, lived in Monash 40+ years
Interview 17 - Julia	50+	F	European Australian	Ashwood/Chadstone	Born in Australia, had worked in Monash for over 10 years
Interview 18 - Steve	40+	M	European Australian	Mount Waverley	British migrant, in Australia for 32 years (resident in Monash), serving Victoria Police member (not in Monash PSA)

Interview/Focus Group Number & Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Based In	Notes
Focus group 19 - Sarah	40+	F	Iranian	Mount Waverley	Iranian refugee background, in Australia 2+ years, had moved from Dandenong to Mount Waverley in past 3 months
Focus group 19 - Simon	70+	M	European Australian	Mount Waverley	Born in Australia, lifelong Monash resident
Interview 20 - Cam	40+	M	European Australian	Oakleigh	Born in Australia, brought up in Oakleigh South where he still lives
Interview 21 - Jenny	50+	F	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, had worked in Monash for 20+ years
Interview 22 - Jeanette	40+	F	European Australian	Glen Waverley	Born in Australia, had worked in Monash for 10+ years
Interview 23 - Phil	50+	M	European Australian	Clayton	Scottish migrant, moved to Australia as a child, ex-Victoria Police member, had worked in Monash for 10+ years
Interview 24 - Fabrizio	30+	M	Italian	Glen Waverley	Italian international student, in Australia for 2 years

Conducting this study entailed gaining the trust of communities the researcher was not a member of. As a result, it was time-consuming and required great effort to establish contacts and networks within Monash LGA with varying degrees of success. For example, one of the eventual participants (Julia) worked in the community social services sector in Monash. Snowballing following Julia's interview enabled information about the project to be disseminated amongst residents of Monash's public housing estates. Unfortunately, this method did not ultimately result in any participants. Another area where the issue of outsider status was relevant, was in relation to ensuring adequate representation in the research population of the ethnic diversity in Monash LGA. Ethnicity has been shown in previous Australian studies to be a highly relevant factor regarding perceptions of the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Indeed, reticence in relation to discussing the police was evident amongst some ethnically diverse groups in Monash that were approached to be part of the current study. For example, protracted discussions were held with representatives of local

Indigenous Australians who, in the end, decided they were not comfortable discussing Victoria Police with a researcher/outsider. This was understandable given the history of problematic relationships between the police and Indigenous Australians (Anderson & Killingray 1991; Finnane 1994; Haldane 1995). Likewise, Chinese religious, community and business organisations in Monash LGA were contacted to try to ensure proportionate representation of the area's large East Asian population. This method yielded no research participants either. Fortunately, Asian members of the Monash Multicultural Forum (a local council initiative) and Neighbourhood Watch organisations volunteered to be interviewed which helped provide representation from these communities, albeit in a lesser proportion that the overall population (Figure 3.2). These experiences in the recruitment phase emphasise the relevance of cultural issues when investigating perceptions of the police in Australia.

Participants were also given the choice of undergoing an individual interview or forming a focus group. The focus groups undertaken for this study were conducted like an interview with two or three individuals simultaneously. The same questions were asked as in the interviews. The difference between the focus groups and interviews was that, as well as the answers to the interview questions, there was interaction and discussion between the focus group members in addition to engaging with the researcher. This added valuable detail and vibrancy to the data, particularly in the case of the married couples who participated together (see below). It was important that the format chosen enabled rapport to be established with the participants in a relatively short space of time to access insights on the police within approximately one hour. Additionally, focus groups involved no more than three people which allowed all participants an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. In the end, only one of the total six focus groups consisted of three people. This group was dominated by two participants which led to the third participant being persuaded to return on another occasion for an individual interview. This latter respondent was also from an ethnically diverse background. Considering previous studies that have suggested ethnicity as a factor in perceptions of the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013), the opportunity to get this respondents' views was crucial; especially considering that he had appeared to be slightly uncomfortable in the focus group environment.

The remaining five focus groups all contained two people who knew each other well. These were either couples, close friends or other family configurations. Combinations such as these appeared to work well, the resulting observations being the result of exchanges between researcher and participants and amongst group members themselves (Jupp 2013; Bryman 2016). This was especially pertinent with respect to several married couples that were interviewed together. Indeed, the dynamic between the married couples prompted discussion between them with minimal intervention from the researcher. It was probable that the rapport between the couples meant topics and ideas were considered which would not have been had they been interviewed on their own. Furthermore, it was possible that being with their partner may have made these participants feel more confident and comfortable, and may have led to some of the more candid opinions that were offered by some of the married couples who participated.

Both interviews and focus groups were loosely structured, with a planned duration of 1-1.5 hours. The same formal list of questions was used for both interviews and focus groups (see Appendix A) but, rather than working through them in turn, a few broad warm-up questions were asked first about the community of Monash LGA. Subsequently, the role of the researcher was to steer the discussion towards law enforcement issues. At the end of 45 minutes, the questions were checked to ensure no topics had been missed. If this was the case, these topics were followed up on. As the participants' opinions were of the greatest relevance, this method also gave scope for topics and areas to be ventured into that may not have been previously considered by the researcher; a key strength of the unstructured, qualitative interview method (Bryman 2016). In both focus groups and interviews, general questions were also asked about the participants and the communities of Monash LGA from their perspective either as resident (as most participants were) or as someone who worked or studied in the area. Once the participants had described their experience of living in the community, they were asked more specific questions about how Victoria Police fitted into that.

The questions asked in interviews and focus groups included whether the participants had experienced an encounter with the police, what were their impressions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA, why they thought the police might not be reaching their performance targets in the NSCSP, if there were any specific policing issues in the area and their opinions on the role of the media - in relation to perceptions of the police (see Appendix A for full list of interview/focus group questions). These broad topics ignited discussion about how Monash LGA had changed over the years and what role the police have today in the context of Monash LGA. Encouraging participants to talk about their everyday lived experience in communities they knew well, and were in many cases quite passionate about, was followed by steering the discussion back to the topic of law enforcement. This approach appeared to make participants feel at ease. All focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded at the time and subsequently transcribed verbatim to facilitate coding and analysis. This technique also enabled the researcher to fully concentrate on conducting the interview or focus group without the additional task of note-taking.

3.7   Data analysis

The interview and focus group transcripts were manually coded. This process involved listening to the audio, re-reading the transcript several times and assigning each topic that emerged a theme code. The choice to undertake this task manually was made deliberately to allow the researcher to listen to the audio, look at the text and take cues from intonation and what was remembered of the participant's intentions simultaneously. This took time and meant, of course, that interpretation was an important consideration. However, the level of detail that was gained by this approach was worth the time taken to accomplish this task rigorously. To ensure confidentiality, the participants were allocated pseudonyms as soon as the audio of their interview had been transcribed. These pseudonyms were used thereafter assuring participants' comments could not be traced directly back to them in the analysis or write-up.

During analysis, once it appeared that all the themes relating to the research questions had emerged – saturation was starting to occur with no new themes emerging – a separate mind map consisting of these themes was created for each interview and focus group. Key quotes were also identified from each of the interviews/focus groups and assigned to their relevant theme. After initial analysis, dominant themes began to emerge. Once all the interviews and focus groups had been represented in this way, the key topics in relation to perceptions of the police in Monash LGA began to be revealed. At this point, rough drafts of three findings chapters encompassing the main topics that had emerged were created with remaining themes allocated as sub-sections within these chapters. Key quotes were annotated and allocated to the relevant chapter and sub-section.

The chapter headings changed several times following further deliberation, with the mission to construct a coherent narrative pertaining to how Monash LGA communities perceived Victoria Police and what factors influenced these perceptions - the main research question. The subsidiary research questions were also slightly adjusted at this point to better reflect the data collected and provide coherence between the research questions, the data and the structure of the analysis chapters. This same method of coding was repeated for every interview and focus group reflecting the inductive, systematic manner characteristic of a grounded theory approach (Babbie 2010). The above process also demonstrates how, in inductive research, themes emerge from the data and become the findings (Babbie 2010).

3.8   Conclusion

Qualitative methodologies cannot be neatly ascribed in the manner associated with quantitative methods and positivism. Instead, by 'showing…[the]…workings' (Holliday 2013: 9) this chapter has unveiled how the data in this research was gathered, what and whom it aims to represent and in what context. This was achieved by introducing the existing quantitative methods for capturing data about the police, the NSCSP, and explaining how the Monash LGA results in this survey were the fillip for a qualitative study. The potential merits of employing qualitative methods in this study and in policing research more broadly were discussed next. The naturalistic, grounded theory approach utilised in this research was then articulated. The data collection methods – interviews and focus groups – were described including methods of recruitment. This was followed by an account of the data analysis process. The following three analysis chapters present the data obtained during this process.

Chapter 4 Change in the Monash Local Government Area

4.1 Introduction

This chapter responds to the first subsidiary research question: Has the rapid change and growth in Monash LGA over the past decade influenced public perceptions regarding law enforcement? Change is a prominent theme that emerged from this study. Participants from all ethnic backgrounds described how their community had 'changed' between 2007 and the first half of 2015, mirroring the timeframe of the worsening NSCSP results described in Chapter 3. Change is discussed under three sub-topics. The first is community change, which encompasses a general discussion of the key elements of change in the Monash LGA observed by participants. The excerpts and analysis illustrate the centrality of change in participant views regarding the police in this study.

The second sub-topic is structural factors. Structural factors incorporate both development and stagnation of infrastructure in Monash LGA, such as changes to housing stock and the increasing development of Monash University, as compared to a perceived comparative lack of investment in the police stations. Selected urban theory (Jacobs 1961; Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008) is used to contextualise the way that participants felt structural factors – leading to rapid urbanisation in their area – were creating opportunities for petty disorder which the police did not have the capacity to respond to. This led to some participants expressing safety fears believing that their community was becoming a place of strangers, especially due to the increasing ethnic diversity.

The third sub-topic is demographic change, characterised by the increased ethnic diversity that has become a feature of Monash LGA. The apparent relationship between increased ethnic diversity and decline in satisfaction with policing is discussed. Ethnic diversity in Monash LGA is also more broadly considered, including the increase in the proportion of the population with Asian ancestries; a key theme arising from the data (Figure 3.2). The topic of community organisations is raised in relation to newer residents and community participation. Migrant perceptions of Victoria Police are examined, with evidence presented that perceptions of the police from a migrant's homeland can influence perceptions of the police in Australia; a phenomenon described by Murphy and Cherney (2011). A discussion about Victoria Police engagement with diverse communities then follows. Finally, established residents' views of new, diverse migrants are considered, followed by the repercussions these residents identified in relation to demographic change in the area. In this last section, tension is revealed between participants valuing diversity versus an evident fear of 'others' (Colic-Peisker 2005: 619), which appeared to be creating conflicted feelings towards ethnically diverse residents in Monash LGA, particularly amongst older, mostly European-Australians. This last section also considers why competing emotions about diversity might have been influencing perceptions of the police in Monash LGA.

4.2   Community change in Monash LGA

The Monash LGA was perceived by participants in this study to have undergone significant changes in the past decade. Some participants expressed that a heightened sense of fear had become part of their everyday existence due to changes around them which they felt they were not able to control. Participants thought that there had been little consideration for quality of life and the wellbeing of the community in planning change in Monash LGA. The following comments epitomised these views towards change:

> Monash has changed amazingly! I've lived in Monash since 1984, I used to live up in Glen Waverley before I moved to Mount Waverley and the demographics have changed so much. Just the demographic that's the biggest thing, the Chinese and, to a lesser extent, people from the subcontinent. (Steve[1], 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

> The City of Monash has evolved a fair bit in the past 10 or 15 years if you look at the census, it has become much more multicultural; it has become more Chinese-dominant, Asian-dominant. The street that I live in, in Oakleigh used to be all Greeks, all my neighbours were Greeks. And now there's Japanese, Korean, Chinese and there's more renters as well. So, transitional people have increased quite significantly as well. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

The theme of community change in Monash LGA spoken about by many participants was characterised by several main factors: Firstly, an increase in the transient population which comprised students and renters and so-called 'absentee landlords who rent places out' (Awena, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley). Secondly, the increased numbers of residents of East and South Asian ancestries was viewed as a reason for community change. Lastly, less willingness amongst newer residents of Monash LGA to get involved with community organisations and volunteering was believed to have led to a change or decline in overall community spirit. Tony, a long-time Monash LGA resident, was asked about the decline in satisfaction with policing and summed it up thus:

> I was talking to a guy the other night, he builds jails and he's never been busier. A lot of people have got less money in their pocket, they're angrier and they haven't got the opportunities so they have this resentment as well, they've been dealt a pretty bad hand in life. It's a bigger problem, a community problem. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

Tony's view was that any problems with law enforcement in Monash LGA should be considered in the context of other broader changes that were taking place at the same time, including changes to the community itself. For example, an increase in the percentage of the population who could be described as transient had, in the view of many participants, led to a decline in the amount that people cared about a community that they did not feel they had a long-term stake in. Ian, another long-time resident, explained:

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[1] Steve was interviewed in his position as a resident of Monash LGA, but was also able to offer his perspective as a serving member of Victoria Police although this was his personal view and does not necessarily reflect the organisation's official position.

Our area's different around here, it's more transient, being near to the hospital and the university, so a lot of people don't have an investment in the community emotionally, physically, ethically because they're here for 12 months, 18 months and move on. So, what's the point in getting involved in something long-term? (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The perception of participants was that changes to the community, over the last ten years especially, were contributing to social problems and community breakdown. This, in turn, was believed to be creating problems from a law enforcement perspective. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs (1961) discusses the way that failure to consider the people or the community in city planning leads to the creation of neighbourhoods where crime and disorder can flourish. This theme was vocalised by many of the participants in the current study. They described how physical changes, like subdivision, had tangibly affected quality of life and eroded their sense of community. In addition to the apparent disregard for community issues in urban planning, participants expressed that the police also appeared to be stretched for resources and were therefore unable to deal with minor offending:

…just as a broken window left unattended is a sign that nobody cares and leads to more serious damage, so disorderly behaviour left untended is a sign that nobody cares and leads to more serious crime as well as urban decay and fear. (Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008; 8)

Using analogies reminiscent of 'broken windows' (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008) was characteristic of the manner in which several of the participants described their community becoming less and less liveable due to the nature of change; change that had even led to some participants feeling unsafe in their own community. It was believed that Victoria Police in Monash LGA were struggling to adjust to the rapid changes and, participants believed, this may have been contributing to negative perceptions of that organisation.

Possibly as a result of changes to the fabric of the community, many participants also spoke of a perceived decline in community spirit in the Monash LGA. Participants cited changing demographics, size and types of housing as key indicators of changes that have precipitated a decline in community feeling. As well as ethnicity and age, the necessity to work full time to afford to live in Monash LGA was suggested as a possible reason for lack of community engagement amongst more recent residents. Level of community engagement was seen by participants as evidence of the elusive 'community spirit':

The other change is that the aging population is being replaced by younger, more professionally skilled, more hard-working residents with less free time. So, community projects are very hard to fill. There is a generation of doers that are getting too old to do it anymore and the, as you say, the time-poor, whatever we call them, are not able to take up the ropes. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Comments like Roger's captured the experience of life in Monash LGA over the period 2007 to 2015 and how change during this time was related to perceptions of Victoria Police. Structural factors affecting quality of life in Monash LGA was also a prominent theme in the interviews and focus groups. A significant number of participants talked about structural factors which they believed were having an impact on quality of life in Monash LGA, even impacting on perceptions of security and order.

4.3   Structural factors: Change versus stagnation

Structural factors mentioned by participants included changes in lifestyle and liveability as a result of subdivision of housing blocks, which had led to denser housing types characterising the area, and lack of parking. Other structural changes included the expansion of Monash University. With respect to structural stagnation, lack of proportionate investment in police services, epitomised by the poor state of the four police stations in Monash LGA, was of paramount concern to the majority of participants. Essentially, these factors were associated with Monash LGA becoming increasingly urbanised. The main point the findings from this research emphasised was that participants felt they had no stake in this urbanisation, particularly the subdivision and resulting, denser housing types. Participants thought that the local council was over-developing for profit and Monash LGA was being '…amputated, bisected and generally shaken up by misguided planning policies' (Jacobs 1961: 137). Participants suggested that the wellbeing of residents should have been at the centre of redevelopment plans, rather than the council simply allowing developers to capitalise on increasing land values and demand for housing stock. Furthermore, the accompanying stagnation of police infrastructure in Monash LGA was perceived by participants as precipitating 'a potential spiral into decline' (Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008: 8) which assured that a measure of the dissatisfaction regarding changes in their area was directed at Victoria Police. Subdivision of housing blocks was a common example of structural changes in Monash LGA that participants thought were affecting the essence of their neighbourhood.

4.3.1   Subdivision

Subdivision was a feature of the built environment in Monash LGA that participants were concerned was changing their area for the worse: 'I think one of the negatives that I've noticed more recently – probably in the last ten years – would be the large buildings that are going up' (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). Roz's comment related to the multiple-occupancy dwellings on entire housing blocks that were being developed in place of single dwellings with gardens, that were more typical in the past. Lots of subdivision has taken place in Monash LGA over the past decade, especially as housing costs and land values have risen. As established residents have aged and sold their large blocks in order to downsize, property developers have bought the land and taken advantage of the popularity of the area to maximise the number of dwellings built. This had been possible partly because the area has become popular due to its schools (Monash LGA has two sought-after government schools which people are prepared to move into the area for), partly for its employment opportunities – such as the university and a major hospital – and due to the area's efficient transport links to Melbourne's CBD.

The resulting increased density has led to the roads being busier throughout Monash LGA which has had an impact on quality of life, such as the time and effort taken to do everyday tasks like shopping. Parking was also cited by participants as a significant emerging problem on local roads that were previously quiet. In essence, Monash LGA has undergone substantial changes to the form and function

of its urban space. Ian's experience was typical of what participants described: 'Once upon a time we had a single house behind us, we now have three. Monash Council want to over-develop this part of the world' (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton). The perception of participants was that local government was to blame for allowing Monash LGA to be developed in this way. Subdivision was creating pressure on community resources in Monash LGA, many residents saw it as a potential cause of social problems and, as a result, increased need for police services rather than the reduction they have seen (an issue discussed later in this chapter).

Other problems linked by participants to subdivision included a perceived increase in stress and loss of 'community feeling' because higher density housing led to a different way of living. Several participants commented on how they perceived this trend to have negatively influenced the feeling of community and wellbeing in Monash LGA. Participants also suggested that a fall in community spirit may have meant that the police had additional challenges in areas such as welfare checks which may previously have been absorbed by informal community structures. The implication was that a dismantling of informal networks had resulted from the reconfiguration of neighbourhoods brought about by subdivision. Rhonda explained: 'As soon as they sell a block of land, three or four units go up on it. It's huge. I think in years to come it will become a real problem' (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton).

At the same time that rapid development was taking place, public infrastructure like police services were not perceived to have enjoyed increased investment. The perception from participants in this research was that development has been profit-driven rather than carefully planned with integration of services. This theme echoes the work of Jacobs (1961) who describes diversity of land use as the key to a successful, functional, thriving urban environment. Rachel expressed her concerns about a lack of supporting infrastructure in Monash LGA: 'Get all these people in and get more and more in but the services and the infrastructure aren't being expanded to meet the needs' (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton).

Participants likewise said that public resources and infrastructure in Monash LGA had been stretched by growth over the past decade, and the police were just one service among many to be affected by that. Therefore, lack of resources, investment, funds and personnel were influencing the services the police could provide to a point that it was affecting public perceptions of them. Tricia, for example, described her disbelief at the rapid growth in their area coupled with the fact that their local police station was not open 24-hours a day despite being opposite a major Melbourne hospital (Monash Medical Centre) which was itself undergoing expansion:

> We've got so many more people living here but, rather than having greater access to police services, they've actually cut back. You've got a major hospital and a children's hospital and a university, how many thousands of people is that and you don't have a 24-hour police station? (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The impression of participants was that, due to a lack of resources, the police have had to prioritise incidents that come to their attention. Violent offences and crimes such as burglary were believed by participants to be recorded but subsequently discarded as there were not enough resources to respond to

them. The community interpreted this visible crime being ignored as sending a message to criminals that Monash LGA was a receptive area for them to operate in, and was a prelude to 'urban decay and fear' (Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008: 8). Participants believed that police resourcing and recruitment were not keeping up with the demands placed upon them by change in the area. Therefore, lack of resources was creating a gap between public expectations and what the police could realistically achieve. As Jeff explained: 'They're under resourced. I mean I sympathise with the police in some cases because I believe that most of them want to do more but they just can't' (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh).

4.3.2   The expansion of Monash University

In addition to the development of Monash Medical Centre, Monash University has also been significantly expanded over the past ten years. This has created employment and brought many opportunities to the area, as well as being important economically for the State of Victoria. However, as explained by Phil – a former member of Victoria Police who now works at Monash University – the university has created additional challenges for the police in Monash LGA:

> The university brings a lot of issues into the area. You've got a demographic of young people generally in that high-risk age group from around 17, 18 up to 24, 25. You're bringing people from not only around Australia but from around the world and they're either living on campus or living in the immediate area around campus because they're using public transport and they don't have cars, they don't have a lot of money, that kind of stuff. So, they're going to be renting and living in the area. They don't have support networks because they've left their home and they've come into a totally foreign environment. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Phil's comments align closely with the concerns of residents that many people living in Monash LGA were now transient – renters and students – and this had impacted on the community overall. Phil's perspective was that the economic significance of the university, not only to the immediate area but state-wide, should have meant that it was worth prioritising resources for police/university partnerships. By this he meant that police stationed on the university campus to deal with problems as they happened, would strengthen relationships between Victoria Police and communities in Monash LGA. Such an arrangement would also have enhanced Victoria Police's profile amongst diverse communities, many of whom had links to the university as students or staff, with the wider benefits disseminated throughout the Monash LGA (Forbes-Mewett 2018). Phil also emphasised continuity as one advantage of a scheme like this:

> So, for us, we get a different person every time we call [the police]. The police don't think it's that important. But the overall impact on us recruiting students from a particular country might be really affected. If VicPol come in and take a report off an Indonesian kid, they don't understand the process and they've not particularly got enough time to sit there and explain it to them all, the Indonesian person walks off and thinks "well that was a pretty lousy experience if that's all they can offer". And then he goes back and tells all his friends how the police in Australia didn't treat him [properly]. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

With a partnership model, not only would problems be mitigated before they became more serious but police on campus, to use one example, would also be great public relations for Victoria Police among young, at-risk groups, ethnically diverse communities and other potentially vulnerable groups such as international students. As a key structural component of Monash LGA and driver of change and growth in the area, the university could be considered an area where scarce police resources could be directed with great effect for the community more broadly. This is particularly so, given community opinion of police services is that the current structural arrangements are not wholly satisfactory. Amongst all the rapid changes, police infrastructure was perceived to be falling behind, even stagnating.

4.3.3   Policing infrastructure: Stagnation of the Clayton, Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley and Oakleigh Police Stations

There was a perception amongst participants in this research that the four police stations in Monash LGA were unfit for the demands of policing in the 21st century. Indicators of their unsuitability ranged from workplace health and safety factors and the general environment for members working there, the times and types of police services available to the public and the lack of parking space. Essentially, while the rest of Monash LGA had seen rapid growth and change, it is perceived that police services had stood still:

> They're not particularly inviting…people would not feel they're part of their community, they look like they're little fortresses or something… some of them are designed that way. Like the one at Oakleigh looks like a little fortress with the fences around it and everything. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

In addition, each of the four stations appeared to have their own reputation amongst the community, particularly the ethnically diverse communities in Monash LGA. That is, the way each one looked and functioned was interpreted by participants to be related to the value of the people who lived in that area. For instance, participants from Clayton felt they were not as valued as other residents because their police station opening hours had been drastically reduced. Likewise, Mount Waverley residents felt their station was only 'for show', as the range of services available there was minimal and, again, the opening hours had been cut. Jeff explained:

> There's four police stations, Clayton, Mount Waverley, Oakleigh and Glen Waverley and I don't know what the other interviewees say but these four police stations have each got their own, to me, perception, their own image. Clayton normally is the joke because it's not open 24-hours. As an international student there's always a joke, they're surrounded! [Clayton Police Station nestles in the midst of student apartments in a residential area]. The apartment next to the police station got broken into and the police took two hours just to respond to that. So, in terms of international students, then I don't have any confidence in Victoria Police because come on, next to you! (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

4.3.3.1   Clayton

Clayton Police Station elicited the most negative comments from the participants about its opening hours, general appearance and whether it was serving the area appropriately. It was the station raised most often in interviews and focus groups, usually negatively. Tricia's comment summed up the prevailing view:

> Probably one of the biggest bugbears is the fact that we don't have a 24-hour police station here in Clayton, even though we've had a huge increase in population because of the development that's happened. (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Furthermore, participants pointed out that, from the point of view of the police members stationed there, it was probably not optimal either:

> If I look at the situation at Clayton Police Station, it's not a 24-hour police station. It's a very old building. It's not built to be a productive workplace for a police person. It doesn't provide an environment which they can work in effectively. As a member of the public, you can hardly get a parking spot, you know, it's terrible. From a security perspective, with all the terrorism stuff, with the requirements for them to be two-up [in pairs] at all times even in the station, that's a problem for them in Clayton. They can't open the front door if there's only one in one building, one in the other building, they're not actually together. So, they have to move into the other building if their numbers are low and the same goes for Mount Waverley. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

On top of that, Clayton also had the reputation of not being welcoming if you were an ethnically diverse resident:

> I mean the Clayton Police Station doesn't actually do law enforcement, they do a lot of things like justice of the peace and witnessing and things like that. And unfortunately, Clayton also have got a reputation that the people there are not very welcoming for multicultural people. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Ultimately, dissatisfaction over what was happening at the local police stations could have been deleteriously affecting perceptions of Victoria Police amongst the community. Clayton participants commented on the opening hours of Clayton Police Station being too minimal and, thus, not providing a proper service. The belief was that the population in the area had grown, housing had got denser and the streets were busier but, instead of the provision of police services being increased, they had been cut back. This was a major source of dissatisfaction with the police in Clayton according to the participants in this study. Former Victoria Police member Rachel summed up concerns:

> With the closure or the changing of the structure of stations in this area and the increased media attention to certain crimes, yeah, it makes people concerned and I can appreciate that they would be upset if their local station was being closed down. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

4.3.3.2 Mount Waverley

Participants believed that the situation at Mount Waverley Police Station was almost as bad as the one at Clayton. In the past, politicians had made promises about this station without consultation with police and without the resources to back up the promises:

> The election before last, the Liberal candidate, who really wasn't expected to get elected from Mount Waverley, made a promise to open Mount Waverley Police Station 24/7. He got elected so prior to the last election, the Mayor became quite vocal about, "Well you promised to open this police station blah, blah, blah, you should uphold your [promise]… why isn't it happening?" And then there was a debate about Mount Waverley operating patrol at night shift and whether that's a 24/7 police service, so it was a semantic thing about what they're actually committed to. My point of view is, who made this promise without consulting with the police? And as a resident with quite a lot of police experience, I would prefer the van to be on the road rather than two members sitting in the police station doing nothing. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

As Steve explained, prior to the Victorian state election in 2014, it was promised by one political party that they would implement 24-hour opening hours for the police station at Mount Waverley (Bucci 2014). When they were elected, the promise remained unfulfilled because the candidate had not consulted with Victoria Police to ascertain whether the plan was actually practicable. In this instance, whilst participants did blame the politicians, it appeared that the police were also seen to be culpable when promises were not fulfilled:

> If you'd been promised by a politician that you're going to have a 24-hour station and it doesn't happen. The reaction always is, "Well there's cars on the road, they come from Glen Waverley which is not very far away and if there's problems a divvy van will be there as quick as it would be from Mount Waverley. But it's a perception thing I think. (Dennis, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

In an attempt to mitigate the fact that police services in Monash LGA were in need of an overhaul, methods of service delivery had changed to try and keep up with the demand for police services. Participants knew this, but felt aggrieved if their station was the one earmarked for closure. Mount Waverley resident, Anita, shared her views:

> It was a big revelation to me to learn that the Mount Waverley Police Station did not operate 24 hours. They assure us there's always a cop car… I think nowadays with computers and all of that connectivity, they're able to conduct police business via their vehicles. So, it's going to be a stranger coming to your house at a time of crisis but, having said that, any time you have a crisis if you call your local police Watch House[2], they will direct you to [ring triple zero] and [ask them to] send whatever is the

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[2] The term 'Watch House' was used by participants in this research to refer to the manned front desk at the local police station where members of the public could phone the police for their help with non-urgent police-related matters as an alternative to calling 000 for emergency assistance.

appropriate service out to you straight away. It's never a case of the local police station taking care of you. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Anita's comment suggested that, despite all the publicity and community anguish about Mount Waverley Police Station staying open 24-hours, residents were resigned to the fact that these days it was normal that policing was more centralised. Glen Waverley was the station in Monash LGA that was open 24 hours and where most police business was based. However, the perception was that it had outgrown its premises. It also appeared to have problems with public relations, similar to the feedback about Clayton Police Station.

4.3.3.3   Glen Waverley

Glen Waverley [Police Station] has got the worst reputation and all the police people stationed there totally go against multiculturalism. I mean, okay, police are very busy, but two or three years ago one of my friends – she's not even an international student, she's of Chinese descent – she went there and the police there were very rude to her. And I mean this could happen maybe to a Caucasian, we do not know, but it's that first impression that counts. So, as the counter staff, I mean whether you are police or whether you are a volunteer, it is that service that actually breaks down the first barrier. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

This example demonstrates the importance of first impressions whenever the police interact with the community. Indeed, previous research has shown that the brief experiences that the public has with the justice system can impact significantly on their perceptions of the legitimacy of the entire system (Roach Anleu & Mack 2005). The above extract also emphasises the importance of encounters in police legitimacy. Skogan suggests that encounters are, at best, a way to not make community perceptions of the police any worse, a phenomenon known as 'negativity bias' (2006: 106). Findings from the current study, however, indicate that even minor encounters with the police could be of vital importance in contributing to opinions of the police which, in turn, inform views about police legitimacy. This standpoint is shared by Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009) and Tyler and Huo (2002) who also argue that encounters can be an ideal way for police to increase their legitimacy and public trust, assuming that police employ procedural justice methods as a basis for their behaviours (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008; Jackson *et al*. 2012; Mazerolle *et al*. 2012).

Public expectations regarding encounters and contact with the police are discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6. For now, sub-optimal working conditions in the Monash LGA police stations may be impacting on morale which, in turn, could be affecting the police's capacity to relate to the public in a way that maximises satisfaction, that is, with a procedural justice approach. While misunderstandings can happen, especially if there is a perceived cultural disconnect on both sides, sub-optimal working conditions at Glen Waverley could also contribute to members appearing stressed out and terse when dealing with the public as some participants referred to. Moreover, other participants emphasised that, although it was important to have multicultural liaison in Victoria Police, it was not just those members

that had to be versed in responding to diverse communities because any community member could walk into the police station at any time. Of all four stations, the most positive feedback from participants related to Oakleigh Police Station.

4.3.3.4 Oakleigh

Participants were more positive about Oakleigh Police Station, particularly from the perspective of community engagement and multicultural liaison. It appeared as if personnel at Oakleigh were aware of being under-resourced and were candid about things that needed to improve but were, nonetheless, willing to participate in community engagement and listen to and engage with community representatives:

> Personally, I like Oakleigh, or I go to Oakleigh most of the time and I have had a personal chance to actually work with some of the police officers there. I got a chance to work with the police over there and they were fantastic. I mean they literally told me that one of the biggest challenges they faced was that they felt they do not have adequate multicultural training. So that led to the question whether our frontline police staff, those in a support role in fact are adequately trained, resourced and understand what the population is about. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Like the other stations in Monash LGA, resources were a prevalent theme in relation to Oakleigh Police Station. Participants in this research insisted that they liked the convenience of having a local station, but this model clearly had resource implications such as the upkeep of four buildings. From a crime fighting perspective, it would also possibly be more advantageous to have police vans on the road which could then respond more quickly to incidents. However, as Steve explained, many in the community were highly invested in the idea of having a local station instead of more police vans on the road:

> A lot of the time it's just so you can go and get documents signed, whether that's a policing role or not. Springvale and Dandenong between the two stations they've got JP rosters there and last year they signed 250,000 documents. If you allow two minutes for each document that's the equivalent of 12 full-time police. Oakleigh probably have quite a few [people wanting to access document signing services]. It's a lot higher where there's areas of new migrants. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

The data suggests that the state of police infrastructure is impacting on community perceptions of Victoria Police. In addition to the impression that some parts of Monash LGA are not valued and do not deserve up to date, functional police services, the state of the four stations also emits a negative message to the police themselves about their own value which could influenced their attitudes towards the public in terms of being able to deliver a procedural justice style of policing. Another prominent element of change in Monash LGA between 2007 and 2015 was demographic change, specifically, increasing ethnic diversity in the area characterised by an increase in migrants from non-European backgrounds. Previous studies in Australia highlight the importance of ethnicity as a factor influencing peoples' perceptions of the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy &

Cherney 2013). This also emerged as a significant theme in this study. The two key topics in the existing research which were also relevant in this study were racism in the police and experiences of the police from migrants' homelands influencing perceptions of the police here in Australia. Chapter 6 contains the data around the topic of racism and the police. The next section of this chapter discusses the opinions revealed about migrants' views about the police in their homelands and participants' speculations as to what implications those views may have for perceptions of Victoria Police.

4.4 Increased ethnic diversity

Murphy and Cherney (2011) assert that migrant experiences from their country of origin have an effect on impressions of the police in Australia, a phenomenon this study corroborates. As to whether a procedural justice approach to policing is effective with ethnically diverse migrant groups as a way of enhancing police legitimacy – as these authors also argue – was less clear from the current study's data. However, the way ethnically diverse communities perceive they are treated by the police is very important in influencing how Victoria Police are perceived in Monash LGA, according to ethnically diverse participants in this study. Findings also show that measures such as police effectiveness and responsiveness to crime are salient factors regarding ethnically diverse community members' judgements of police legitimacy in Monash LGA, as well as impressions of the police more broadly in Australia.

Increased ethnic diversity in Monash LGA is a recurring theme in the data in relation to stimulating changes in the community which creates additional challenges for policing practice, culture and resources. The next section describes the nature and impact of increased diversity from the perspective of the participants – both more recent, ethnically diverse migrants and longer-term residents of mostly Euro-Australian backgrounds – and what implications this may be having on satisfaction levels with Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Ethnic diversity is not a new phenomenon for Monash LGA, but the perception of the participants was that there had been a distinct shift from European migration (specifically British or Irish, Greek and Italian) to migration from East and South Asia (the subcontinent) and, to a lesser extent, Africa. Euro-Australian participants perceived the latter, non-European groups to have very different cultures and values to those of previous waves of migrants. Thus, there were perceived to be greater challenges for the community in terms of cohesion and for the police in terms of having the capacity to serve all residents effectively and satisfactorily.

4.4.1 The shift from European to Asian immigration in Monash LGA

Ethnic diversity is an essential characteristic of contemporary lived experience in Monash LGA. There has been considerable demographic change in the period 2007 to 2015, when Monash LGA underwent an increase in the percentage of the migrant population being from ethnic backgrounds other than European (Figure 3.2). As discussed below, shifting ethnic diversity has brought change to Monash LGA not just in the demographic sphere, but also in relation to the fabric of the community itself and in

the way that the community functions in relation to institutions such as the police. Overall, demographic change was perceived by participants to have been both positive and negative. The focus of this study was whether these changes may have implications for law enforcement. On the whole, ethnic diversity was viewed by participants as an integral characteristic of Monash LGA and a feature the area had prided itself on for many decades in one form or another. Tricia's comments about Clayton reflected the views of many established, mainly Euro-Australian, participants:

> I like it from the point of view of it is very much a melting pot. When our boys went through primary school, living here there was no way they were ever going to be in an all-white school and that was, from my perspective, fabulous because they were always going to be mixing with other kids and they would be accepting of them. (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

There was a view, however, that ethnic diversity also had implications for policing, such as needing interpreters, with the result that sometimes police work took longer and required more resources:

> Most of the new arrivals in Monash are further educated type migrants and probably have got a good understanding of English. I know that in certain areas where there's a lower socio-economic group and there's more refugee type people, certainly English becomes an issue and that delays, slows down. So, a job that would take ten minutes might take half an hour if you've got to do it through a telephone interpreter and stuff like that. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

As Steve's comments demonstrate, ethnic diversity presents practical challenges for police services in an area. Yet, in Monash LGA, many incomers from Asian backgrounds for instance, had moved into the area for the reputable schools. In order to be able to do this, they had to be in a position to afford expensive house prices in Monash LGA's school zones. Therefore, they were often highly educated and middle-class and unlikely to be persistent users of police services. Although Monash LGA was multicultural, the migrant population had generally settled there for reasons of their own choosing such as accessing opportunities to work or study for themselves or their families. This indicates a higher socio-economic status and a different premise for the move than, for example, if they had been forcibly resettled into this area or had had no choice about the move in the first instance.

Monash LGA residents overall enjoy relatively high socio-economic status (Community Profile 2014). Simon, who lives in Monash LGA but works with refugees and asylum seekers in the neighbouring LGA of Greater Dandenong, described the difference between his clients and the majority of the immigrants he observed around his home in Monash LGA:

> Dandenong is very multicultural and some of the tensions that people talk about are more evident there. There are more Muslim people and, if that creates a problem, there's a bigger problem. Not that I personally think it's a problem. In Glen Waverley, there's a high proportion of Chinese people around The Glen [Shopping Centre]. But I don't think people see any tensions with the Chinese people. If there are a few people that wear hijabs in The Glen, a very few people, the number or the incidents or whatever you want to say is less, it's a multicultural area without the influence of Islam being so obvious. A

lot of the migration into Monash has been the people bringing their kids to Glen Waverley High [School]. Asylum seekers basically don't reside in Monash whereas a large number do in Dandenong. So, there's a big difference in the socio-economic demographics for Dandenong and Monash. Particularly the high ended people buying in because of the house prices. They're capable, educated, moneyed and so they blend in, because money says we're equal. (Simon, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Simon's view was that, in Monash LGA, migrants have more money which in turn affords them higher status. He suggested that socio-economic factors are significant in the migrant experience generally and also influence an individual migrant's likelihood of having dealings with the police and their perceptions of the police. Furthermore, his comments suggest that, although ethnicity is a very important predictor of how well migrants are able to settle into life in Australia (Colic-Peisker 2005), being well-off financially is also highly relevant as it enables migrants to integrate more easily.

As well as socio-economic factors, Simon also viewed the 'cultural mix' in Monash LGA as relatively harmonious because there are fewer Muslim migrants. Many of the clients that Simon works with in Dandenong are from Muslim cultures so he is in a position to know a little about their experiences with the police, albeit vicariously and in Dandenong. In contrast, Simon's view was that Monash LGA is culturally quite harmonious. Due to the different nature of the community in Monash LGA as compared to Dandenong, he explained that the police are much less visible on a daily basis in Monash LGA (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of police visibility). The above extract also illustrates clearly the way that many complex, interrelated, often contradictory factors such as class, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status and age impact on police legitimacy, often concurrently. As a result, it becomes vital not to make assumptions about public perceptions of the police based on any one factor being assumed to be the most relevant. This example also demonstrates the value of qualitative data in facilitating the complexity of social processes to be revealed.

Many of the participants in this study reflected on the number of Asian migrants moving into Monash LGA (Figure 3.2):

Glen Waverley has become very Asian. For example, the school population now is over 90% Asian, it's unbelievable. One of the strip shopping centres here, Kingsway, is now very, very Asian and nearly every shop is a restaurant. So that's changed dramatically. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

This demographic shift was frequently identified by participants (both the more established participants and representatives of the newer Asian communities) as a possible reason why the police might be struggling to adjust their capacity to the needs of the area. Indeed, members of Asian migrant communities themselves such as Jeff, a Chinese Singaporean migrant living in Oakleigh, expressed views on the recent waves of migration into Monash LGA particularly the fact that people of East Asian origin, specifically Chinese ethnicities, are well-represented:

In my area, there's eight apartments, all are Singaporean or Malaysian, there's nobody else. So, we actually dominate the whole place. One family moved in, a young family,

working professionals, and they always tell us that it's so uncomfortable living among international students. So, let's say a migrant worker felt that way, imagine a local citizen. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

The increase in people of multiple Asian ethnicities living in Monash LGA was of interest to most participants, including those of Asian backgrounds themselves. In addition, some residents described Asian migrants as culturally distinct, therefore in their view, contributing to changes in overall social cohesion. For example, Jeff explained – drawing on his experience as an Asian migrant himself – that Asian communities in general did not tend to integrate much with other Monash LGA communities but preferred to remain in 'silos' with people of their own ethnicities (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh). Long-term residents, often of Euro-Australian ethnicities, felt that this undermined the sense of community spirit in Monash, impacting on social cohesion and even how safe residents felt in the community. This last observation has a bearing on policing because if people do not feel safe in their community where they live, they are more likely to look to the police for extra reassurance. The police could demonstrate this with greater visibility or increased community engagement, elements that are problematic if an area's police services are also perceived as stagnating (see 4.3.3). In addition, the Asian communities in Monash were perceived by Euro-Australian residents as distinct from established cultures in Monash LGA, with different values. One example of this was in relation to ideas about how the streetscape should be treated:

> You see this big development and you can see all of those letterboxes, that was two houses when we moved in so it's got underground car parking…and, without being racist, a lot of the Asian people don't go underground for parking. No, they won't, they'll just park on the road. (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Indeed, many comments perpetuated stereotypes about migrants from Asian cultures:

> A lot of Chinese immigration - so anything that's sold [houses] seems to be from someone from South Asia or China and I don't know if the philosophy of looking after nature strips and gardens is inherent culturally in some folk. So, I'm sure the inside of the houses is fine but the outsides are let go quite a bit. (Awena, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

In a similar vein to Bloch and Dreher's (2009) work, participants expressed that migrants from Asian cultures are one of the reasons for a decline in so-called traditional Australian 'community spirit' in Monash:

> Whenever I walked around the street I'd say hello to people but nowadays lots of young people don't bother to say hello back and I noticed that they are by and large mostly Asian kids and that's because they come from big impersonal cities in Asia. That's the difference between big cities and even though Melbourne is, in principle, a big city, it's still got that community feel, though that's changing. I just think that there's much in Australian culture that is different from the big cities in Asia and it's a pity that migrants who come here don't avail themselves of that. That sense of community, I found Australians very decent and any time you're in trouble you can turn to just about anyone

and say, "I need help". In a way that I didn't see in Asia. People would just walk past someone in need because they're too busy. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Keeping to themselves in 'silos' (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh) and not joining in with traditional Australian community organisations was cited by some participants as a problem that undermines the sense of community in Monash LGA and, in turn, is making the task of policing more difficult because of the breakdown in wider relationships and networks. Looking at the positives however, it appeared that the situation in Monash LGA may be significantly better than the situation elsewhere. Italian temporary migrant Fabrizio, an international postgraduate student at Monash University, compared his experience in Australia (informed by his experience in Monash LGA where he lived and worked) with his experience from back home in Italy where he was himself a police officer:

> Here there are a lot of Asian people. And they are all interacting. You should see in Italy; Chinese people are a completely closed community. You don't know anything about them. So, it is better here than there. (Fabrizio, 30s, Italian, Glen Waverley)

Fabrizio's comparative perspective indicates that the integration of Asian migrants in Monash LGA has been reasonably successful. Nonetheless, their lack of proportionate representation in community organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch was of concern to participants of all backgrounds including ethnically diverse participants, Jeff and Anita. These latter two participants were exceptions, being members of several community and volunteer organisations. This placed them in a privileged position to comment as they did not often meet other diverse Monash LGA community members in the respective organisations to which they belonged:

> With migration, what I've seen in the last ten years is I've now got two friends who lived in the street [who are now] in [aged] care, and their home's been sold and you get a new, young family, usually Asian that's moved in. But they're not involved in the community, so there no longer is a community. Because I think in general in Asia there isn't that spirit of volunteerism. I think because Australia really built itself up by pulling on its own bootstraps and what I like about Australians is the 'can do' spirit. So, it's part of its social fabric, I think, to be a volunteer, to roll up your sleeves. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Anita is a Singaporean migrant with an Indian ethnic background (Table 3.2). She had been in Australia since 2002 and described how she had had time to settle into and become accustomed to Australian ways of doing things. Anita described the experience of volunteering and belonging to community organisations as a quintessential part of Australian culture. Euro-Australian research participants generally perceived that newcomers did not want to join in with traditional organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch. But, it could also have been a question of them not being made to feel welcome in such consummately Australian institutions. It was possible that diverse migrants did not feel welcome, hence, some established residents assumed they were not interested:

> They [the Asian community in Monash LGA] don't seem to want to [get involved] do they? They don't want to be involved. We had a few of them come to Neighbourhood Watch but not many. (Pat, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Notably, community organisations appear to play a crucial role when it comes to facilitating relationships with Victoria Police. Therefore, if certain communities do not feel able to be involved in these organisations, it could disadvantage them with respect to having equal access to police services. There are, of course, ethnicity-specific organisations that the police engage with during community outreach. For example, reaching out to Melbourne's Islamic communities by holding the Victoria Police *Iftar*[3] dinner to mark the end of the Ramadan fast; a chance for Victoria Police members and Melbourne's Muslims to build networks (News Desk 2015) or the Food and Culture initiative at Flemington Police station in West Melbourne (Ly 2015). The idea behind the latter event is that, each month, locals from a different Horn of Africa country prepare their traditional food and participate in a lunch with Victoria Police members at the police station, again in order to build networks and break down barriers between ethnically diverse communities in Melbourne and Victoria Police (Ly 2015). Both examples demonstrate police outreach making use of the important role that food can play. Sharing traditions around food creates an environment where migrants can integrate and host populations can become familiar with migrant groups whom they may not otherwise have any dealings with - in the case of the police, until something goes wrong (Schermuly & Forbes-Mewett 2016).

Ideally, as in the examples given, police partnerships with community organisations should reflect the needs of the community such as with respect to diversity. Language appropriateness is another example of this with participants making comments such as: 'It would help greatly if police could provide an officer at Neighbourhood Watch meetings who spoke Mandarin' (Bill, by email, Glen Waverley). Also from the data, it is apparent that traditional Australian community organisations in Monash LGA, such as Neighbourhood Watch, are dominated by European-Australian representation. Anita again described how she was in a minority in the Neighbourhood Watch organisation to which she belonged: 'Over the years I've seen a couple of other non-white people. Once in a while someone Chinese will track in' (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley). Awena, a Euro-Australian Neighbourhood Watch member, summed up the problem as she saw it:

> We had one marvellous gentleman of oriental extraction who was a real help [with Neighbourhood Watch] some years ago but he left the area and we have an assortment that come to meetings but nothing percentage wise of the population. So, the percentage is low but the ones that come are lovely people, they're terrific people. (Awena, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Equally, ethnically diverse participants themselves suggested that they did not always feel welcome at more traditional Euro-Australian dominated community organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch, Rotary, Returned Services League (RSL) and sporting/social clubs. Benny, a long-term Monash LGA resident of Sri Lankan-Australian background, described his own experience:

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[3] The evening meal when Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset.

> You've got to make other people feel welcome as well because sometimes people tend
> to have a hold on these things [community organisations] and they don't want to let
> others in. (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

As previously stated, community organisations in Monash LGA appear to undertake a key role in facilitating relationships between the police and the community. Therefore, individuals are potentially disadvantaged by not feeling able to access such groups. In addition, some participants felt that, if people are unwilling to take part in the community, volunteer and take ownership of the changes that are happening in their area, then it would leave a void for other forces to fill: 'Neighbourhood Watch is dying in the same order that activities by the Apex Gang[4] are growing: is this a connection or just coincidence? Are we losing our vigilance?' (Bill, by email, Glen Waverley). Rapid demographic change was seen by participants as being partly to blame for the decline in membership of traditional community organisations:

> It's taken a while to build up again [community networks in Monash LGA], I think years
> ago it used to be a bit and then there was, sort of, I don't know, a change I guess, of
> demographics here and it fell apart for a while because a lot of people didn't want to take
> part, because you've really got to commit to a few bits and pieces. (Francine, 60s, Euro-
> Australian, Chadstone)

On top of diminishing interest in more traditional community structures, older participants who had formed the core of these organisations for so long also felt that the changing demographics in their area are leaving them behind as a group. Steve's feelings as a Euro-Australian of British background typified the way that residents in general accept the multiculturalism around them in Monash LGA, whilst also feeling slightly threatened by it. This manifested itself in resident's feelings around how Victoria Police are serving all the communities in Monash LGA:

> In the City of Monash, I think the Anglo-Celtic people are, maybe not neglected, but
> forgotten in some ways. A lot of programs are put in place for people from culturally
> and linguistically diverse backgrounds. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Steve explained that he is a member of the Monash Multicultural Forum partly because he feels that Euro-Australian views need greater representation at Monash Council. Steve's ambivalent perspective on demographic change and ethnic diversity in Monash LGA exemplifies responses to this type of change from the Euro-Australian community; a point that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

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[4] Apex is a street gang originally made up of young men from Melbourne's South Sudanese community, which has now evolved and become more diverse in its membership. See www.theage.com.au/victoria/melbourne-cbd-brawl-who-are-the-apex-gang-20160314-gnimaz.html. Supposed issues with so-called 'African crime gangs' of which Apex was one, have been highly publicised and sensationalised in Victorian media since 2015 and, therefore, appeared to preoccupy many of the participants in response to questions about policing in Victoria in general, especially when discussing migrant communities and law and order.

4.4.2   Migrant perceptions of Victoria Police

Murphy and Cherney (2011) suggest that migrants' perceptions of the police in Australia are likely to be based on experiences with the police in their countries of origin. The current study similarly found that experiences from 'back home' were a significant factor when considering satisfaction with the police in Monash LGA amongst migrant groups. When participants (of all ethnicities) were asked whether they had any suggestions for why satisfaction with policing may have decreased in Monash LGA, the most common explanation from both migrant and non-migrants alike was that new migrants retained negative views of the police from their home countries:

> Coming from a background of working with people from immigrant backgrounds, they come from countries, some of them, where the police have a pretty bad reputation, so they come to Australia and that impression of police stays with them so they think the police here are also similar to those back in their country of origin. (Jeanette, 30s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

It is important to note that participants from *all* ethnic backgrounds mentioned migrant perceptions of the police being informed by their perceptions of the police in their country of origin as a possible reason for satisfaction with the police in Monash LGA declining between 2007 and 2015. This included migrants themselves, their advocates in the community, ex-police members and the speculations of non-migrant community members; it was a very common discussion point, and one that was repeated by ethnically diverse and migrant participants. The narrative was that, if perceptions of the police in Monash LGA had declined over the past ten years generally in line with the increasing numbers of diverse migrants moving to the area, then this must have been because these migrants brought negative views of the police with them based on their experiences from back home, as opposed to experiences they were likely to have had in Australia. This perspective was also partly based on the specific countries where many of the more recent migrants had originated, China being a prominent example:

> Most people from China, I think, let's call a spade a spade – that's where most of the increase of the population is from – would have a low opinion, I would imagine, of police activity. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

As well as non-migrant perceptions such as Roger's, migrant views corroborated this viewpoint. Asian migrant Jeff described how lack of familiarity with the Australian police system, coupled with cultural assumptions from their homeland meant that some migrants were mistrusting of Victoria Police, at least initially:

> The concept of law enforcement in China is very different and Singapore is very different. So, it's very diverse. I mean you can't generalise because it all depends on how you're being brought up in a family as well. My mum always joked that "If you don't behave yourself I'll ask the policeman to catch you". So, there's a negative stigma attached. Even now we're very cautious that we bring up our child we don't actually say those kinds of things. But in Asian families it's very common. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Another temporary migrant to Australia described how the policing culture of his homeland, Italy, influenced his views of Victoria Police members. On the one hand, he described himself as lucky to have come from Italy, another democracy, which gave him an idea of what to expect regarding police culture in Australia. On the other hand, he still vocalised feelings of vulnerability to finding himself on the wrong side of the law as Australia was not his native culture. Thus, he was unable to feel completely comfortable:

> If you made some mistake in Italy, you can justify it and maybe they can understand. Here I'm not so sure and here I'm pretty sure that I can justify but it may be my fault, so I have to pay. I think that the main point for me is that I'm coming from Italy. I'm coming from a country where police are there mainly to help people. You have to respect the rules of course. But you know I come from a democracy like here. I think that I can't feel fear for the police like refugees for example, former refugees. For me, police are there to help and my parents when I was a little boy, they used to say if you will be lost somewhere you have to go to the police. (Fabrizio, 30s, Italian, Glen Waverley)

Anita, a migrant herself, offered the views of her social circle which confirmed perceptions from a migrant's homeland as relevant in her experience: 'My friends from India say, "When there's trouble, don't call the police" I guess because of the corruption. I suspect many of the African migrants would have the same take' (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley). Anita also suggested that the key to mitigating the problem of migrant's perspectives from home influencing their views of Victoria Police, was time. Although many migrants may have had little idea initially what to expect with respect to police philosophy and culture in Victoria, over time they learnt what their rights were and how the police were supposed to conduct themselves. Importantly, the next generation became familiar with law enforcement in Australia which disseminated a different perspective throughout the community:

> As with all migrants they have to come through, they come from a completely different culture and, in many of those cultures, there's distrust of the police. So, when they have a problem they prefer to fix it amongst themselves and keep the police out. All it takes is for one generation to come through the Australian system and they'll understand that things are done by the law here. I think the police understand that people, because we have migrants coming through all the time, they've got a different culture and approach and people just need to learn that it's a different sort of police here. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Evidently, there was a perception amongst participants that it was a struggle for Victoria Police to build relationships with migrants from some ethnic groups in the short term. Participants believed that it was crucial to work towards forming relationships by having outreach in place, which they currently do in Victoria Police illustrated by events such as the Victoria Police *Iftar* dinner (News Desk 2015) and Flemington Police Station monthly lunches with the West Melbourne Horn of Africa communities (Ly 2015). Rachel, as an ex-member, supplied a possible police perspective:

> It's a very diverse area out here [in Monash LGA] and a lot of the community do come from backgrounds where police are corrupt, authorities are corrupt, so they are very distrusting. I remember pulling over many people and they'd just be sweating and you're thinking, "They've got drugs on them, they've got something on them" but it was just

because they were so nervous from their previous experience in their home country. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Some participants also suggested that a more explicit system of orientation for new migrants to the Australian legal system could be beneficial in shaping positive perceptions of Victoria Police. Some migrant groups already benefitted from this, such as international students who received a presentation from Victoria Police at their university orientation, but others missed out:

> Sometimes different culture has different response to the police or perception of the police. So, we do get the police to orientate international students, but there's a lot of groups out there that are not properly orientated. For example, migrant workers, asylum seekers. So, if you are from Indonesia, if you have money you can solve everything. If you are captured by Indonesian Police for speeding fine just put $10 or equivalent, you can get off the fine. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Phil's comment below provides a substantive basis to suggest that greater provision of orientation for new migrants in relation to the law, the justice system and policing issues could be the answer:

> With Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, lots of Chinese people are moving into that area. Many of them who really don't have a great command of the English language and have lived the majority of their life in China. And it takes a long time for them to establish, to be comfortable in this new environment. So even to pick up the phone and ring the police, most of them won't know how to do that. They won't feel comfortable, they won't know what the police provides, all that kind of stuff. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Ultimately, being a migrant does appear from this research to have a bearing on opinions of the police. This influence could be positive or negative, depending on your previous experiences:

> Especially the people coming from some, I don't know, I'm thinking about some country in the centre of Africa where there are people that come with the force and is very…like militia. And they know that police there is for the government, not for the people. My wife comes from Romania and when she was younger there was still the [Communist] regime. She told me a lot of times that police and also the secret agents, there were a lot, and you should pay attention and talking, only talking, just talking because if someone heard her you can disappear the day after. And for people that are coming from this kind of ambient, I think is really hard to trust the police. Because the police became the… in these places police became the harmer. But I know that I don't have to be scared to be beaten because I made a mistake. I think that some people that come from specific countries, they have a fear. (Fabrizio, 30s, Italian, Glen Waverley)

Fabrizio's experience encapsulates the importance of engagement between police and all communities, but especially with communities who may have historically had more problematic relationships with the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007).

4.4.3 Victoria Police engagement with ethnically diverse communities in the Monash LGA

The group engagement model (Tyler & Blader 2003), upon which the procedural justice approach to policing is based, illustrates how police interaction with all communities has implications for whether they feel fully part of society. Any group can become marginalised if they feel excluded by key institutions (Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). This study demonstrates that engagement is critically important because the forming of relationships between institutions and the community promotes cooperation, breaks down barriers caused by actual or assumed differences and opens up a forum where problems can be addressed. As Jeff explained:

> Without that understanding and without that engagement, then people will not feel confident or safe to come forward. And that's an ongoing issue, it's not just Victoria Police but New South Wales Police, everywhere in Australia is going to face this for the next couple of years. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Increased ethnic diversity in Monash LGA raises the issue of police/community engagement. The findings of this research confirm that participants, representing various ethnic communities in Monash LGA, perceive current police engagement as less productive than it could be. Moreover, community engagement is perceived as an area that is under-resourced; a consistent motif discussed throughout the three analysis chapters. The perception is that engagement is improving slowly, initiatives such as multicultural liaison officers are thought to be a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done. Furthermore, those members not directly involved in multicultural liaison do not receive enough training in cultural matters. Cultural competency is described as a skill that comes from more than just learning, it requires broader experience, 'empathy and communication' (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh). This is particularly so, as many Victoria Police members do not currently originate from ethnically or culturally diverse backgrounds themselves (representation of cultural diversity in Victoria Police is discussed in Chapter 6):

> Some of the police officers don't communicate as well as they should with some of the particular communities around. They are improving, I know they've got multicultural officers. I got the perception that they've thought that just having a few multicultural liaison officers is adequate. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Although many participants thought improvements could still be made, Monash LGA police are thought to be making some progress in this difficult area, according to participants who work with the local police on a regular basis. Jenny, a community health professional, described her experience:

> We contacted the local police inspector a few years ago because in our drug and alcohol program there was a young Vietnamese man who was getting groomed by one of the Triads[5] and it was getting serious. It was getting firearms. It was getting messy and a staff member got involved and said, "I think this could be explosive and what should we

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[5] Chinese organised crime gangs operating in Australia.

do" and there seemed to be weapons in the house. He'd been leant on to do a lot of distributing drugs and he had his own substance abuse problem as well. I got the local police involved and kind of ran the scenario past them and they agreed it was fairly serious and needed intervention. Without disclosing confidentiality…we made the report and they did a raid on the house. Now the Mum was tearing her hair out. Mum would sometimes come to the appointments and her English wasn't fantastic but we got an interpreter involved. She was so worried about her son and thought something more was going on than just drugs, and she was spot on. Eleven police officers went in and conducted the raid. But that kind of was a catalyst and broke the dynamic. She fed back to our worker that they [the police] were so respectful; they were so careful. It wasn't like on the movies where they turned the place upside down. But they went through and looked for firearms and looked for things and she was so grateful about how respectful they were to her. (Jenny, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

It also does not go unnoticed amongst participants when Victoria Police do make overtures designed to improve relationships with diverse ethnic communities in Monash LGA and the broader region:

The perception is that here the police force works better, because it seems to me coming from Italy at least, it seems to me that here it works well. And I had the opportunity to go to the Migrant Settlement Committee. And there is [sic] the police also there. They are participating, they are trying for the community, they are struggling with a good integration of very good community society. (Fabrizio, 30s, Italian, Glen Waverley)

Most participants expressed that there is a positive side to the increased ethnic diversity in Monash LGA. Nevertheless, that does not mean that all participants are completely comfortable with the changes wrought by greater diversity.

4.4.4   Perceptions of security and fear of crime

Changes in Monash LGA including increased ethnic diversity were a factor influencing participants' perceptions of the level of crime and how safe the community was. Seniors that participated especially, believed the streets of Monash LGA to be populated by strangers – the way they viewed both ethnically diverse residents and younger people – and this perception influenced these participants' perceptions of security: 'Fear increases when people consider that their immediate neighbourhood is threatening because it is populated by strangers' (Roach Anleu 2006: 349). The following was typical of the concerns voiced by participants in this research:

In the Court, just over here we had a murder! My next-door neighbour saw the Asian, Chinese fellow being bundled into the boot of a car, chased by the fellows who he was bundled in to the car by and he disappeared. Then it turned out to be a ransom demanded from his mother. But the handover, I think it was at Spencer Street Station[6], in the old days, was bungled and the body was found in a drain three weeks later. I don't know all

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[6] Spencer Street was the name for Southern Cross Railway Station in Melbourne prior to it changing in 2006 following an extensive renovation. Many Melbournians continue to use the old name.

the ins and outs but it appeared to be a Tong[7] thing. Paybacks and drugs and things like that. But from a policing point of view if you've now got to deal with mafia type things? (Awena, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Some participants – mostly older, Euro-Australians – indicated that they now felt unsafe in certain locations in Monash LGA due to changes that had taken place:

I'm sure immigration's had an effect on the level of crime and that it's not safe like it used to be. And in saying that, I'm not saying that we don't want to have those people because we're surrounded by them, we've got Iranians across the road, the Chinese, we're surrounded by Chinese here, we've had Indian neighbours. I mean I think the police do a fantastic job and I have to say, we're certainly not racist, but we just get so upset when we see the attitude of people in Kingsway particularly. (Pat, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Kingsway refers to the main restaurant strip in Glen Waverley close to the train station. Older participants thought it had been taken over by 'ethnic gangs' and criminals, while others highlighted more positive features including that it is a vibrant, multicultural eating hub that has enriched the area. Nonetheless, for many older, Euro-Australian participants, some of the change has been confronting:

The vibrant Kingsway restaurant and theatre popularity has caused a few problems, a few behaviour problems. It has become a hub for eating out, particularly for the Asian community. You get a lot of people coming in and I think the police would say that any problems they've had in Kingsway have not been local residents. Because the area's become an attractive hub, people are coming in from outside, from all over the place and they're the ones. I mean there've been a few late-night fights. Once you get places, bars open for extended hours, the chance of having problems are greater. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Dennis also appeared fearful of so-called 'ethnic young people' taking over: 'Have you ever been in the main street of Glen Waverley at nine o'clock at night? There's not an Aussie in sight!' (Dennis, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). Essentially, immigration is identified as something that has profoundly changed Monash LGA in ways that are both positive and negative. For some, often more established Euro-Australian, communities in Monash LGA this has influenced their sense of security and identity in a society that is, to them, fundamentally changed. These feelings are also sometimes channelled into negative impressions of the police. These participants see contemporary police forces as having to appease ethnically diverse communities and be seen to be politically correct[8]. Pursuit of these goals means neglecting the needs of the European-Australian community. Conversely, ethnically diverse participants identify the police as not doing enough to promote relations with them and view Victoria Police as still a predominantly European-Australian institution.

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[7] A Chinese organised crime gang.

[8] Political correctness is 'the avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalise, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against' (Oxford English Dictionary 2018).

4.4.5 Ambivalence about demographic change in Monash

Conflicted views about ethnic diversity in Monash pervade the narratives about change. For example, 'Asians' and 'Africans' in the community are perceived by some (Euro-Australian) participants to be responsible for most of the crime in Monash LGA. It is believed by some that these ethnic groups originate from countries where the police and the law are not respected and they then perpetuate these views in Australia. The following comment is representative of some of the Euro-Australian participants' responses to the changed demographics in their area and law enforcement: 'The majority of things that happen, the crimes, are Asian… the people involved' (Pat, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley).

Some Euro-Australian residents of Monash LGA blame ethnically diverse residents for changing the community to its detriment. Yet, when the same participants are asked to identify specific migrant groups they think are involved in crime, they do not necessarily view one ethnic group as individually or specifically problematic. This view applies particularly to the East and South Asian migrants (from mostly India, Sri Lanka and Chinese ethnicities) who were described in terms that align with the 'model minority' theory of migrant groups (Pettersen 1966). That is, participants stereotyped them as hardworking, polite, calm and quiet. The following excerpts typify the discourse about the new migrants when participants were asked for further detail on the causes of crime in their area and the repercussions for policing:

> I don't know if they [the Monash LGA police] find it difficult to deal with all the different cultures and stuff, but a lot of the Indians are just such quiet, peaceful people. I don't see them causing the trouble. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

> There's been a lot of houses for sale and the majority of people that come and look at them are Sri Lankan, Indian or Chinese, Asian. And I've got an Asian next door and never hear from them, they're no problems at all. But that's, once again, it's different and they're not going to have probably any different reaction with them [the police] than we are but they're certainly going to be different than what, as you say, out of Footscray[9] the Asian involved in the drug trade or whatever they are. If you go at the end of school time and watch the kids coming out of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley High, the vast majority of them are Asian. But they're all good-looking kids, they're all dressed well and the like, that's the impression to me. And even you see them around the streets of Glen Waverley and they don't look threatening in any way to me, anyway. And as I said, go walk along that main shopping strip in Glen Waverley at nine o'clock at night when the restaurants are all open and that's all you'll see. And they're young … and it's really amazing. That's different than when we arrived 46 years ago. And they're certainly very much into education with the kids and they fairly obviously do have the backing and the money behind them to be able to afford the houses. (Dennis, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Clearly, there are contradictory views. On the one hand, ethnic gangs are believed to be responsible for the crime but this view does not match with existing stereotypical profiles of the groups in question

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[9] Footscray is a traditionally working-class, highly multicultural area in the Western suburbs of Melbourne.

according to participants. Notwithstanding, demographic change and increased ethnic diversity do appear to have a relationship to community perceptions of the police inasmuch as feelings of security and fear are tied up with the people in one's community and the capacity of the police available to respond satisfactorily to anything that eventuates.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter addressed the first subsidiary research question: Has the rapid change and growth in Monash LGA over the past decade influenced public perceptions regarding law enforcement? Monash LGA has experienced rapid change during the period from 2007 to 2015, much of which was perceived to have been poorly planned with insufficient thought for quality of life and wellbeing of residents. In this chapter, change was discussed under three sub-headings: community change, structural issues – change versus stagnation – and increased ethnic diversity. The key finding was that police services were not believed to have kept up with the broad changes either in terms of infrastructure, personnel, practices, organisational culture or reputation. In addition, residents described a decline in community spirit, engagement and participation in community organisations coupled with a heightened fear of crime. This last phenomenon was especially characteristic of older, European-Australians. The police were interpreted by this group as unable to reassure them in the way they perhaps once could on account of political correctness and a compunction to appease minority groups. This had resulted in Euro-Australians feeling left out, forgotten and aggrieved. Furthermore, ethnically diverse communities in Monash LGA were not satisfied either and perceived multicultural liaison, such as it is, as inadequate and perfunctory. On top of these factors, police resources were purportedly being stretched and it was hard to see how Victoria Police were going to muster the capacity to provide a service that is satisfactory to everyone into the future without resourcing to match the growth in other areas of Monash LGA.

Chapter 5   Police Legitimacy

5.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings relating to how participants in this research view Victoria Police in Monash LGA. It addresses the second subsidiary research question: Are the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities met by police and what are the implications for police legitimacy? The chapter begins with a snapshot of the participants' positive and negative views followed by three topics: 'Processes of police legitimacy in Monash LGA', 'Contemporary challenges' and 'Context'. These findings contribute to a picture of police legitimacy; whether the police in Monash LGA are believed to be legitimate and what factors appear to influence this. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), processes of police legitimacy are conceptualised as normative or instrumental factors, or a combination of both (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Tyler 2004; Hinds & Murphy 2007; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). This framework is also relevant to the findings of this study. Skogan's research on encounters (2006) is also discussed, as the data from the present study contrasts with his conclusions. In addition, as flagged in Chapter 4, the broken windows thesis is evoked in relation to the policing (or not) of petty street crime and the ramifications of approaches to minor offences for the perceived proliferation of more serious crime (Wilson & Kelling 1982). The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that Victoria Police operates within a complicated contemporary environment and it is a difficult assignment to act in a way that satisfies the whole community, all of the time. Although policing is certainly not easy, there are also actions and behaviours that Victoria Police can improve on in regard to legitimacy. This chapter presents examples of such instances and other areas where Victoria Police could enhance legitimacy.

The chapter begins by providing a snapshot of participants' opinions of Victoria Police working in Monash LGA. The chapter then explores participant expectations of Victoria Police including the roles of responsiveness, reassurance and perceptions of how the police use their authority. Participants' perspectives on some of the challenges to effective policing in the 21st century are considered, in relation to police pursuits, special operations (family violence and counter-terrorism), police having to provide welfare services and the privatisation of aspects of police work. The chapter concludes by exploring the contextual factors that influence perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA. This includes observations about changes in society's attitude towards the police, vicarious experience via the media and, finally, the law itself.

5.2   Snapshot of perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA

Monash LGA is generally regarded by participants as a safe, pleasant area in terms of lifestyle. Residents that participated described not having major concerns about crime on a daily basis:

Monash and particularly this area of Monash, Glen Waverley, has had a very feathered existence in terms of crime and difficulty in community behaviour. It's been pretty smooth, pretty easy to live here. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Roger focused on instrumental measures of police legitimacy to frame his positive views. In addition, he insisted that the local police had a good reputation, particularly regarding corruption, and were viewed as having the capacity to deal with the needs of the area. It appears that, in Monash LGA, similarly to the situation observed by Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney (2013) in other Australian studies, both instrumental and normative assessments of police legitimacy are important:

I see Victoria Police in Monash as an aware organisation. They, from my point of view, seem to be able to have the capacity to respond effectively and quickly to difficulty. They present a benign face, they as far as I know have no reputation of illegal or illicit practices. From the reports that you hear they're probably as good as any. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

The overall impression was that people felt safe in most areas of Monash LGA, during the day at least. Participants felt able to conduct their business without the fear of becoming a victim of crime. The following sentiment was expressed by several participants:

I feel safe around here. If I don't see [the police] and they're not visible I comfortably go out walking around here, late at night, running, jogging, pick somebody up, do something. I wouldn't hesitate. (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

In the main, participants had positive views about their local police, which were expressed in both normative and instrumental terms (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). They also expressed confidence in the police's ability to carry out their role appropriately and effectively, representing an instrumental assessment. Victoria Police in Monash LGA were also perceived as generally fair. Participants compared their area favourably to other parts of Melbourne, especially neighbouring LGAs. Furthermore, participants with experience of interacting with Victoria Police in a work capacity also compared Monash LGA police favourably to neighbouring areas. One participant recalled the following anecdote from several years ago that demonstrates a history of positive policing culture in Monash LGA:

Fifteen years ago, when the heroin epidemic was big, there were a lot of partnerships with police and in the local area, because we cover Knox[1] from here as well in youth services for drug and alcohol. So, I used to go to stakeholder meetings both here and in Knox and the difference between those two places, and I'm going back 15 years, the two police responses was… Knox police used to come in like cowboys. They always wore their weapons. But the Monash police never came with weapons. They were always professional. (Jenny, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

When Jenny described Victoria Police in Monash LGA as professional in the above scenario, she is referring to the impression they give the public when they are conducting police business. The ostentatious

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[1] The City of Knox is the adjacent LGA to Monash, to its east.

carrying of weapons is just one example of perceived unprofessional behaviour. It is likely that the definition of 'professional' in this case is that the Monash LGA police convey to the public by their behaviour that they follow procedural justice principles. Indeed, a professional attitude projected by the police would include elements such as encouraging individuals' participation in the justice process, a neutral approach rather than 'all guns blazing' (literally), respect towards the community and a professional, trust-inducing presence - all elements of a procedural justice approach (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Mazerolle *et al*. 2012). It appears that, from Jenny's perspective at least, these characteristics are present in the demeanour of the Monash LGA police which creates a positive impression.

It is possible that heterogeneity in some of the views regarding Victoria Police is a result of the highly diverse nature of the communities across Monash LGA. The diversity in Monash LGA, of cultural, ethnic and socio-economic dimensions, is cited by Julia (a community advocate) in relation to its propensity to lead to differing views of Victoria Police:

> This is a highly stratified community. Perceptions of police across those different substrata in this area would be quite different. A lot of the professionals have probably got only professional contacts if they're social workers, social researchers, lawyers or whatever. And would actually have perceptions of the police that would be mostly aligned to our own. The same would be true of the South Asian and the South-East Asian communities I think. The police are down here [at the neighbourhood house and public housing projects where Julia is based in her work role] every other day or more often than that with family violence or section 10[2]. These people who are accessing them, or those who are interacting with the alcohol and other drugs, have probably mixed perceptions of how the police work. But the general perception, and my understanding, of the police in this community is that it is positive except that they wonder about the level of resourcing and people wonder, in particular, about the level of resourcing around alcohol and other drugs. So, I have heard comments about "We know exactly where the households are. We know who's dealing. We know who the bankers are. We know in fact quite a lot about who is buying as well. If we know, can't the police clean it up?" And it's quite difficult for the police because they don't actually have the resources. So, the number of vans they actually have to get down here is limited. (Julia, 60s, Euro-Australian, Ashwood/Chadstone)

According to Julia, even residents of the area whom she knew to experience more vexed dealings with the local police had told her in the past that they thought the Monash LGA police were mostly fair and doing a reasonable job. Considerable effort was made to arrange interviews or focus groups with some of Julia's clients and contacts who were residents of the public housing estates she spoke about but unfortunately this proved unsuccessful. Notwithstanding, Julia attempted to construct a picture of how views are spread amongst that community. Her conclusion was that Victoria Police are doing an effective job in this sector of the LGA. The most noticeable thread throughout Julia's assessment was the issue of resourcing both in relation to the police and other social service agencies in Monash LGA. Firstly, her comment above demonstrates that services, particularly mental health, are under-funded

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[2] Section 10 refers to police powers under Victoria's Mental Health Act. See https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/practice-and-service-quality/mental-health-act-2014-handbook/complusory-treatment/police .

leading to Victoria Police increasingly having to provide frontline assistance in this space (an issue presented again in the 'Contemporary challenges' section of this chapter). Secondly, Julia's insight suggests that the police themselves are experiencing lack of funds exacerbated by having to fill in for other social service shortfalls. This increasing necessity means that policing services are left short in the area, indicating that Victoria Police are unable to begin to properly address some of the entrenched issues in this part of the LGA (such as drug-dealing). Overall, there was considerable goodwill towards the Monash LGA police from the interviews and focus groups, although positive comments were tempered by observations about lack of resources.

There were also plenty of suggestions with respect to what could be improved with regard to police services in Monash LGA. For instance, participants commented on a deterioration in street behaviour. Some had observed individuals on the streets, in Clayton particularly, engaged in illegal behaviours such as drinking alcohol. The criticism was, if they noticed them, why was it that the police did not appear to be doing anything about them. Of course, the public does not get to see what goes on behind the scenes in police work so Victoria Police may have been acting unbeknownst to the community. Nonetheless, these public, blatant acts of law-breaking fuelled participants' frustrations with the police. Police inaction towards persistent, petty offenders was leading to a feeling of community disorder. In turn, this meant that residents generally felt less safe, that their area was in a downward trajectory of urban decline - views that could be interpreted within the framework of broken windows theory (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008). Rhonda's story about persistent drinking by groups at the back of the shopping centre in Clayton illustrated this complaint:

> I can see why people think that the police are not doing their job. I saw the police drive past these people but they didn't stop. It is a problem at the back of the shops where the carpark is. But when you're all banked up in traffic in Clayton Road, a policeman will walk up the middle of the traffic looking to see if you're on your mobile phone. For the dollars, instead of going down the back of the shops to see what's happening there. I agree, people shouldn't be on their mobile phones whether they're sitting in traffic, they shouldn't be jaywalking, any of that. But, at the same time… I feel like they do things that are bringing in the money, rather than for safety. Let's get the dollars in, and if people are complaining about them at the back of the street drinking, well they're not going to bring in money. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

As this comment showed, some incidents of criminality were interpreted as being ignored by the local police. The perception was that this would lead to more serious incidents of criminality taking place on the streets and to impressions that Monash was a community that was perceived to be deteriorating into disorder (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008). As examined in the previous chapter, some participants indicated that they were beginning to feel unsafe on the local streets in Monash LGA. These feelings of insecurity influence community perceptions of the police, the organisation traditionally looked upon to uphold security and safety. Rhonda's critique also provides an example of the view that revenue-raising is a focus of police work; a factor that causes some of the participants to consider Victoria

Police in a negative light. Revenue-raising will be explored in more detail at the end of this snapshot as one of the key areas the data demonstrates Victoria Police in Monash LGA should address.

Victoria Police's public image was also suggested as something that could be improved in Monash LGA (public relations also forms part of a wider analysis of the media towards the end of this chapter). For now, in terms of an aspect that could be improved by Victoria Police, Ray described the balance the community believed the police must attain between their role as legitimate authority and their helping role – the more human side of policing – and the way this balance affects their public image:

> Another thing with the police is I guess, in their working life, the threat to them is always there which does affect their personality as relating to the public goes; I think they need some training in public speaking and communicating with the public. I feel that it'd be very beneficial because I find them in public places a bit stand-offish. Now whether that's insecurity or whether that's the threat, I don't know. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Ray used normative measures to frame his ideas of what police legitimacy should entail. His priority was the way that Victoria Police relates to the public and the ramifications the impression they give has for perceptions of the police across situations.

Other participants also thought that the police could be doing more to contribute to positive community outcomes more broadly, such as in the promotion of social cohesion during a time of change in the area (see Chapter 4). One factor in the promotion of positive police/community relations that participants identified for improvement was the representativeness of the current force in Monash LGA in terms of the different cultures and ethnicities in the area: 'If you look at Victoria Police, the majority of them are still very Caucasian-based, Australian-based' (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh). Representativeness is considered further in Chapter 6 but, essentially, this research found that if an individual perceives that the police represent the culture or ethnicity they identify with, they are more prepared to view them favourably. If the impression is that the police does not represent all communities, there is an inherent suspicion towards them; whereas 'representation in the police force of minorities will hopefully help build a bridge' (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley).

Another source of frustration with the police in Monash LGA that emerged from the interview and focus group data is the alleged 'box-ticking' activities of police, as well as the revenue-raising briefly introduced above. Box-ticking is a term that refers to the police appearing to be concentrating resources on minor issues, whilst appearing not to focus on the more complex cases; the idea being that combatting the minor issues looks more positive in police statistics. Participants illustrated this complaint with the example of fines for minor traffic violations and the complicated process of challenging them. Monash LGA police were perceived by some participants to be dealing with the 'easy' issues rather than tackling entrenched social issues. Thus, they were believed to be focusing resources on 'ordinary people' rather than the 'real criminals'. Fifth-generation Clayton resident Ian, a schoolteacher, had had several experiences with the local police that had led him to believe they were reluctant to help in certain matters:

My car was stolen a number of years ago, I went to the police station, the policeman was there, he tells me he's not on duty. I said, "But you're here, all I want is the paperwork". He said, "I'm not here". I said, "But I'm talking to you". He said, "You'll have to go to Oakleigh". I said, "But my car's been stolen" and the response was "Catch the train", that was the response! All he had to do was fill out a form, but that was too much trouble, that would've been five minutes. He was just a smart arse. Then [another time] I got knocked off my push bike, went to the police again, "That's a civil matter, we don't deal with that". "But this guy went through the stop sign and he hit me, this is…" "Oh it's your word against his". "I've got witnesses". "It's a civil matter". Again, didn't want to deal with it. But then our favourite story, our son and his friend were in the backyard shooting the basketball. The guy from behind rang [the police station] and complained about the noise. The police came. They've got time to come out about that, they couldn't fill my form in, they couldn't chase up the guy that hit me but they can come and tell off two boys for throwing a basketball. I actually wrote to the police at Oakleigh and said, "Are we now known to the police?" I got a letter back that said, "We have to investigate everything". I left it at that but I'm thinking: "I've had my car stolen, I've been knocked off my bike, you've never followed that up." Then, they dropped in one day didn't they, just to see if everything was… they were checking us out again! It was really quite irritating. They've got time to do that! Like, go get the real criminals! My little thing is they can tick off that if… so me and my bike accident they would have to deal with something, okay, so it's paperwork… so if they don't start the paperwork they can say, "We're 100% up on this". That's how I look at it, the police figures. If you fob people off, we've successfully dealt with it, pick the easy cases, "Oh we had a call out, noise, tick. Call out noise, tick. Call out noise. Oh, man's car's been stolen, not open so we don't have to deal with that. (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Ian was frustrated with Victoria Police because several times when he had approached them for help having been a victim of crime, he felt he had been met with a rigidly, discouraging response from the police. Other times, he felt that his family had been the target of over-zealous police patrols. He had made sense of his experience by assuming that manipulation of the crime statistics was at the centre of the attitude of the police he had encountered. The police appeared more willing to act in a situation if the outcome was likely to positively contribute to the tally of how many crimes had been satisfactorily resolved. This so-called box-ticking meant that participants felt their needs were being disregarded and this creates frustration, which then engenders negative views of the police. It was also believed that the police are wasting their time dealing with petty incidents such as noise complaints involving otherwise law-abiding members of the community. The view expressed by some participants was that such prioritisation improved police statistics more effectively than attempting and failing to solve more serious crimes. Indeed, in the next excerpt, Steve illuminates some of the factors that may have been behind Ian's negative experience and why the police in Monash LGA may have been encouraged to take this approach, if indeed this was the case. Steve's observation also alludes to the impact change and growth might be having on police services:

Police have to respond to government. Like when the Andrews government[3] came in they wanted crime figures to go down, raw crime figures, 5% or whatever it was. And the only way you can do that is to address what we call volume crime, which is things like theft from motor cars, all of that sort of stuff, theft of motorcars which are, I wouldn't say they're victimless crimes, but on a scale…so a lot of resources got funnelled towards that to try and reduce the volume crime and so things like this thing with Apex at the moment that maybe could've been nipped in the bud if we weren't so focused on car crime. I mean that's hypothetical. So, there's still a separation between government and police but the government are driving police policies. They keep reducing our budget and then they also say, "We expect the crime stats to go down". And [this is] when … the population's growing so much... (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Revenue-raising also influenced negative views of the police, perceived as a cynical gathering of fines for small offences. Perception of these issues may not always have matched the reality, but these matters appear to be fuelling dissatisfaction with the local police in Monash LGA. Such incidents colour perceptions of the fairness of the police as an organisation, despite participants conceding that sometimes organisations such as VicRoads or even private speed camera operators may be at fault:

The speeding infringements, they're not as lenient as they used to be and I think that's a real issue at the moment. People tend to think that's just a money grab form of taxation, which I reckon they could be a lot more lenient when you're five ks [kilometres] over. I do think that a lot of people might think that the highway patrol guys are more cowboys than the general police. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

In fact, several participants described frustration which they direct at the police, however when probed further, they recalled that the incidents were not police matters. Private speed camera operators, VicRoads and the government are all examples of organisations whose conduct impacted upon perceptions of the police, often negatively. The police, it appeared, were a target for grievances which originate with other organisations:

I think the biggest problem is because we've got private camera operators. Even though the letters come from the police and we might be angry with the police. These private operators feel as though they've got to make money so it's really not the police who are in those vehicles hiding, it's private operators. (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

Above all, if police operations are perceived to be revenue-raising rather than genuinely undertaken to protect the best interests of the community, this reflects adversely on perceptions of the police. Moreover, participants complained that the local police are no longer solely responsible for everything that goes on within an area. Therefore, it is impossible to know who is responsible for what and harder to assess whether the behaviour of local police representatives is consistently up to a good standard. There is potentially less accountability for police members when they are not working in their local area, which is evidently an increasingly common model of policing:

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[3] The current state Labor government in Victoria.

In the last 20 years, policing has changed significantly. Apart from your local police there's always specialist areas, or support areas that come in, like the operational response unit and now there's the PSOs[4] at all the railway stations. There's a lot more transit police as well, police in the railway stations, in the environment and so when the police get their satisfaction figures from the attorney generals, whatever…So basically, it's frustrating in some ways where the local police are held accountable but a lot of the time they have a bad interaction with someone from another area of policing that's operating in your area without your knowledge, you've got no control over. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Promoting satisfaction with the local police force is potentially difficult when there are additional stakeholders involved and they are not all necessarily focused on that particular community. This section has presented a snapshot of how the research participants viewed Victoria Police. The positives included feelings of safety from crime, favourable comparisons with neighbouring LGAs, the professionalism of Victoria Police in Monash LGA and a reasonable level of fairness in Victoria Police treatment of the Monash public. The negatives included Victoria Police not appearing to tackle visible street offences, a negative public image, not enough promotion of police/community engagement initiatives, especially those involving the diverse communities in Monash LGA, and what was described as box-ticking or revenue-raising policing targeting the community, rather than the so-called 'real criminals'.

5.3 Processes of police legitimacy in Monash LGA

This section constitutes an examination of the processes of police legitimacy in Monash LGA. Not unreasonably, participants expected that the police would always be there to assist when they had a problem. Yet, misunderstandings sometimes occurred because situations that members of the public approached the police for help with, were not always the police's responsibility. Illustrated by Anita's experience below, it emerged that the police could still influence public perceptions of legitimacy in these circumstances, by the way they handled the incident:

I can't say I have a real understanding of how the police work but I would say that I feel fairly confident walking into a police station and speaking to someone. I have once, [about] one of the neighbours' dogs, I was out for a run and the next thing I knew the Alsatian was snapping at my neck. I kept on running and I got home. I thought, "Now what do I do?" I went down to Glen Waverley [Police Station] to see someone to say this happened and it was a young officer and he made me laugh because he said, "There's nothing I can do because you're not hurt". I said, "What, you're waiting for the dog to kill me?" he said, "I'm afraid that's the job". But he did say, "Take it to the Council" and I did and we started a process there. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Skogan's work on encounters argues that interactions between the police and the public reduce confidence and satisfaction with the police, a conundrum known as 'negativity bias' (2006: 106). This

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[4] Protective Services Officers are trained personnel recruited to enhance feelings of public safety at Melbourne and major regional train stations in Victoria after dark. Their scope of powers is limited to so-called 'designated places' which currently encompasses train stations and the immediate surrounds, see https://www.policecareer.vic.gov.au/pso

study strongly refutes this assertion. The current study's findings suggest that small, incidental encounters are a huge opportunity for the police to increase their legitimacy with the public by the way that they deal with the situation. This finding is congruent with previous research that found that very minimal encounters with institutions representing the justice system – such as the police in the case of the current study or experiences in court, for example – have a highly meaningful impact upon perceptions of the institution as a whole (Roach Anleu & Mack 2005). In the excerpt above, Anita left her encounter with the police feeling that they had dealt with her fairly and treated her well (normative measures of police legitimacy). Indeed, most of the anecdotes contained in this study are of similarly non-critical incidents that involve interactions between the police and the community. This is an ideal time to gather impressions. This study, therefore, assesses the effect of encounters when stress levels are relatively neutral and a balanced assessment of the situation by the member of the public is more likely.

The findings from this research indicate that, as long as members of the public feel well treated by police, individuals feel satisfied that they have been taken seriously and, even in the event that the police are not the agency to help them, they are at least able to confidently approach the appropriate institution. Interactions in this vein enhance satisfaction with the police through a procedural justice framework of legitimacy, similar to that described in Tyler's work and other scholars who adopt his approach (Tyler 1990: Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008; Bradford, Jackson & Stanko 2009; Jackson *et al.* 2012; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). Furthermore, the current study demonstrates that it is often the small incidents that seem to create lasting impressions (Roach Anleu & Mack 2005). The participants in this study had few encounters with the police outside minor incidents, except those who are former or current Victoria Police members, of which there were three. As a result, it is these relatively innocuous encounters that shape perceptions of police legitimacy. Therefore, this research concludes that police behaviour is an important factor in determining legitimacy through a procedural justice framework, regardless of the depth of the encounter. These findings create an inherent challenge for Victoria Police because they suggest that the police need to be acting optimally *at all times.*

Expectations regarding actions and behaviour were also high in terms of what the participants thought the police should be doing to alleviate some of the problems that contributed to participants feeling their community was becoming unsafe, such as the increased prominence of family violence (an example of one of the specific contemporary challenges to Victoria Police explored later in this chapter). Phil's excerpt below captures the way that, as a former Victoria Police member, he knew the system intimately including the pressure the police are under to perform effectively and satisfactorily but also that they were constrained by resources and an increasing workload:

> I had a phone call recently from a family member, one of my nieces, and it was from her
> mother and she was saying, "Oh look you know, her and the boyfriend have broken up"
> and the boyfriend was a bit of a dud this guy. But she was at her daughter's place and
> saying look he's refusing to go. So, they were ringing me up to say well what should we
> do and I said well pick up the phone and ring the police and tell them that he's refusing
> to go but just make sure they're clear that it's her home. And then my worry was that if
> they get a police unit that shows up, doesn't have enough time or the right attitude then

they could make a difference as to whether it was done the right way or whether it's not. And so, I said to my sister, "Ring me back when they're there or something just to let me know how they're going". Because if I have to I'll come down and I'll maybe put a bit more pressure on them that I know the right way to go and you need to follow that sort of thing. Which you don't like to do, you hope they do the right thing. But as it turned out there were three [members that] came and when she rang me back she said, "They spoke to him and told him he has to go". And she said, "They were writing up all the paperwork for the family violence stuff to give him an interim order and then lots of paperwork" and she sent me through copies of the paperwork [and] everything. She took photos of the documents and texted them to me so I could see that they'd actually done it all properly. And I thought that was terrific, that was really good. But it took them three hours to do that job. During that three hours, there were three police officers sitting in that house and what else was happening around them that you know, they just haven't got that luxury [of time] I don't think. So there probably would have been a lot of other people sitting there getting a bit frustrated thinking, "Where's the police? I've been broken into". (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Phil's story is illuminating for several reasons. For a start, the fact that Phil's family prefers to ring him first rather than calling the police officially demonstrates how members of the community would rather deal with someone who is familiar to them when things go wrong. This phenomenon is examined further in Chapter 6 in relation to the positive difference having a named police member can make to perceptions of the police. Furthermore, Phil's response shows that he himself is aware of the potential for things to go wrong in interactions between the police and the community, especially if the police are having to operate with less than optimal resources at their disposal. Phil's anxiety also demonstrates again the importance of the police employing a procedural justice approach at all times to reassure a possibly already stressed member of the public. Another significant factor implied from the above extract is that Phil, as a former police member, was convinced that his presence in a situation could potentially have changed the police response. As an insider, Phil possesses capital in this situation that civilians would not normally have been able to emulate. The significance of a relationship model of authority like this is examined in greater detail in Chapter 6. The final thread to draw out of the above narrative is that Phil, although he was very pleased with the treatment his family received from Victoria Police, commented on the amount of time and other resources that would have been required by Victoria Police to execute their role as well as they did and the repercussions such an approach would have had for other jobs that came up for the police during that time; issues that could only be alleviated by significant increases in resources for the police.

An additional, serious issue for Victoria Police regarding processes of legitimacy that emerged from the data was that, on the one hand, it was expected by participants that the police treat everyone in the community equally. This concept is fundamental in normative assessments of police legitimacy (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Mazerolle *et al*. 2012). On the other hand, the participants perceived themselves as ordinary, law-abiding citizens in the main, which they believed warranted more nuanced treatment by the police. Effectively, self-proclaimed upstanding citizens wanted to be treated as such, which meant that if they should fall foul of the law in relation to a small matter, they believed the police should be able to use their discretion

in dealing with them. Superficially, this appears reasonable, but it could cause problems for the police, for example, by leaving them open to accusations that they were not treating everyone fairly and equally - the focus of the negative results in the NSCSP survey. Expectations such as these also demonstrate that an impression of fair and equal treatment is highly subjective. Ian's experience encapsulates this:

> I went to the police station when our son was going to have an 18th birthday and at 11 o'clock at night we had the police turn up because they'd had noise complaints and I said, "But I was under the impression it was midnight at least". "Oh no, it's whenever we get a complaint" and I thought, these kids are not doing anything wrong, we've got music playing, it's not even midnight, it was a Friday night. But the police had our number, all they had to do was ring up, they didn't have to send anybody out because we had registered with them, we'd done the right thing. They knew what was going on. All they had to do was cruise up and down the street and make sure that nothing was going on. But, no. We'd like to think we're law abiding and we pay our taxes, we've raised our kids to have ethics and morals and we've never really had too much need for them [the police] but we've found, when we've had need, it's been wanting. (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Ian's criticism above follows on from his previous narrative where he explains how he thought that Victoria Police dealt with matters based on how the situation would affect the crime statistics rather than according to which incident was more critical (in Ian's view). The above excerpt provides another example of a comparatively benign incident that Ian felt received more attention than when he had his car stolen or when he was knocked off his pushbike. What Ian encountered was a lack of consistency in the zeal with which Victoria Police apply the law and deal with the public, something that is tough to achieve in a large organisation but something that, according to the data, has a considerable impact on perceptions of the fairness and legitimacy of the police. Clearly, these experiences have left an impression on Ian and influenced his views of the police in his area.

Another issue that was impacting on perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA was participants' concerns around the police's capacity to tackle petty, visible law breaking in the area. Several examples were given including persistent public drunkenness behind the Clayton shopping centre:

> We have an issue down in Clayton in the shopping centre car park with a group who just sit and drink constantly. Now that's against the law, and you ring the police and you say to them, "They're sitting there drinking again" and if you're lucky they might come and cruise through the car park but that's all they do. They never stop, they never move them on so you think, "Well what are you guys doing?" (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Rhonda also commented on this same phenomenon:

> A few years back, I had a huge issue with a lot of people sitting out the back of the TAB drinking. I'm going to Coles and the TAB is there and they're just sitting there drinking out of brown paper bags. I used to ring the cops. But then again, I'd have to ring Oakleigh because Clayton was unattended. I did that numerous times because I can't even go to my local supermarket – and during the middle of the day, this is – and feel safe. And that's what I said to them, "I feel intimidated by it. They're sitting around drinking.

Why are they there?" And the cops did come, well, I presume they did. But then there was another time where the cops came, not that I rang them. There were people sitting there but they just drove past. Why aren't you out there telling them that this isn't acceptable? So, I was a bit annoyed. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The essence of the broken windows thesis (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008) is that inability to get on top of petty crime and minor public disorder by the police is interpreted by the wider community as reluctance on the part of the police to get involved in larger issues as well (see Chapter 4). The idea being that this situation then creates an ideal environment for more serious crime to flourish. Visible demonstration of policing in small matters also appears, according to this research, to be vital in relation to enhancing legitimacy and improving satisfaction. It is likely that social problems like groups drinking on the street are issues beyond the scope of the police alone to resolve. Nonetheless, Rhonda's highlighting of the practice – which occurred several times during her interview – was a comment about appearances. Whether the police seem to be taking issues seriously, or ignoring them, sends a message about themselves as an organisation to the community and certainly influenced Rhonda's perceptions of them.

5.3.1   Responsiveness and reassurance

It was evident that research participants had high expectations of the police in Monash LGA. Resources allocated did not necessarily match these expectations and had possibly not kept pace with the growth and change (described in Chapter 4) which had put pressure on the police and impacted their ability to respond to incidents, particularly petty crime. Change in the community could also have been putting more pressure on the police as the networks people may have relied on in the past were no longer as effective. This could have led to the public being more reluctant to get involved in informal policing. Rhonda explained her frustration when asked to help the police in a situation she perceived as potentially dangerous:

> We had Sudanese – I'm not being racist, but they were Sudanese – renting a unit, across the road from us. They were having a party, it was about 11 o'clock at night and I'd just got into bed and there was a girl in our driveway, screaming, and a guy attacking her. I rang the police and the police asked me, "Does he have a weapon?", I said, "I'm not going outside to fucking look and I'm not putting my outside light on. I can hear her screaming and he's attacking her". I thought that was a really strange thing: does he have a weapon? Well, I don't know, I'm not going out to look. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

It is likely that the police did not really expect Rhonda to go out and check for a weapon but rather were trying to gather information to prepare the units that would be sent to deal with the situation. However, the perceived lack of responsiveness negatively influenced Rhonda's perceptions of Victoria Police.

Responsiveness is a key component of the procedural justice model and includes the police taking the community's views into account in their actions towards them (Van Craen & Skogan 2014). For

example, some of the participants in this study speculated how police television fiction might have fuelled unrealistic expectations regarding police responsiveness: 'A crime is not solved in 45 minutes, not counting ad time, and we then go home in time for tea' (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley). The image of policing projected on film and television media bears little relation to the reality of day to day police work, but it can influence public perceptions (Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015). Jeff described, as an example, Asian young people's perceptions of the police being influenced by Western police procedurals. He wanted to illustrate why some of the international students he works with were disappointed by police responsiveness in Australia:

> A few years ago, one of my housemate's flats got broken into. So, it's not his fault but when the police came, I heard the conversation I thought it was quite interesting, the police of course took down a statement. Then of course we are so influenced by Western TV we thought they would get a CSI team, dust for fingerprints, whatever, which never occurred. So again, young people have all those kinds of perceptions and I find it very interesting because in the end they say there's really nothing much they can do. I was like, "How can a police officer tell them that?" (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Participants who had themselves been victims of crime expected the police to deal with their situation immediately, exercising responsiveness, but the police have a wider agenda and respond to each incident in the context of that. The police have to prioritise and follow certain processes. One participant, who was a former police member, had had 'a good response' (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton) when she needed police assistance during the course of her employment in Monash LGA. She also had experience herself of being a victim of burglary (albeit not in Monash Police Services Area). She explained how her expectations of the police's response were very different from the standpoint of a victim and how she felt shocked that the police did not respond immediately. From the interviews and focus groups, this appeared to be a typical reaction from participants who had been victims of crime. All in all, many participants had expectations of police responsiveness that did not align well with reality, perhaps partly as a result of the portrayal of police work on TV:

> If you're dealing with the police, it's usually the most significant thing that's happened to you so it's, yeah, many things I can talk about like people ringing up to say their house is being robbed and the police don't usually go out to those, it's just a report. And then another unit will go out when they're available. But I've been in the situation where I've been robbed and it was like, "What? The police aren't coming out now? What?" You're at a loss and the police coming out is a massive reassurance. I'd just moved out of home when I was late teens, early 20s and our house was robbed, my best friend and I, and the police didn't come out until the next day to fingerprint it. So, we slept in the lounge room with a broken doorframe. But that's the process and we weren't aware of the process. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Rachel's narrative also alludes to the police's role in providing reassurance to victims of crime. Reassurance is a significant aspect of normative approaches to policing. However, it is potentially very expensive to provide police reassurance for everyone who needs it. Pragmatically, reassurance uses resources that could be otherwise deployed solving the burglary. Again, the police look at crime in a

wider context whereas participants, not surprisingly, had a different perspective when a crime was committed against them:

> That's another factor in the frustration of the public in relating to the police force, in that their reporting of something that's happened to them is vital and very important. Their reporting to the police might be immaterial as far as that perceived crime goes and their attention to that report might be just wiped because they just haven't got the time to deal with it. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Instantly, a discrepancy can be distinguished between public expectations of police responsiveness and the police's own expectations of their actions and behaviour. Plus, expectations regarding responsiveness often do not match the realities of resourcing and other constraints in which policing takes place, such as the law. Rachel and Steve were able to see the situation from both insider and outsider standpoints, both having had experience as civilians but also as police members:

> When people contact the police it's usually at a pretty significant time in their life, whether it be for a crime that's been committed against them, death of a loved one, whatever. So, to them what they're experiencing is a priority, it's like, "I need this dealt with". So, I can understand that the perceptions of police or the perception of police doing their role…Yeah, so I mean I can appreciate people's opinion. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

> These days if your house is burgled, the police will go, "Just leave it alone and we'll send the crime scene officers around". And that might be the next day, probably the next day or later in the day. When I started 30 years ago, a van would turn up and you'd go through, check points of entry, blah, blah, blah and you'd offer reassurance and stuff like that. That's what people want. They want to know if something happens like that the police will attend. (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

It could be that unrealistic portrayals of policing on television have created unrealistic expectations around police responsiveness in the community. Aspects of policing like reassurance are difficult to measure but appear to be significant in informing public perceptions. Whatever nostalgic representations of policing appear on TV, necessarily, the nature of policing has changed, as society has changed. Unfortunately, media representations of policing have been shown to impact more general perceptions of the police (Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015) which will be explored in more detail towards the end of this chapter. As has been demonstrated here however, minor encounters for the police mean a lot more to the public and create lasting perceptions. Moreover, police attendance at an incident signals that they are taking a complaint seriously and reassures the public exponentially. Thus, it increases legitimacy under a normative framework.

5.3.2 Perceptions of how Victoria Police use their authority

In addition to the significance of incidental encounters, the way Victoria Police treat people involved with minor offences and traffic fines appears to have a significant effect on perceptions. One of Tyler's studies on procedural justice policing concludes that 'the police can most effectively build and maintain

public trust by focusing on how police officers exercise their authority' (2005: 339). In this research too, participants suggested that a decreasing ability of the police to use discretion in dealing with small matters – perhaps on account of less well-developed police/community relationships – had repercussions for satisfaction which were consistent with Tyler's observations. This creates a potential area for conflict and dissatisfaction to develop because, on the one hand, contemporary police had to follow policies and procedures because they did not want to be accused of inconsistency or favouritism. On the other hand, an emphasis on treating everyone equally appears to have ramifications for the trust relationship between the police and the community rather than everyone feeling they are being treated fairly; the cornerstone of procedural justice policing.

This conundrum aligns with the assertion by some participants that the police should differentiate between the 'real criminals' and members of the public who may have committed a minor infraction but are generally law-abiding. Participants indicated that such discretion signalled a more mature relationship between the community and the police which demonstrates trust on both sides. The link between trust and legitimacy for the police is not novel (Bradford & Jackson 2010). Yet, this study's findings suggest that it is more complex for the police to navigate community relations than just adhering to certain principles, such as the four components of procedural justice. Cam reflected on this phenomenon in relation to speeding infringements. He emphasised that a single interaction might be the only contact a person ever had with the police, so it had a big influence on their views overall:

> For people that would otherwise go, "Yeah coppers are good, I've got no problem with them", but then they get the shits because they get a speeding fine in an area they shouldn't and then they go, "Why do I?" Yeah if there was one thing to me that was a negative reflection on the Vic[toria] Pol[ice] is that because they do get involved in that and they have to enforce it, they're seen as the bad guys when in reality it's not their fault. It's how people perceive the police use their authority. (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

The above excerpt somewhat supports Skogan's 'negativity bias' (2006: 106) if only in that this member of the public would likely have felt aggrieved regardless of the police's manner. Therefore, negative perceptions of the police inevitably result because the scenario does not align with the individual's perceptions of what the police should be making a law enforcement priority. In the main however, the present study suggests that more often minor encounters are an opportunity for the police to ensure the public receive a good impression of them. Cam also suggested that the efforts of the police to reach out to diverse communities, such as LGBTQIA communities, may alienate some of their more traditional, conservative supporters. Some community members, he suggested, interpret this as appeasement and misplaced political correctness:

> A really good example is Gay Pride Marches where members who are gay are allowed to march in uniform. We go back to some of the more redneck-type straight up and down people of which I know several and I'm happy to call a few of them my friends. But by the same token their tolerance for anything that's not Carlton Draught, Anglo-Saxon, man, wife, two kids, I drive a Commodore and there's footy on Friday night. Anything

Cam asserted that some members of the community in Monash LGA are highly conservative in their views. These individuals would traditionally have been very supportive of Victoria Police and, moreover, have expected the police to represent them in terms of both demographics and ideology. In recent years however, Victoria Police has had to try and adjust to become more inclusive and representative of the whole community, considering the increasing diversity of the populations it serves. According to Cam's critique, this shift has meant that some of the traditional supporters of the police may be struggling to process the changes. Their struggle is exposed further when they themselves receive what they perceive to be unfair treatment in a police matter. Grievances about the way that society has changed are revealed and the police become the target for those wider grievances.

This section reveals some of the processes by which police legitimacy is negotiated in Monash LGA. Not surprisingly, community expectations of Victoria Police are high with problems occurring when an issue does not fall under the police's remit. Nonetheless, the data shows that no matter whose responsibility an issue is, these incidents provide vital opportunities for the police to exercise procedural justice approaches and thus increase their legitimacy. In fact, it is often these non-acute incidents that supply the opportunity for the police to improve public perceptions of them, although constraints such as lack of resources, mean the police are often under considerable pressure which could be impacting their practice. Responsiveness to victims of crime is also a key component of police legitimacy with participants believing that this could be improved in Monash LGA. Connected to responsiveness, reassurance for victims of crime is also highlighted as important in terms of police legitimacy, despite it possibly involving resources being diverted from directly solving the crime. Victoria Police in Monash LGA are meeting some community expectations but not others according to participants. The factors revealed so far in this chapter impact collectively on perceptions of the legitimacy of Victoria Police in Monash LGA.

5.4   Contemporary challenges for Victoria Police

Despite supplying plenty of criticism, the research participants emphasised that they thought Victoria Police do not have an easy task. The rigours of the job of policing and how they would have been averse to becoming police personnel themselves were prominent themes in the interviews and focus groups. For example, Rhonda was critical of her local police in Monash LGA but she conceded that earning the whole community's trust was not straightforward for Victoria Police:

> I do feel sorry for the police. I do. I just think they get the raw end of the stick. But then, you know, the youth today, they have no respect. I do feel for the police as well. Some of these young kids…It would be a shit job, seriously. I do feel for them in that respect. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Policing was characterised by participants such as Rhonda as a more difficult proposition than in the past. Participants acknowledged that the police are trying to modernise, but that this is difficult in a traditional public organisation with limited resources. Another participant, Tony, focused on the continuous scrutiny the police operate under. Scrutiny ensures greater accountability but, in Tony's view, it also influences the way that policing is practiced and even has the potential to influence policing outcomes in some cases:

> I think the police have been given more training on how to deal with different cultures. But as soon as the police muck up there's a lot of bad press. Their pursuit strategy is not working and they're under the microscope with cameras and phones so they can't do a thing wrong. Their hands are virtually tied. Policing is under the spotlight now whereas, in the old days, they didn't have to deal with all of these sort of things, I think that's why a lot of the older coppers just want to get out. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

Many participants commented on how they thought policing is a stressful occupation. One ex-member spoke frankly about her own experience with Victoria Police, her love for the job, but how eventually she had been forced to leave the profession as there was no relief from the constant stress:

> I would think over the last few years there's been a lot leaving Victoria Police and they're not getting them re-joining and that comes down to issues within Victoria Police about staff welfare and just all the political stuff. I would still be a police officer in a heartbeat if circumstances had been different. I went to a unit that was very, very, very, very stressful. You can get a job and be tied up for the rest of the shift doing interviews and paperwork or you could be at the hospital with a mental health assessment for the whole shift. Ninety percent of the time it's overtime. I appreciate my job now, a lunch break, a guaranteed lunch break, nine to five. You don't have that in policing that's for sure. Definitely more resources. I think Vic[toria] Pol[ice] is way understaffed at the moment. Your blood runs blue and it's not a job that you [want to] leave. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The stress is perceived to be caused in part by the nature of the job, exacerbated by shortages of staff. Police members are believed to be consistently not getting lunchbreaks and being expected to work overtime. The unrelenting stress also means that members are resigning from Victoria Police which compounds the staffing problems. It was suggested, by both former members of Victoria Police and other participants, that the high stress levels have a negative effect on the capacity of the police to employ a procedural justice approach:

> The police spend a bit of time talking to the public and my observation is that the communication is really, really very good and I'm impressed with the way they treat people as normal people. I think the police have to put up with a hell of a lot of abuse and once they're abused then that's when the police, some police, lose the plot and go over the top. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

> And the thing is, if you have to put up with that on a daily basis it could be very… and that's… I'm sure they probably go on stress leave and stuff especially when they've been called up to accidents and there could be murders and stuff - that would be terrible. (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

Certain features of contemporary society were also suggested as factors that make modern policing problematic. The police are perceived to be struggling to respond to the perpetual media cycle, social media scrutiny and multiple, sometimes competing, political priorities and directives - all under the constraints of inadequate resources. Rachel, an ex-police member, emphasised the part that under-staffing played in her opinion: 'Definitely they're [the police] understaffed massively, gee whizz, that's something that they've got to look at and change' (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton) whereas Phil, another ex-member also saw resourcing as a key issue for Victoria Police:

> I'm an ex-policeman myself so I understand the predicament that the police are under and it's a high pressure, always been a high-pressure role throughout the time. But in terms of this area [Monash LGA], I would say that in my own view they would be under resourced for the population that they service and the type of population that they have to service as well. A lot of it comes back to funding. I'm sure the police force would love to be bigger if they could afford it because it would make it a less stressful job. You know, obviously if you push too much onto people there's only so much they can do and then they hit breaking point and then they're even worse off. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

What Rachel and Phil are also alluding to, from the perspective of their previous policing experience, is that they believe that Monash LGA is not seen as an especially needy area in terms of requiring police services, perhaps because of its relatively high living standards (Community Profile 2014). Their point is that the university itself (Monash University) creates a catalyst for more police resources being needed. Catalysts such as extra numbers of young people and additional numbers of people travelling into the area daily (as discussed in Chapter 4). Phil and Rachel implied that Victoria Police Command were perhaps under the impression that the Monash PSA was not a priority for extra resources. Indeed, Phil argued that if more resources were put in, value could be gained in areas such as community engagement, crime prevention and neighbourhood partnerships which would ultimately impact police satisfaction rates and perceptions of the police, as well as mitigating some of the societal factors that the police were dealing with.

The participants in this study mostly appreciated that the police operate with many stressors and limited resources, suggesting that this may impact their effectiveness and the impression they give to the public. In general, it was agreed that Victoria Police in Monash LGA were doing a good job:

> I've been very impressed with the [police in Monash LGA] that I've seen in action, particularly domestic violence, so, it's just so hard for these people. And, of course, one of the things that people overlook is, if you're on a three to eleven shift, and it goes to half past two and you do one at half past seven the next morning, you're there at half past seven. I know there's some compensation for the time but the fact that you can suddenly… an eight-hour day can suddenly run into another four or five hours and then you've got to come back to work at the same time the next day. I think we're fortunate actually in the police we have. (Athol, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

It was also observed by participants that often, whichever course of action the police might take in an incident, they are subject to criticism which leaves them in a no-win situation with regard to public perceptions:

> I think that they're in a cleft stick because, if they, wander around the shopping centre for example, on their feet, people say, "That's fantastic! But do they have the time to do that?" …then somebody is going to say, "Why aren't you chasing criminals?" They can't win. (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

There is sustained debate over police pursuits in Victoria and this was a frequently raised topic in the interviews and focus groups.

5.4.1   Police pursuits

> This Apex Gang they actually kick people's doors in and come in, grab car keys so they're pretty full on but the police aren't allowed to chase them. I'm sure the police would prefer to chase them at a distance than let them run riot. Because they actually taunt the police now. They can get away with it. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

The ongoing debate in Victoria over the police pursuit policy was used by participants to demonstrate the way that they perceive the police to be in a difficult position; that the dilemma over whether or not to act and the judgement and repercussions afterwards mean that often the reason for the action is forgotten and risk-averse policing emerges. Undoubtedly, accountability on the part of the police is vital. Nonetheless there was a feeling amongst participants in this research that perhaps matters had gone too far the other way and now the police are powerless to act when really necessary:

> You feel whatever the police do now, it's wrong. I mean with the chases, the pursuits. If they pursue, they're at fault, if they don't pursue and let them go, "Well how could you let them get away?" So, what do they do? I hold the police in very high regard. I know that there will always be some [police] who don't do the right thing but I think the majority of them are genuinely working hard and trying to do the right thing in the community. (Pat, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Participants revealed their frustration that the furore around the issue of police pursuits in Victoria had created a risk-averse policing climate that encouraged inaction in situations where a more pro-active approach would have, in their view, yielded better outcomes. In addition to the debate surrounding police pursuits in Victoria, new family violence directives and issues surrounding counter-terrorism policing were also cited as political factors that impacted on police work with the potential to influence perceptions of Victoria Police.

5.4.2   Family violence and counter-terrorism

Most research participants voiced support for new practices and guidelines being introduced in Victoria to better address issues around family violence. However, some suggested that perhaps the resource

implications of more rigorous practices will impact an already stretched police force with ramifications for satisfaction overall:

> You find that the bigger stations, the manpower that they have there's just enough. And then they have to provide people for special task groups and things. So, when you actually look at their roster they'll have a whole lot of names on it but this one will be at the district this and this one will be at the district that. And whilst you say okay well those district things must be providing services back, they're not always. They might be focusing on a specific thing that's not really adding any value in the resource. When I speak to members of the police force now and they tell me about the problems that they have, these are the same problems that I had you know when I was in the police force. They haven't got any better really. It's always been a drag on resources to the extent that you have supervisors that have to jump into a divvy van because they've got no one else to go on it. And from a customer point of view, it means a wait. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Phil's insights from his policing experience proved useful to illustrate the way that lack of resources could be one of the causes of problems with perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Above, he describes how members being re-assigned to other duties affects the capacity of local forces to meet the needs of LGAs. Other participants were also generally supportive of the new initiatives, but they thought that such initiatives are possibly diverting funds and manpower away from community policing. Moreover, there was a perception amongst some participants that the new protocols around family violence generate a lot of extra paperwork (related to the ability to successfully prosecute an offence later) which is straining police resources to the limit. Police have to work extra hours and are struggling to fulfil more mundane tasks. Community policing is suffering as a result, including the policing of petty criminal behaviours and minor crime. As discussed in Chapter 4, participants saw this as potentially leading to a general deterioration in the quality of life in their area or a 'potential spiral into decline' (Kelling, Coles & Loader 2008: 8).

In addition, it was perceived that new directives around counter-terrorism, while considered necessary, are draining resources from an already overstretched force. Participants were supportive of counter-terrorism interventions, which may reflect the demographics of the participants in this study who were mostly European-Australians and all non-Muslims (Table 3.2). Furthermore, Monash LGA does not have a large Middle-Eastern Islamic community who have been a sustained target of this type of policing elsewhere (ABC News 2014; Caldwell 2014). Despite this, counter-terrorism directives do mean that police funding or personnel are taken away from community activities and certain stipulations make community policing more difficult to achieve, for example, the police having to pair up at all times:

> The issue of terrorism has meant that they have to be fully kitted up. And they have to work in pairs, which restricts the jobs they can do, it's a bit of a problem. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

The local force in Monash LGA sometimes also had to supply police to bolster numbers elsewhere, for example, in the City of Melbourne for protest marches (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount

Waverley). This emphasises the impression of a lack of resources for policing more broadly which feeds into negative perceptions. Furthermore, such directives take members away from duties in Monash LGA. A penultimate contemporary challenge that has already been raised earlier in this chapter is the notion of the police having to fill in for other social agencies that are also straining under increased workloads, partly due to population growth.

5.4.3   Victoria Police on the frontline

One of the contributing factors to an increase in police workload was thought to be that police are now being relied upon to provide some of the services that other agencies once did. For instance, Victoria Police are increasingly having to deal with situations that occur as a result of reduced government funding for mental health services:

> With the violence and the mental health breakdowns, the police themselves have reported that basically what they're doing is mopping up on the shortfalls of funding for other services. The State Government and Federal Government have made decisions to limit or to cut and cut and cut funding from mental health and family violence services. And the police therefore need to prioritise frontline safety services. Whereas, in fact, what they should be doing is supporting services that are appropriately funded. So, community perceptions of police maybe not being proactive or being rather more swiftly reactive or responsive, or providing different types of backup supports around alcohol and other drugs are in fact, I think, reflective of comments on fundamentally a total social welfare system that is in crisis. (Julia, 60s, Euro-Australian, Ashwood/Chadstone)

Julia expresses passionately in the above comment the situation as she sees it. Victoria Police are being thrust into the role of principal responders when ideally other social services agencies should be helping to ease the strain, especially in areas such as mental health and family violence. But, due to continuing funding cuts to these services, Victoria Police are often left compensating for shortfalls elsewhere in the system. Reductions in community support have also left some residents increasingly lonely, isolated and vulnerable. Rachel, in her previous role as a Victoria Police member, had observed that a lack of adequate mental health support meant individuals would sometimes turn to the police for help:

> You'd get people ringing up the Watch House and sometimes you'd just put them on speaker and just let them talk and it would be… so many different scenarios. But I remember one in particular and this elderly person must've been in a concentration camp and so they'd just sit there and they'd just be talking about magpies in the tree and then "bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, the tanks are coming, the tanks are coming" and would just go on about this incident that's happened when they were younger. And you just put them on speaker and you just go, "Mmm". So, you're almost like a counsellor, the amount of jobs that you could've just hung up on but you sat there and listened or talked to them. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Finally, with regard to specific contemporary challenges, participants had noticed a disconnect between what members on the ground are faced with every day and the way that Police Command thought policing should be performed in an ideal situation.

5.4.4   The official paradigm versus the operational code

Some research participants thought that there may sometimes be a disconnect between the expectations and impressions of Police Command and the way that policing actually works on the street; the so-called 'impossible mandate' (Punch 2009: 2). Participants also believed that the ability of the police to be accountable and transparent and have a relationship with the community in their dealings with the public is compromised by political interference and directives they have no control over. These participants were under the impression that there is a significant gap between what Police Command say should be done and what actually works on the street for local members. This potential discrepancy causes confusion and impacts legitimacy by making the police appear that they do not have a coherent strategy:

> I have the feeling that the people in High Command, in the city, do not actually understand what is happening in the local police stations. And I can understand that they are up there, they are over there, they are not connected, they've got other people who connect in, it's a network. It's like a pyramid, and I understand that, but it wouldn't do them any harm once in a while to come down. (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Roz's views were echoed by others, for example Tony who also conceptualised policing as a pyramid: 'The top of the pyramid might be thinking one thing but by the time it filters down it can take years to get the strategy right' (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh). Other participants blamed political correctness for the police being unable to act in certain situations and making the wrong decisions to act in others. Roger invoked political correctness and implied that Police Command prioritises this at the expense of letting personnel on the ground get on with the job more spontaneously:

> Numbers are down, the job is as big or bigger, there's less of them, we all understand that, so they can't be as effective. But I still don't think that they're approaching it from a top level properly. There's tremendous attitude of political correctness in "How do we handle this? How hard can we go? How soft do we go?" If you can't make a decision, run for cover in a situation, yeah, soft option. It's the world we live in; I don't think it's ever going to go away. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Phil drew together issues of resourcing with the impression he believed that Police Command held of Monash LGA, that is, not understanding it as an area with its own set of challenges which are not well understood by Police Command:

> I just feel that they're under-resourced, under-manned and they have very good training in terms of operational responses but I don't think they have a real understanding of the community that they have here. And when they are looking maybe at the Force Command level and when they look at Melbourne, places like Clayton and around other universities and that, I don't think they have really an understanding of what that attracts to the area. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Lack of resources allocated to Monash Police Services Area (PSA) is understood to reflect a fundamental lack of understanding about the area and a disconnect between the 'official paradigm' and

the 'operational code' (Punch 2009: 2 & 3). Recent fresh allocations of government resources for law and order have been concentrated in more recognised urban growth corridors (Chalkely-Roden 2016; Edwards 2016), meaning Monash LGA has missed out.

The data presented in this section suggests that, similarly to the effects of change (see Chapter 4), purported dissatisfaction with the police in Monash LGA could be a reflection of wider issues throughout the community. Contemporary challenges for Victoria Police mean that participants perceive modern policing as a tough task. Even basic tasks such as pursuing criminals are perceived to involve a trade-off between accomplishing the goal and risk-aversion that is leading to inaction. Likewise, an increase in workload and lack of funding, illustrated by the implementation of new initiatives around family violence, counter-terrorism and the police having to subsidise for under-funded welfare agencies, are also making policing increasingly difficult. Moreover, dissonance between the way policing works on the streets and requirements from Police Command creates a lack of coherence that influences how the police are perceived.

5.5   Context

Police legitimacy does not occur in a vacuum, the context in which it is negotiated, shaped, contested, achieved or not is highly relevant. One contextual component – ethnicity as a factor informing perceptions of the police – is a significant theme in the literature (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). It is also a key finding in this study and, as such, is discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. The following section of this chapter focuses on other contextual factors that this research suggests may influence interpretation of police actions: changing societal attitudes towards authority, vicarious perceptions via the media and the law. These contextual factors illustrate some of the difficulties the police face when trying to operate to the satisfaction of the whole community in a contemporary environment.

5.5.1   Attitudes towards authority

This research reveals that one possible reason satisfaction with the police may have declined in Monash LGA is due to a change in societal attitudes and values towards the police as an institution. Many participants appear quite nostalgic for a past where the police were, as they saw it, more respected. There was a view that certain values, such as respect for authority, had diminished in importance in contemporary society:

> Attitudinally I think that the policeman himself has had to alter being the Bobby on the corner with the baton and the hat, we don't have that anymore, to something that they're probably not quite as comfortable with. There was an aura of respect; "Oh yes, I must be good". That's softened, it's weakened. I think that's not helped the force. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

This comment indicates that the problem may be deeper than just community satisfaction with the police, and that attitudes towards authority have fundamentally shifted. In this regard, the public are no longer necessarily willing to submit to authority without challenge and this may have an impact on how effective the police appear. Cam summed this up: 'It's not just my opinion, I think it's generally recognised there's a basic lack of respect for authority across the board nowadays' (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South). Mike had a more detailed interpretation of the situation, and suggested other areas that may be symptomatic of a similar erosion of respect:

> I'd say one of the difficulties is determining whether the public's perception of the police has changed because people change. I mean, it appals me how many arseholes are around in the community. It's reflected in family violence, road rage and all sorts of things. And the police have to deal with it and I suspect that maybe public opinion has changed because the people have changed rather than the police. My view would be that the police now are far more cooperative and far more aware of dealing with the public than they have been in the past. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Several participants also singled out young people, young men especially, as a potentially disengaged group who do not respect the police, which impacts the police's profile in the community. This indicates that age may also be a relevant factor in negative perceptions of the police. To illustrate this, participant Dave explained his feelings towards the police as a young man which had changed as he matured:

> When I grew up, 18, 20, 22 years old and within my peer group now attitudes towards the police were, "Oh the police, they're mongrels" and that rubs off on you a bit. And so, you want to be part of that group so you don't want to say, "Oh they're not that bad". And then you start driving and they pull you over and they fine you for not using your blinker or driving badly and then you grow up a bit more and you get into your 30s and you go: "Police, I know one of them, they're just people". (Dave, 40s, Euro-Australian, Mulgrave)

Tricia, a school teacher in Monash LGA, thought that this anti-authority attitude was also reflected in younger children's feelings towards the police:

> I think a lot of kids these days have no respect for police and you can have a conversation at school, particularly with the older kids, and you'll bring up the subject of police and nobody's got anything positive to say about them. And you think, you're dealing with 11 and 12-year-olds who have already got an attitude of "I can't stand them". So where are they getting that from? From their parents, obviously. (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Describing the way police dealt with young people's disrespect in the past and also taking a nostalgic stance, Rhonda once again invoked political correctness. This theme emerged during this study in relation to various aspects of contemporary policing. In this case, political correctness is suggested as the reason for the police not being able to act spontaneously and use minor force without repercussions. Rhonda's point is that, in Victoria today, there would be significant ramifications for police personnel if old-fashioned methods were employed: 'I do feel for the police. I do believe that they have to be so

careful. Like, back in the old days, a clip on the bloody ear and, "Get home you little shit" or whatever'
(Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton).

Quite rightly, it would not be acceptable nowadays for the police to be allowed to administer random corporal punishment. At the same time, the feeling amongst some research participants was that perhaps the balance had swung too far the other way and the 'advantage' now resided with offenders. This perceived erosion of police authority was thought to be partly media-related with the public's ability to film encounters on a mobile device and then frame the footage in such a way that the police look bad: 'One of the things with policing I suppose is the social media, not everyone's got a camera but everyone challenges the police now' (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). Accountability is vital for police legitimacy. Yet participants were adamant that there should be a balance between the police being able to use discretion and act when appropriate, rather than be hindered by the prospect of situations being distorted via social media.

5.5.2 Vicarious experience: the media

Public perceptions of the police are not necessarily based on actual, personal experience as many people do not have the opportunity to meet police during the course of their daily lives. Therefore, perceptions are often based on vicarious experience, that is, the experiences of others that individuals hear about from family, friends or community networks (Weitzer & Tuch 2005; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012) or via media reports (Jewkes 2015; O'Malley 2015). Vicarious experience is a significant factor in perceptions of the police (Weitzer & Tuch 2005). The present study also provides evidence for the media being the key conduit for vicarious perceptions, in this case amongst participants in Monash LGA. The media in various forms is mentioned as an influence on perceptions of the police and whether the police are viewed as legitimate. The most common assertion is that – although the media could potentially help the police both in terms of positive public relations and more practically in crime fighting – more often than not, the media focus on negative or sensational stories rather than on positive police actions or behaviours. This emphasis encourages community dissatisfaction with the police:

> I think that the media can influence what the public perceives or thinks about the police force, either positive or negative, depending what they're trying to push. And I don't believe we get a balanced perspective put to us. We either hear one side of the story or another side of the story, not very often that we get both. So, we tend to hear the bad things about the organisation and we don't get enough of the good things that the organisation does for the public. I'm not saying the organisation is not blameless; any big organisation has got its strength and its weaknesses. How do you get balanced coverage of a situation out of the media? The media is after people viewing or reading what they put out or viewing what they show. They want to get support, they want to get people subscribing to what they do. I mean, you pick up a Melbourne paper and there's not too many happy stories in there…[and] television is all about violence, impact. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Participants were overwhelmingly of the view that the media focuses on the negative, shocking or sensational aspects of stories that involve the police, as a means to encourage greater viewing figures or wider readerships. The media's own interests are at the centre of their mission rather than the public interest or what might be most helpful to the police.

Furthermore, as Rachel and others describe, there are many aspects of police work that are not mentioned in the media and this tends to give the community an unbalanced perspective:

> The good stuff doesn't get reported and what's prevented you can't quantify; you can't do stats on what's prevented. I hate the media. From personal experience, they either report it wrong, they sensationalise it. I mean just for me the media gives out way too much information and I think for people that aren't exposed to that side of the world it can be so traumatic and then you've got the people that are, almost like your copycats, it's just like getting information. So again, the media can be a bonus, they can help, it can have a huge effect on perceptions of police as well. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Cam provides some interesting suggestions about how crime-related news media and social media combine to bring about negative perceptions of the police:

> I think we as a nation have still really not grown up from a little bit of redneckery and we're still a little bit easy to rabble-rouse when things go on and it kind of annoys me about Australians that we couldn't be a little bit mature. Some people like to jump on a cause and then make a lot of noise about it and then there's just this mob mentality that goes along behind it. When we talk about the media, we're always hearing stories about aggravated burglary this, or whatever-whatever that and they always like to finish with, "And they only got two months" or something and then and we all sit back and we go, "Wow!". You've only got to have a look at any online news, whether it's *The Age* [Melbourne broadsheet] or whatever it is. You get more reading out of the comments because there's 147 comments and it's just people who go bang, keyboard warrior, bang, bang. And they're reacting to the article rather than looking at the issue objectively and going well hang on a minute, what could they have done there. (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

Cam's insights highlight the potentially detrimental effect of the continuous news cycle on perceptions. He also explained how it was possible to become involved in the news oneself by posting comments and what effect this could have on perceptions of the police:

> The more they report, the more it becomes an issue and then the more you get a potential backlash for "Well, what are you doing copper?" So, where a normal person who's just gone and got himself $130 speeding fine and this is sort of where I got back to that little bit of redneckery that we still tend to have as a nation. We tend to go well hang on a minute, that's not right and then we look at the bloke in the uniform who's just sort of doing his job, it wasn't his fault anyway and they go, "Well hang on a minute, why are

you letting those bloody Abo boys or those Nigger boys from Noble Park[5] run around and why are you pulling me up for…?" (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

This excerpt demonstrates how it is possible for the media to inflame simmering resentments within a community by their framing of news items involving crime and policing. It also provides an example of the view that perceptions of revenue-raising are an issue that causes dissatisfaction with Victoria Police in Monash. That is, media framing encourages the community to believe that the police prioritise resources towards otherwise law-abiding citizens for minor offences rather than channelling resources into ridding the streets of groups perceived to be causing disorder and spoiling the quality of life in the neighbourhood. Cam's point is that some of the media coverage of crime issues throughout Melbourne encourages the public to see these two uses of police resources as connected, as an either/or proposition. As a result, when members of the community get stopped for speeding, then are subsequently exposed to media coverage about, for example, groups of ethnic young people being disproportionately perpetrators of crime, this increases their sense of injustice and outrage at the police for targeting them.

Dennis also thought that the media could be used more positively by the police to help in fighting crime or informing the public. He proposed, however, that the popular press prefer to focus on the aspects of law and order reporting that are likely to evoke negative reactions towards the police. The widely reported 'Moomba Brawl'[6] of 2016 was supplied as an example:

> That Moomba Brawl between the two gangs, and they [the media] did start off saying it was Africans versus Islanders, but all you've ever heard about was the Africans and I don't think a word has ever been said about supposed Islander opposition. *The Sun* [Herald Sun, Melbourne tabloid] loves that sort of stuff. (Dennis, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

The events at the Moomba Festival in 2016 were widely reported in the media. The events were also used by several participants to illustrate the way that media coverage could influence the public's impression of what happened, the people involved and public opinions of the police:

> The media push it. Like the Moomba. The trouble is, today, everybody is videoing everything. You can't get away with anything. Like with the police, how long did it take them after Moomba before they released the pictures of those three guys? And then they handed themselves in. They should have been able to do that straight away but were they going to be perceived as being racist because they've targeted those three boys? (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Rhonda's views also highlight the political correctness that some participants felt Victoria Police are restricted by. Another similar issue raised was the more recent theme of the Apex Gang, allegedly

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[5] Noble Park is a working-class suburb also in the South East of Melbourne in the neighbouring LGA of Greater Dandenong.
[6] The Moomba Brawl involved members of the Apex Gang being involved in a rolling brawl on the streets of Melbourne's CBD one evening during the 2016 event. Australia's largest free community festival, Moomba takes place annually over the Labour Day public holiday weekend. See www.theage.com.au/victoria/melbourne-cbd-brawl-who-are-the-apex-gang-20160314-gnimaz.html.

involved in Moomba events, but who have subsequently become notorious via the media as the force behind a so-called 'crime wave' in Melbourne's suburbs:

> You've got that incident at the moment that's happening with the Apex Gang that are going around and they're just in that gang and that pack mentality and they're going around hijacking cars and doing ag burgs [aggravated burglaries] on houses and everything. That's been in the media a lot and I know from dealing with students at the University [Monash], a lot of them are being very hyper vigilant and aware of any African appearance students around any of the campuses. So, we've had a few students that've been victims so that is causing a bit of a stir at the moment because it is in the media a lot. And again, from my experience, there's so much that's not reported as well that police are dealing with and have under control. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Rachel's explanation of the potential damage one-sided media coverage can do is plain in the examples she gives about recent events in Melbourne. From Rachel's perspective, it appears that some of the media coverage may have contributed to some university students feeling alienated whilst others are suffering levels of anxiety which may or may not be justified or proportionate. Rachel suggests that more balanced reporting of events would enable the public to maintain perspective around some of the more worrying events and also have more confidence in Victoria Police that they were taking action, which would improve public perceptions of the police. As well as dealing with actual events, the police also have to anticipate the media factor and incorporate this into their planning. Current police member Steve's anecdote demonstrates Victoria Police's awareness of the place that the media now occupy in the environment in which they operate:

> When you look at the news, the TV news, there's usually five of the top ten stories all related to police or crime, even social media, there's people in the city now for Victoria Police who just monitor social media and if someone gets onto social media and complains that the police didn't do anything about this, blah, blah, blah, someone in town rings us up and says, "What's going on about this? We need a briefing paper". (Steve, 50s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

The media is clearly an influential element regarding public perceptions of Victoria Police and law enforcement more generally. Connected to the contemporary media landscape is the issue of public relations; also shown in this research to be a contextual factor affecting community perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA and perceptions of police legitimacy.

Conventionally, the police's relationship with the public is based on their authority being seen as legitimate by citizens (Tyler 1990; Tyler 2004). Having said that, the necessity for specific public relations within the police force emerged as a theme in this research, related to a procedural justice approach to policing. Richard, a local priest, was supportive of the often-unseen work Victoria Police do but felt this positive side of policing was underplayed:

> They need better advertising; they've got to sell themselves better. There's a difference between authority and being authoritarian and people see the authoritarian bit and not the authority bit. I think they've really got to sell the perception that they are a friendly

bunch of people helping you. At the moment, they don't sell themselves in a well-integrated way. (Richard, 70s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone)

He continued that it is important to have police that are able to respond to a crisis but a balance between this need for authority and the human side – represented by normative measures – would be the ideal:

> We see them in trauma, we see them in aggression, that's bad situations. We don't see enough of police delivering babies or helping. They're husbands and wives, they're fathers, they're brothers and sisters, they're grandparents some of them. We don't see that, they're a human person, we see a black uniform. You don't see their fragility. (Richard, 70s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone)

Richard's comments emphasise the relevance of normative measures of police legitimacy, like procedural justice, in Monash LGA. His vision was that being able to see the police as human is key to the public feeling more positive towards the organisation despite the necessity for them to be able to employ force if required. One of the most effective methods by which this could be achieved, Richard suggested, would be by using targeted public relations to accentuate the positive work that Victoria Police undertake - to the extent that the media currently accentuate the more sensational side of policing. Indeed, public relations are conceived as an important part of the police's role. Participants conceptualised Victoria Police's image as a combination of how the police represent themselves (partly within their control) and how the media represent them (not always in the police's control) which is often negative. Therefore, specific public relations within the Victoria Police organisation could help balance these two elements. The final contextual factor that was a theme in the interviews and focus groups was the part the wider justice system plays in influencing perceptions of Victoria Police.

5.5.3   The law

The legal framework in which the police operate is an important element in assuring policing has checks and balances. In turn, this contributes to legitimacy of authority (Beetham 1991) and to a relational, 'dialogic' mode of legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012), which will be analysed further in Chapter 6 with reference to the current study's findings. As regards context, many participants in this research thought that the law is letting the police down and contributing to an erosion of police legitimacy. Rather than providing a framework of checks and balances, the law is undermining the possibility of actions by the police. Tony's comment was typical: 'The police do all the hard work and the judges and the legal system are letting people out' (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh).

The law and the justice system in Victoria were perceived by some participants – including former Victoria Police members – to be hindering the police doing their job properly. Criticism of the law was aligned with participants' complaints about excessive political correctness being responsible for the police not being able to be as effective as they could be. Moreover, participants highlighted their belief that wrongdoers, especially young offenders, are more aware of their rights nowadays and, thus, use the law to

their advantage. Some expressed outrage that the police work hard to catch offenders but they subsequently appear to be given minimal punishment by the courts:

> We had a siege on the corner very early on, the guy held his girlfriend with a spear gun or something. But they brought him back home in the afternoon! In the morning everything's blocked off, you couldn't get out of your house and then they brought the clown home! And you think, "He should've been locked up somewhere". He should've been in a psychiatric ward, don't send him home to his girlfriend who he's just… far out! (Ian, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The 'good old days' (Athol, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley) were also often evoked by participants as a time when the police could exercise discretion in their actions, partly as a result of being more integrated with their local community than they are perceived to be today - a theme considered in Chapter 6. On a similar note, earlier in this section changing attitudes in society were highlighted as a factor that impacts perceptions of the police. Athol summed this up in relation to the law:

> I think the laws generally are against the police. In the good old days if somebody acted up, two policemen took them around the corner, gave them a few thumps and said, "Don't do that again" and they didn't. But now of course, I mean they've all got rights and it's a bit like the kids, "Oh but I know my rights" they forget that with rights come obligations. (Athol, 80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Findings from this research suggest that the police are sometimes not adequately served by the law within which they must operate. Instead of facilitating police legitimacy, the law sometimes undermines it. This results in negative perceptions of the police not doing enough to keep criminals off the streets. Ex-police member Rachel explained:

> It was always when you had people out on bail or parole committing further offences and people would be directing at you, "Why aren't the police doing anything?" Well the police are working their butts off to get them locked away and then the courts are going, "Yep". God yeah, and that's really, really frustrating for police because I suppose if you're not aware of how the system works and that you're just going to blame police, police, police. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The above scenario may represent the fairest outcome of course, but it also contributes to negative perceptions about the police and the courts:

> If you talk to a detective in homicide, it's horrendous. They do not get backed up by the legal system. It's very dispiriting and I know that a lot of plain clothes sections of the police are very dispirited and it's another aspect of policing that must have an effect on morale and attitude and then people's perceptions. (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Participants explained how, often, the public have the perception that the police are not doing enough about catching criminals and locking them away when, in reality, they have no control after a certain point in the proceedings. Therefore, there was a perception amongst participants that the law is not supporting the police's efforts sufficiently. Other participants also suggested it was timely that many of the laws be improved and updated:

I think one of the key fundamentals is to actually revisit the legislative tools. We recognise that the population has changed but the legislation hasn't accurately reflected that change yet. So, what I believe is that law enforcement needs to consider how crime has changed. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

The question was also raised as to whether the Australian legal framework could be presented in such a way as to make it more transparent to migrants. Jeff talked about the law at length as, in his opinion, a key part of Victoria Police's response to improving relations with diverse communities. He argued that the actions and practices of Victoria Police must be explained in such a way that improved the image of the police amongst migrant communities:

One thing is, I can't even understand the concept of a suspended sentence[7], how could you sentence someone and give them a suspension? With growing multiculturalism and migrant workers, they have challenges that how do you actually explain Australian legislation. I think a lot of people from the multicultural community don't understand the legislation here and that dilutes the presence and the image of the police, the Victorian Police. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Jeff was experienced in navigating the Australian legal system in his role as an advocate for international students. His experience included helping those who had been victims of crime. As a result of problems understanding the system, some of these student victims feel that they have not been taken seriously and have not been able to achieve redress and justice. Jeff explained that these same individuals often feel that the police are not taking them seriously, as an international student, implying in their manner that they have got into trouble due to their own ignorance. Jeff suggested that many of them would perhaps not be so vulnerable to becoming engaged with the criminal justice system in the first place if there was a bit more clarity about the ways the laws work and what their expectations of the police in Victoria should be:

For law enforcement to be effective, the law needs to be effective. That's one of the things to really look at. Just looking at an example: how an international student reports a crime. They could report a crime very differently from how an Australian reports a crime. So, after legislation the next step was to review the procedures as well. I mean there are certain procedures that the Victoria Police follow, the question is that is there a need to review it? (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Questions about the law are a significant theme in relation to participants' views of the police. For the police to be beheld as a legitimate authority, the law also has to be perceived as offering a legitimate framework:

Sometimes I believe that Victoria Police are doing a fantastic job. They're doing a very difficult job because they are under-resourced, there's growing crime, so much pressure and things like that but sometimes it's not their fault that they're being underplayed as well. The media and even the legislative framework is not supporting them well enough.

[7] Suspended sentences have been abolished in Victoria for all offences committed on or after 1 September 2014, see https://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-sentencing/sentencing-options-for-adults/suspended-sentence for more information.

That's where the Victorian police have a difficult job because how can you control or manage something that's organic in a mechanical manner? Law enforcement unfortunately is very mechanical, you need procedures, process...I think a better understanding comes from more discussion as well as potentially more collaboration to actually address the issue. Because I think it's not solely a Victoria Police issue, but again the wider community, the State Government and also Local Government and the key community groups as well. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Jeff's insight underlines the importance of considering the broader context when discussing police legitimacy. This last topic illustrates how factors such as societal attitudes, vicarious perspectives (often transmitted by the media) and even the law creating the framework for policing all contribute to a complex mix of elements in which the police must work to best maximise legitimacy.

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the second subsidiary research question: Are the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities met by police and what are the implications for police legitimacy? The findings showed that Victoria Police in Monash LGA were meeting expectations in some areas but there were several key factors that were impacting on their ability to practice as the community would hope, wish and expect. These factors were influencing the legitimacy of the police in Monash LGA. Addressing them would potentially improve legitimacy as well as satisfaction with the police. Both normative and instrumental processes appeared to be involved in contributing to satisfaction and police legitimacy in Monash LGA. Criticism and areas for improvement also comprised normative and instrumental domains.

The first part of the chapter contained a snapshot of participants' positive and negative perceptions of Victoria Police. Following this, 'Processes of police legitimacy in Monash LGA', revealed participants' expectations of Victoria Police in Monash LGA including the roles of responsiveness and reassurance in enhancing police legitimacy and, therefore, satisfaction with the police. This topic concluded with an exploration of how participants perceived that Victoria Police used their authority and how this impacted legitimacy.

The next topic, 'Contemporary challenges', outlined the perceptions of participants around the job of policing in contemporary society. The prevailing viewpoint was that modern police work was fraught with difficulties, illustrated by the topic of police pursuits. Analysis followed of other factors participants believed were affecting the police's capacity to operate in a way that maximised legitimacy and satisfaction. These factors included new family violence directives, counter-terrorism strategy, the police having to provide a welfare service and lack of harmony between the priorities of Police Command and local police personnel.

The final topic, 'Context', focused on the cultural context in which modern policing takes place and what implications context may have had for police legitimacy in Monash LGA. Contextual factors presented

here were changing societal attitudes towards the police, the transmission of vicarious perceptions via the media and the wider context of the justice system and the law. Evidence in this section demonstrated that the participants believed all these factors to be impacting in some way upon police capacity to practice and subsequent perceptions of the police. Ultimately, this chapter comprised an examination of police legitimacy in Monash LGA which – although there were some positive areas – revealed areas where improvements could be made. The last analysis chapter will explore the relational aspects of police legitimacy and make the link between legitimacy and trust for Victoria Police in Monash LGA.

Chapter 6   Trust in Victoria Police in the Monash LGA

6.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the final major theme that emerged from the data: trust in Victoria Police in the Monash LGA. It addresses subsidiary research question three: Does the community in Monash LGA trust Victoria Police representatives in their area? Trust in the police is important because it is linked to legitimacy (see Chapter 2). The conditions for police legitimacy to be sustained are unlikely to be met if a community does not trust the police. The main goal of this chapter is to delineate the main factors that the residents of Monash LGA considered to impact upon community levels of trust in Victoria Police in their area. Indeed, there are several domains the community thought could be addressed which would improve levels of trust in Victoria Police and, by improving trust, enhance overall satisfaction.

The first of these domains, is referred to as named police members. This describes police personnel known to the Monash LGA communities who are often identified during the interviews and focus groups. One particular police member's name was frequently mentioned by various participants. He was involved in Neighbourhood Watch and actively liaised with the community in a variety of ways. The participants who had come across him expressed the value of this connection and relationship to how they felt about the police more generally. However, the data indicates that this traditional model of community policing (Virta 2013) does not appear to be the wider norm in Monash LGA. The second domain is continuity. Participants expressed the value of an uninterrupted relationship where one police representative dealt with them when they had a problem, rather than having to keep explaining their situation to different personnel. This approach increases trust in the policing process. As discussed in this chapter, former police members explain how continuity is impaired by police rosters and the way the promotion system operates within Victoria Police. The next domain is contact. Residents felt that regular, non-threatening contact with police, for example, observing police at community events and being visible in the local area favourably influenced trust and confidence in the police. The community also felt they got to know their local police better this way which increased familiarity and enhanced trust. The Police/Schools Involvement Program[1] or Police in Schools Program is cited as one example of how Victoria Police can ensure regular contact with residents from an early age. Visibility of the police is the next domain discussed in the chapter. This domain links closely with contact, in that the participants valued police visibility in their area, including foot and car patrols, and the increased opportunities for the public to initiate conversations with police which built a relationship, increasing trust in the institution. Participants' views on PSOs[2] are included here as one means by which the

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[1] The Police/Schools Involvement Program or PSIP entailed the Victoria Police going into schools to give talks on safety subjects such as road safety or drugs and alcohol issues. It also meant that a relationship was built up between the schools and local police. It was discontinued in 2005. See www.aic.gov.au/media_library/conferences/partnership/sutton.pdf and https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/.../QON-Wayne_Gatt-30052017.pdf for further information.

[2] Protective Services Officers

Victorian Government and Victoria Police have sought to increase the visibility of law and order at Melbourne train stations, including those located in Monash LGA.

The next domain that the community felt was important in relation to trust in Victoria Police is a visible procedural justice approach evident in the handling of matters. Participants' responses about the police suggest that the Monash LGA communities value the process as well as the outcome of encounters with police. How the police are viewed as people, how they interact with the public and how they are perceived to carry out their duties impacts on whether the police are trusted by the community. This section also discusses what implications a lack of resources may have on the ability of Victoria Police to practice a procedural justice approach which leads into a fuller discussion of resourcing as the next domain which impacts on trust in the police in Monash. The resourcing domain also includes a discussion about the role technology plays in facilitating contemporary police work, potentially freeing up personnel to perform community-related duties.

Ethnicity is also a domain that emerged from the data, contributing to differences in community perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA. This topic has stimulated a vibrant area of research (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Ethnicity as a factor in relation to trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA is considered in the context of representation of diverse ethnicities within Victoria Police itself and how Victoria Police are currently responding to the diversity in Monash LGA. Essentially, ethnically diverse communities in Monash LGA are more likely to view any shortcomings in their experiences with the police as being a result of their ethnicity, whilst Euro-Australian residents of Monash LGA also tend to view the ethnicity of diverse residents as the most probable cause if there are suggestions of community problems with the police. The data that emerged on this domain emphasises the significance of a constructive relationship between police and the communities they serve in maintaining trust.

The domains are premised on a relationship model of authority. As described in Chapter 2, this model is proposed by Weber in *Economy and Society* (1968) and has been more recently updated by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012). The latter authors describe legitimate authority as 'dialogic' meaning that legitimacy of the police, for example, should be conceptualised in terms of 'claims to legitimacy by power holders and responses by audiences' (2012: 120), in this case, the community. The findings from the current study also suggest that a deeper conceptualisation of legitimacy is useful in relation to understanding the role that formal and informal contact via community organisations plays in nurturing police/community relations in the Monash LGA. This chapter argues that trust is a key component that can provide the essential building blocks for a positive police/community relationship model to evolve.

6.2   Named police members

This term refers to the situation where representatives of the Monash LGA communities know a police member by name and feel they are able to use this connection if they access police services. This

situation ensures community members feel more confident about accessing police services, should they need to. Such a model is reminiscent of a community policing approach (Virta 2013), a model that has not been widely acknowledged as official policing policy in Australia (Fleming 2010), but nonetheless elements of it have captured the public imagination in terms of what they expect from their police (Fleming 2010). Anita, for example, explained how it is important for her feelings of security and belonging in the community to have local police members as friends, know their names and conceptualise policing as a partnership between the community and the police:

> One of our local police officers, I'm told he's different from police officers in other areas because he actually attends Neighbourhood Watch meetings. People think of him as "our" police officer. We know him on a first name basis. It gives us a sense that if we go up to the police station and say to someone, "I know someone who works here", you'll get treated maybe a bit better. (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Having a connection with a local member – a police representative whose name you know and can use if necessary – was perceived as a kind of capital by participants. The catalyst to initiating such relationships is often community organisations, such as the Neighbourhood Watch, where community members get to know a police member or because of other community engagement initiatives such as the Monash Multicultural Advisory Committee. Community members evoke this named contact if they need to access police services on any other occasion. For example, Monash LGA had one police representative who appeared to be especially dedicated to his role as a community liaison officer with Neighbourhood Watch. This member, who had been based at Oakleigh Police Station for at least the past ten years, was mentioned several times in the interviews and focus groups. The way the community describe their relationship with this representative is that he increases confidence in the police more generally and provides the community with a point of contact if needed which makes residents more comfortable about using police services.

Bradford and Jackson (2010) conceptualise trust in the police as having both institutional and individual dimensions. In this study, a named member is a manifestation of the interpersonal strand of the process by which trust in the police is constituted. Taking this concept further, at the heart of Bradford and Jackson's conceptualisation of trust (2010) in institutions is the importance of encounters with representatives of that institution, in this case, police members. Evidence for the significance of encounters between the police and the public that emerged from this study has already been emphasised in Chapters 4 and 5. The interpersonal trust Bradford and Jackson (2010) describe is affirmed by the police acting in a certain manner when encountering the public, a manner that justifies the public instilling trust in them personally. If the community has a named police member who attends community events, for instance, the opportunities for such encounters to occur in a way that increases trust is greatly improved through familiarity. Furthermore, Bradford and Jackson (2010) introduce a relational aspect into their conceptualisation of trust. They contend that encounters between the police and the community only serve to increase trust in the police – both personally in that member and towards the institution more broadly – if *both* the police member and the community representative act in the prescribed manner

during an encounter (Bradford & Jackson 2010). This suggests that trust can be conceptualised as 'dialogic', similarly to legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012: 119).

Named police members who engage with the community on a longer-term basis were spoken of very highly during the course of this research. This could have been because they have clearly demonstrated a commitment to the community. Such continuity and long-term engagement appear to positively affect community perceptions of Victoria Police and certainly augment levels of trust and satisfaction. A named member represents a long-term investment in the community. However, there was also a perception from some of the participants that knowing your local Victoria Police member by name is becoming a thing of the past. Awena suggested that the community are not the only ones who benefit from a named member arrangement:

> In the old days, we had a dedicated policeman. Neighbourhood Watch was his assignment so they would turn up every month and the locals would get to know whoever it was, that worked out well. I thought that was excellent public relations for them. (Awena, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

As Awena's comment illustrates, having a named police member facilitates an improved level of continuity in the police's relationship with community members and groups.

6.3 Continuity

Continuity indicates a paradigm whereby the same police member deals with a member of the public from the start of an incident to its resolution. Greater continuity assures that issues are dealt with more efficiently without repetition, therefore, increasing the level of trust in both the organisation and individual members (Bradford & Jackson 2010). Continuity, thus, creates more confidence and trust in the process of policing. Participants in this study indicated that continuity was important from the point of view of public perceptions of police efficiency and commitment to the community. Even so, such a system was apparently difficult to maintain under current Victoria Police arrangements for rostering, shift work, leave and promotion. Nevertheless, lack of continuity left members of the Monash LGA communities feeling as though no-one was satisfactorily dealing with their situation and it took longer to resolve issues:

> The other thing that we find very frustrating with our police partners is that everyone up here seems to be in an acting position. You go to report to the person that you related to and they're gone. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

The insights of former Victoria Police member, Rachel, demonstrate some of the barriers to maintaining continuity on a daily basis for the police:

> It's even just down to shift work, people might call between the business hours of nine to five and just with rosters and shift work, you've got your day shift, afternoon, your night shift. There's nine weeks leave that police members get so the chances of always getting the same person are pretty rare. I remember from my own experience, you deal with a victim and they would call to follow something up and you were either out on the

road, doing patrols in the van, you're uncontactable so you'd come in at the end of the day, maybe have an email message from the Watch House saying, "Missed call from…" try and catch up with them. And it would be a lot of to-ing and fro-ing. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

In addition, participants that had established a relationship of continuity with the police through their previous life as a police member or via community organisations (discussed in the section above about named police members), for example, expressed feeling fortunate because they perceived that this extra connection ensured they would be able to feel confident calling on the police if they needed to. They could use their connection to promote continuity in the service they received. Another relevant issue that was perceived as a barrier to continuity was constant staffing changes at the local stations. These are perceived to lead to lack of continuity within the community for the police based there and a loosening of the relationship between the police and the community which leads to that community having lower levels of respect for their police. As alluded to above, the structure of promotion and career pathways in Victoria Police are interpreted as being partly to blame for lack of continuity as well as general shortages of staff in Victoria Police. Resource issues are perceived to be at the core of many of the factors the community highlighted that impacted upon trust in the police, including contact.

6.4   Contact

Contact between Victoria Police members and the public is perceived by the communities of Monash LGA to be an effective method by which the police can promote a relationship of trust with communities with ramifications for legitimacy, satisfaction and improving perceptions of the police. Feeling amongst research participants was that the police should maximise opportunities for police/community contact; not enough is being done currently to promote opportunities for formal and informal, regular interaction. Schemes such as having the police visit schools to explain their role to pupils were suggested as ways contact could be facilitated, similarly to involvement of the police with community organisations (discussed in Chapter 4 and explored further later in this chapter in the context of the relationship model of authority).

Contact as a domain impacting trust aligns with the literature on encounters with the police described in Chapter 2 (also evoked in Chapter 4 in relation to the importance of first impressions in forming views of Victoria Police from within ethnically diverse communities). Previous research around police legitimacy examines the role of encounters in influencing public perceptions of police legitimacy (notably Skogan 2006; 2009; 2012). Skogan (2006) concludes that *any* encounters between the police and the public result in negative perceptions of the police by those involved. Skogan's argument is not accepted by all police legitimacy scholars. Tyler (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008), for example, argues that encounters between the police and communities have positive ramifications as long as they are conducted under the auspices of a procedural justice approach. This latter view is reproduced in the work of Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009), Jackson *et al.* (2012) and Mazerolle *et al.* (2012), other

prominent authors in the field of procedural justice policing. Furthermore, Roach Anleu and Mack describe the impact that brief encounters with the court process have on public perceptions of the entire justice system (2005), and this study suggests this was also the case for encounters with the police, however minor.

The findings of the current study demonstrate that encounters are an important element regarding augmentation of trust in the police. This research found that communities thought there should be more frequent, every day, non-threatening contact between local Victoria Police members and members of the communities of Monash to increase both interpersonal and institutional trust (Bradford & Jackson 2010). Community representatives that participated in this research thought this would have a positive effect on perceptions of the police overall leading to greater satisfaction ratings. It was believed that regular, non-threatening contact normalises the institution of the police, encourages the police to be viewed as part of the community and counteracts some of the fear that certain community members express about having to approach the police. This fear is not necessarily based on actual experience with Victoria Police but does appear to exist within sections of the Monash LGA communities as Ray, a Neighbourhood Watch representative, recounts. Ray had been asked on many occasions to intercede on behalf of his neighbours and accompany people having to make a visit to the police station to report an incident or ask for help: 'But strangely enough I find people frightened of going to a police station and frightened to make a verbal report to police' (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley).

It appeared that some members of the community were often nervous about having to deal with the police even if they had no logical reason to feel threatened. It helped, therefore, to have a mediator such as a community representative or organisation who had regular contact with Victoria Police and, thus, knew how the system worked. This was especially relevant in the case of newer migrant communities who had not had the time or the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with the police or who may have had negative experiences with police in their countries of origin (a phenomenon discussed further in Chapter 4).

In order to mitigate fear and encourage trust in Victoria Police, regular contact with the community needed to happen. Some community members believed this to be especially pertinent in relation to children and young people. Regular contact via school or youth programs helped allay fears and shape young people's views of the police with actual experiences rather than them forming their perceptions of the police by vicarious means, such as through family or peer group opinions. One example of such a scheme was the Police/ Schools Involvement Program:

> There used to be the Police in Schools Program and that's gone. The police would come
> and talk to the students just to make them a friendly face rather than the first time the
> police met somebody was for a bad thing. But that funding got cut. (Ian, 50s, Euro-
> Australian, Clayton)

Ian and his wife Tricia are school teachers. They speak with authority as they interact with young people every day at work, as well as being the parents of young adult sons. Schemes such as Police in

Schools were perceived by participants not to occur to the extent now that they did in the past. Indeed, some participants described fond memories of the police visiting their school or youth group on a regular basis. This experience meant that they had got to know some police members and been encouraged to consider the police as part of a wider community:

> Even coming down to the local footy and walking around, being somewhere where people are. Because see once upon a time when we were kids I think we had a much better connection with police. We had a more positive image of police. (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

One former member described her personal experience of participating in the Police in Schools Program in another part of Melbourne. She is very positive about its benefits:

> In my previous role, we'd go out to a couple of primary schools now and then and give talks and it's just making them aware of police; that we're there to help them. Because how many times do parents say, "If you don't eat your veggies I'm going to call the police, they'll take you and you'll get locked up if you're naughty". And there would be times where a kid would see you and they would just ball their eyes out and you're like, oh that's probably come from their parents saying, "The police will lock you up if you don't wear your seatbelt" - or whatever. So, I did that a couple of times, went out to schools and just let the kids try on uniforms and hats, have photos. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Crucially, when these encounters occur, whether in an informal setting or in a more formal way such as Police in Schools, the police have to be mindful to conduct themselves in such a way that they leave a lasting positive impression with the public; a manner that could be summarised as a procedural justice approach. Procedural justice is discussed in further detail later in this chapter as it was important to the residents of Monash LGA as a domain in which trust between the police and the community is nurtured. Closely connected to contact, however, is visibility.

6.5   Visibility

Monash LGA representatives were preoccupied with the phenomenon of being able to see Victoria Police members on the streets of their community. In sum, the view from the research participants was that the relationship between the police and the community must be nurtured by contact in order for trust to develop. This cannot happen from behind a counter, the inside of a patrol car or via a helpline. The police must be visible: 'There is no evidence of law and order unless you actually see the police' (Roger, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley). Roz also described this key area regarding formation and maintenance of trust in the police in Monash LGA: 'Visibility. That's what it's all about. And approachability' (60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). Approachability is a component of procedural justice policing which is discussed in the section that follows. Roz's statement also highlights the role that police visibility has in encouraging trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Roz's comment was typical when participants were asked to discuss how they thought perceptions of the police could

have been improved in Monash LGA. Essentially, participants thought that greater police visibility in Monash improved perceptions of Victoria Police by enabling trust to develop between the police and communities. Ultimately, greater visibility of police leads to more opportunities for everyday contact and, thus, for relationships of trust to be formed which impact overall perceptions and cooperation with the police in the Monash LGA:

> It's very noticeable, when police attend community events, the number of people that come up and talk to the officer. People want to do that, people want to see that there's a police presence, not in a vehicle speeding through, but walking down the street. It's connection, we've got a human being. The Neighbourhood Watch have funded a bicycle patrol from Glen Waverley Police Station. The officers ride the bicycle paths; they ride around the shopping centres. They're a visible presence. They can get to places that a car can't get to. It's less threatening. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

The community were in favour of the police being more visible, walking a traditional beat and being available for them to talk to and get to know. From the perspective of the research participants, it was irrelevant whether this type of policing is more effective for fighting crime, improving safety or the best use of resources. As far as perceptions of the police are concerned, visibility is important. Further complicating this issue, are contemporary security concerns which impact upon whether it is feasible for Victoria Police to provide the sort of service that communities feel is optimal. Notwithstanding the practicalities, the role and importance of visibility in relation to trust is clear. It remains to be seen whether a policing model could be developed that is practicable for the police, and safe of course, but also maximises this significant domain in terms of promoting trust in Victoria Police.

There were, however, divergent points of view. Some participants thought that not seeing the police is a good sign because it means all is well. For others, not seeing the police indicates that there are not enough police to go around in the area. The views expressed below are typical responses regarding visibility of the police in Monash LGA:

> In England in the old days with a local Bobby walking around and people walking to the shops and things they met each other, you got to know them and there was a personal interaction. But here, now they'd be driving around, you wouldn't see them and the fact that people don't walk on the streets very much anyway is also a factor I suppose. (Bob, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

> From a physical presence perspective, I've always been a big fan of pay more coppers; just put them out and about all the time. I would rather have an extra X amount of my tax paying for more police even if they're driving around doing nothing, I would rather see that. From a presence perspective, I've always been a big fan of having them there. (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

As previously, these observations contradict findings by Skogan (2006) in relation to encounters with the police. According to this study, personal interaction in non-threatening, everyday situations such as passing the police in the street and exchanging conversation greatly increases satisfaction. Many participants, such as Tricia, believed that police visibility had declined in the area:

It used to be that they would do foot patrols through the shopping centre and so you could visibly see them. These days you rarely see them. The only time you see them is when the cop car's parked outside Coles because they've come to pick up yet another shoplifter. (Tricia, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

It was suggested by Benny that lack of visibility may be linked to the winding down of police services more generally in the area, notably the restriction of hours at Clayton and Mount Waverley Police Stations (discussed in Chapter 4):

It's always good if the police patrol in an area. They've wound down a lot of the police stations and the local police services were there for a reason. They were close to you, central, so if they close them down, the police will have to come from further away. (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

Some of the changes observed could also be linked to resources which are discussed later in this chapter. Tony's view was emblematic of what the participants said in relation to visibility and resourcing:

I would probably say that from what I can gather the police would probably be under-resourced so they're fairly stretched and they're not as visible and they don't seem to mingle in the community like they used to, which is probably a negative I reckon. Years ago, they used to walk through the shopping centres and things and have that presence which is quite good. Because then the people in the community get to know them on a better level and it's just a real bonus. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

Participants described visible police as a deterrent to potential wrongdoers as well as a symbol of reassurance for the rest of the community. Cam described how he did not currently feel the chances of encountering police on the streets of Monash LGA is high enough to serve as a deterrent for him not to break the law in minor ways:

It'd be a Saturday afternoon, a cracking day, and I'd go past Clarinda Cellars and I'd think "well I know I'm not allowed to drink in the streets here but if I'm going to walk around and do this and do that I'm going to get me a couple of lagers and just hide them in the pram" and off you go. I'd be walking down Centre Road doing this, looking around and there was not one time I went "oh that's a cop car, hide my beer". I've always believed we need a far greater physical presence just to deter wrongdoers. Because if you see a police car you're going to think twice about doing something wrong. (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

But other participants viewed current levels of police visibility as adequate. The exact location within Monash LGA where a participant was based, appeared to account for this inconsistency. Some Clayton residents, like Tricia above, felt they did not see Victoria Police enough. Alternatively, Glen Waverley participants like Jenny thought police visibility was sufficient. This could be due to their proximity to the large station in Glen Waverley, a busy hub which would give the impression of an ongoing visible police presence, or even the fact that the Victorian Police Academy is in Glen Waverley:

> Police visibility I think with their vehicles is quite high. It's a relative thing and it's kind of almost the price that maybe you pay for being in an area where perhaps the crime isn't quite so bad? (Jenny, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Many participants talked about their experiences with Protective Services Officers (PSOs), one of the primary ways by which the State Government has tried to raise the profile of law and order in and around Melbourne.

6.5.1   Protective Services Officers

PSOs are a highly visible method by which the Victorian Government has sought to increase the visibility of law and order, specifically on Melbourne's public transport network; one of the key locations where the public is likely to be most fearful of becoming a victim of crime (Roach Anleu 2006). Their deployment has proved controversial, with a 2016 Auditor-General's Report finding that there is little evidence that PSOs help to reduce crime on the transport network (Frost 2016; Silvester 2016). Regardless, the other primary function of PSOs is to improve public perceptions of safety on Melbourne's public transport which the Report deems a resounding success (Frost 2016; Silvester 2016). PSOs are not a specific focus of this project, but their presence was commented on by many participants. Therefore, they are included in relation to visibility of law and order. The comments below were typical:

> PSOs are fantastic. I mean I really felt, Huntingdale Station, which my wife frequents is not the most safe. There used to be this group of youngsters who just hung out in the car park and people felt unsafe but you know they are gone, now the PSOs are there. So, that's a good improvement because people feel safer using public transport. But the problem with PSOs is, what about between the train station and back home? What stops you from being mugged on that bit of your journey? In Australia, unfortunately, the streets are not properly lit and things like that. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

> PSOs. I think it's wonderful PR. When you get off the train, they greet you, "Good evening". I think it's a positive. (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

> [PSOs] increase the visibility of security in the community, there's no doubt about that. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

> The PSOs at the stations have been great for women not getting harassed, they can walk to their cars and that's been a real positive. I think they have been very successful. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

Feedback from this research demonstrates a high level of support for PSOs at Monash's train stations as a way of making passengers feel safer. PSOs are perceived to be facilitating a relationship between law enforcement and the community that is difficult to maintain otherwise with sworn police members, given increasing demands due to growth. Whether or not the service they are providing is simply reassurance, the community really like them and feel they greatly add to the perception of safety. Findings also showed that PSOs are facilitating community contact with law enforcement and performing a public relations role for Victoria Police:

And the PSOs at the train station, I think they're doing a hell of a good job - just having that presence there. And quite often we're going to the football or the rugby and you see them there and they try to make contact, they say, "How are you?" and stuff and then when we come back they say, "How did the game go?" I think people are starting to embrace that so whether you can have another similar type of force or whatever of people similar to the PSOs walking around the streets? It's good; they're making themselves available and approachable - that's what the police need to do, make themselves more accessible really isn't it? (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

Despite generally positive commentary about PSOs, some participants questioned whether, firstly, the resources committed to PSOs would be better channelled into having more sworn police members. Secondly, Jeff raised the question of inter-cultural competency and whether, if Victoria Police members themselves are not all as well-versed in dealing with ethnically diverse communities as they need to be in an area such as Monash LGA, then this is likely to be even more of an issue with PSOs who receive even less training:

But with PSOs, one question is that the resources committed to them could be diverted to Victoria Police. And PSOs, again, they don't go through as stringent training so to what extent can they cater to the multicultural community? That's the question I would raise. If the Victorian police, they themselves are not trained, how would you expect us [ethnically diverse members of Monash LGA communities] to be confident in PSO training? (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Visibility of law enforcement is clearly an important strand in perceptions of the police in Monash LGA, particularly pertaining to levels of trust in the police. As the Auditor-General's Report (Frost 2016) found, however, this visibility is very much about community perceptions of security rather than concrete evidence that visibility makes a difference to levels of crime. Correspondingly, Fabrizio offered the view that, although visibility is clearly an important preoccupation, police visibility has to be deployed in the right way in order for it to achieve the aim of improving levels of community trust in the police. Fabrizio compared police visibility in Monash LGA with his home town in Italy. Although he perceived his home town to have a more visible policing culture, he offered the view that structurally the two cities are very different which has resulted in different policing cultures. He suggests this could account for the lower perceived visibility of Victoria Police personnel on the streets of Monash LGA:

It's strange because in Italy I was used to seeing a lot of police cars and police officers walking down the street in the downtown of the city. But the reality is that an Italian city and an Australian city are very different. Melbourne is sprawling compared to any city, an Italian city. It's really huge in area. So, I can understand that it's different, the management of police officers. But on the other hand, I feel more safe here instead of in Italy because here the ambience is different. It looks really, oh it could be a stupid example, but just driving is different. Because here everyone respects all the signings. Nobody screams or uses the horn. It is generally good the trust in the police here. From this point of view, I think that I feel safe, me and my family. (Fabrizio, 30s, Italian, Glen Waverley)

Fabrizio's comments illustrate that just having more visible police or PSOs is not the only important factor to consider. Also important is the way in which they are deployed to best contribute to an overall

atmosphere of safety in the city. Above all, the manner in which encounters between the police and the public are handled on an everyday basis is highly significant, that is to say that, it is pertinent whether procedural justice principles are followed as routine procedure (Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008; Bradford, Jackson & Stanko 2009; Jackson *et al.* 2012; Mazerolle *et al.* 2012). In fact, procedural justice is a theme underlying many of the opinions gathered in this study, in relation to encounters, contact and visibility but also in the Monash LGA communities' wider discourses relating to trust in Victoria Police.

6.6   Procedural justice

A key focus in policing research concerns whether it makes a difference to public satisfaction with the police if they treat the public well, epitomised by work around procedural justice policing. The consensus to date is that it does improve public confidence in the police, hence the public's propensity to cooperate with police, if the police employ procedural justice principles in their everyday practice. This perspective is integral to the work of key authors such as Tyler (1990; 2004) as well as Mazerolle *et al.* (2012) and Bradford, Murphy and Jackson (2014). The procedural justice approach to policing has also been considered in terms of different ethnic groups (Sunshine & Tyler 2003; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013; Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014), a perspective relevant to ethnically diverse Monash LGA, and in terms of the psychological mechanisms which are invoked when procedural justice appears to enhance police/community relations (Smith *et al.* 1998; Bradford, Murphy & Jackson 2014). This latter scholarship demonstrates that procedural justice policing has implications in terms of social inclusion - a phenomenon that is also relevant to Monash LGA. Procedural justice specifically as one of the means to increase trust in the police is one of the factors considered in Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney's (2013) study concerning the relevance of procedural justice approaches across different cultural contexts in Australia. The current study also found a relationship between procedural justice and trust in the police. Monash LGA communities view their local Victoria Police members more favourably and, thus, are more likely to cooperate with them if they come across as pleasant and approachable invoking encounter-based interpersonal trust (Bradford & Jackson 2010).

Although the current study is not specifically designed to capture incidents of procedural justice as such, in the way the QCET is for example (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012), procedural justice is a theme alluded to in many of the interviews and focus groups comprising this research data. Participants were quick to turn to process-based assessments to frame their opinions about the police in Monash LGA, such as Athol's comment: 'I deal with quite a few of them and they're all great people' (80s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley). In interviews and focus groups, statements that the police are 'great people' is a more common observation than remarks about their efficiency or ability to do their job, which are possibly taken for granted amongst this cohort. Plainly, the way the police treat members of the public in Monash matters a great deal as far as trust in the police on an individual and institutional level is concerned. Cam explained how this works in his experience:

I've rarely been pulled over but when you talk to coppers, if they're too aggressive, too assertive, too in your face, you get your back up straight away. You think: "I'm now one more degree disconnected from you as an authority figure, mate, because you've just come across as a bit of a flog and I haven't done anything wrong!" But, if we see a bit of procedural fairness, you go, "okay, maybe I don't really like the outcome but I can sit back and say X and Y was done so we're at Z and there's a logical outcome to it. It might not be the best for me but there's a logical outcome to it." (Cam, 40s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh South)

Narratives about the police in Monash LGA were characterised by indicators of the importance of procedural justice to the communities' experiences with the police:

The support that we get from our local police station, that's the Mount Waverley Police Station on Stephensons Road, they've been very supportive. Every time I've been to the police station, they've been very pleasant. I've watched them interview people and I couldn't fault their approach. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Ray's comment also suggests that opinions of the police as people are important in addition to them doing their job well. In fact, it is likely that both normative and instrumental factors have a role to play regarding trust in the police in Monash LGA. Indeed, this would be congruent with previous research in Australia: Hinds and Murphy (2007) in their study on the impact of procedural justice on public satisfaction with the police and Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney's (2013) study comparing the effects of procedural justice policing on trust in the police across different ethnic groups in Australia both demonstrate the value of normative and instrumental factors in informing satisfaction with the police in Australia. Nonetheless, process-based, normative assessments of the police are very prominent in many of the narratives from Monash LGA.

Above all, when describing police who have made a good impression, community members talked in terms of the personalities of the officers in question: 'Police officers in Monash are generally very personable, the ones I've met' (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). The personalities of the police that have contact with the community inform trust in the police more broadly. Having the right personality in a police member is believed to enable trust relationships to be built between the community and the police which are positive and conducive to building a strong relationship model facilitating both effective law enforcement and communities trusting and feeling satisfied with police. Some participants, however, also discussed how they believe that stress, short staffing and the difficulties of the job all impact negatively on the police's ability to employ procedural justice principles all the time:

Maybe they've had a busy night going to the same place for different people and maybe, like most humans, the police get a little bit short tempered. I have dealt with the police on behalf of a neighbour and I've found that when they've come they've been extremely well-versed in dealing with the problem and are very patient and seem to know their job well - the ones that I've dealt with. But they need to sell the fact that they do assist the public and they are quite friendly, most of the time. (Francine, 60s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone)

Therefore, being under pressure in terms of resources could impact the way the police treat the public.

6.6.1   Ramifications of lack of resources for procedural justice policing

The data reveals that when the police are very short staffed, one of the areas that suffers is the way that they treat the public, that is, perhaps procedural justice principles are overlooked when the police are very stressed due to overwork and being short staffed constantly. For example, programs for engagement with diverse communities might suffer if there is a lack of funding:

> I don't know whether it's under-resourcing or they're not well trained or is it just that this is acceptable practice within Victoria Police. Sometimes the response they give; I don't know whether it's because the police officer just doesn't give a damn about what's going on. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

The above extract suggests that procedural justice policing is an equally important factor in increasing trust in the police in ethnically diverse communities, as in other communities in Monash, contrary to what some previous research has found elsewhere in Australia (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). As a former Victoria Police member, Rachel verified that lack of resources affects the capacity of the force to respond to the public in a manner consistently congruent with procedural justice principles:

> It's that bitter cycle where they're under resourced but they're still doing the same amount of work so the members are getting burnt out, morale is going down and it's just that wicked cycle of the community copping a very unhappy, grumpy police officer. I do appreciate that side of policing where you are so burnt out and exhausted. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Procedural justice policing appears to positively affect trust in the police in Monash LGA. This is likely because procedural justice methods engender a better impression of police personnel generally and a greater likelihood that an individual feels able to call on them if they need to. It is, therefore, valuable for Victoria Police to exercise procedural justice practices as often as possible. Central to having the informal opportunities to practice procedural justice policing are greater opportunities for interactions with the community through the domains discussed above (named police members, continuity, contact, visibility) and these practices are reliant upon adequate or additional resources. Indeed, lack of resources such as staff shortages are perceived to be a major factor in all the domains that impact trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA.

6.7   Resourcing

The communities in Monash LGA perceive there is a lack of police personnel to serve their area, a phenomenon encapsulated by a dearth of visible police on the streets of Monash LGA. In addition, the perception amongst the participants is that existing police are overwhelmed with paperwork and administrative tasks which take them away from being available to provide adequate frontline and community services. Technology, which could alleviate some of the resourcing issues, is believed not to have been fully exploited due partly to the length and complexity of procurement processes for new

equipment. There is a perception that this is partly due to cost-cutting that has reduced administrative and support staff positions within Victoria Police in the recent past, resulting in police being required to perform multiple roles with inadequate support: 'Because now police officers have got to be multi-skilled, whereas in the past you'd have had some of them just behind the desk or admin staff dealing with some things' (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone).

The root cause of issues such as these is believed to be inadequate resourcing. In order that factors that influence trust in the police be implemented, sufficient resourcing is key:

> I think now police numbers are sort of increasing but I remember a time when they were really… they were so short staffed that they couldn't… it might've been quite difficult for them to handle all the requests for assistance. Internally they must be under tremendous pressure. If you look at all the police stations that have been closed and that makes your population, your community feel very vulnerable and fragile. (Richard, 70s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone)

Above all, Victoria Police in Monash LGA are perceived by the communities to be short of staff. This is thought to be partly a consequence of police resources not keeping pace with growth and change in the area (see Chapter 4). A common pattern in interviews and focus groups was that participants initially insisted they had no complaints about Victoria Police, but then proceeded to list multiple grievances which included lack of visibility, lack of accessibility, lack of continuity, reduced 24-hour access to local police stations and shortness of staff - factors that, as the previous section demonstrates, relate to creating an environment in which trust in Victoria Police can evolve. Likewise, when asked about why she thought the NSCSP results for Monash LGA were not up to the benchmarked standard, Roz offered this explanation: 'You don't think it has anything to do with lack of staff and therefore that the police are stressed out of their brains? They haven't got enough staff' (Roz, 60s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley). Similarly, Francine's comment epitomises the views of many participants when asked about declining satisfaction rates for the Monash Police Services Area: 'You can't have four police doing a job for which 20 police are required, it just doesn't work' (Francine, 60s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone).

Clearly, there is a widespread perception that the police in Monash LGA are seriously overstretched due to lack of staff. Participants also questioned whether lack of staff could influence Victoria Police's capacity to employ procedural justice methods of policing when they deal with the public which could have ramifications for satisfaction with the police in Monash LGA. After all, the link between procedural justice methods and satisfaction is well-evidenced (Tyler 1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008). As discussed in Chapter 4, the situation is perceived to be worse at Clayton and Glen Waverley Police Stations, whereas Oakleigh is doing better in this regard according to participants.

Continual changes in staff is also suggested as a trend that may affect the likelihood of trust evolving between Victoria Police and the Monash LGA communities. Inconsistency in staffing fuels a sense of community frustration and influences perceptions of Victoria Police:

One of the negative things I think in dealing with the police is the changes in staff. Their staff change a lot. So, it's hard to build up a relationship. That's another issue that the public want - to see police stations around the place. And really, we're better off with less stations and more police out in patrol cars. But they like to think that there's a local police station around the corner. There have been political decisions about Mount Waverley Police Station. They put a lot of money into it and it probably should never have been done, it didn't need it. It would've been better if the police had a 24-hour station but they decided it wouldn't be 24, it just cost too much to staff it. (Mike, 70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

As previously discussed, staffing the police stations in Monash LGA (especially Clayton and Mount Waverley, see Chapter 4) is perceived to be a key issue concerning satisfaction with Victoria Police in Monash LGA and one that also has ramifications for trust. The central cause of the problem with station opening hours is perceived to be political decision-making in relation to keeping stations open in certain electorates, however, participants are also under the impression that lack of funding is a contributing factor. Participants understand that choices have to be made between having police personnel manning stations, providing patrol cars on the road and seeing police out on the beat. Fundamentally, there are not enough resources to provide all the services that Monash LGA residents feel they should have or that politicians have promised. In addition, it was acknowledged by some participants that there is possibly a disconnect between what the community feels it needs and what are appropriate, evidence-based uses of police resources. For example, once politicians had promised that there would be a 24-hour station at Mount Waverley, the community remained attached to that idea which has dominated the conversation thereafter concerning police infrastructure in Monash LGA. Evidently, political matters such as this continue to impact upon perceptions of the police more broadly. Matters pertaining to promises being made about the future of policing infrastructure in the area were a key discussion point in many of the interview and focus groups. The data reveals divergence between what works operationally for Victoria Police, what works for politicians in an election campaign and what maximises satisfaction within the community.

Lastly, it is vital to acknowledge the impact of any lack of police resources on the remaining members on the ground (explored in Chapter 5). This is an aspect many of the participants in this research mentioned as potentially impacting upon the relationship between the police and the community and, therefore, on levels of trust in Victoria Police. Lack of staff particularly and resources more generally were perceived to affect the stress levels and mental health of those members that are left to fulfil increasingly busy roles. Consequently, Monash participants viewed lack of police resources as a problem for their community but also as an issue that affects the police themselves. High levels of stress and the associated sick leave contribute to further staffing issues which impact the service even further:

The mental training is probably not as rigorous as it should be because of the suicides and the breakdowns. The police have got their frustrations as well but they try and do the best with what they've got, they never know what they've got staffing-wise because they could have the strength of 23, they've got sick leave, well you'd probably know all the things

that have got to be met on rosters. They're always dragging officers away from local police stations onto special duties so that they're still rostered on, they still say they're on the strength of Mount Waverley Police Station but Mount Waverley Police Station might not see them for three months. (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley)

Measures that enhance trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA also have positive impacts for Victoria Police as an organisation, helping to address issues like retention of staff, mental health issues and high rates of suicide (Choahan 2015; Houston 2015). In fact, the Victorian State Government recently announced more places and fast-tracking of police recruits to fill chronic staff shortages (Chalkely-Roden 2016; Edwards 2016). This is clearly a step in the right direction, given the findings of this research, but it remains to be seen whether any of the new personnel will have an effect on police services in Monash LGA; many of the new resources have been allocated to growth areas in the Outer North, West and South East of Melbourne (Chalkely-Roden 2016; Edwards 2016). Equally, one of the ways to begin to address some of the resourcing/staffing issues could be new digital technologies. This research suggests that this area is experiencing a lack of investment and, worse still, a lack of decision-making meaning the potential of technology is not being fully exploited.

6.7.1 Technology

The police can always improve with training, but I know for a fact that they had faulty equipment and things so they were…hamstrung by their budget and I think they just don't have the numbers. (Tony, 50s, Euro-Australian, Oakleigh)

Having the latest, up to date digital computer technology, adequately resourced and supported would appear to be a must for the police, in terms of supporting police members doing what this research has shown to be an increasingly difficult job. Participants were convinced that Victoria Police needs more personnel out on the streets. Technology could be one of the ways by which the demands of paperwork for members is alleviated, thus, freeing them up for more visible, community policing. Appropriate technology could assist Victoria Police to make the best use of resources. That said, former police members that participated in this study explained how, due to the nature of the procurement process, it takes so long to get a new technology on board for Victoria Police that the technology itself may have been superseded by the time it is implemented:

It takes them too long to decide on technology. And then by the time they're ready to, they've evaluated something over a period of time, just as a new product comes out. And then they stop and think "no we better have a look at this one". So meanwhile the product they're using just gets older and older and older. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Undoubtedly, use of tax-payer's money should be scrutinised carefully, as well as any systems implemented being fit for purpose in terms of later prosecutions, court processes and integration with the wider justice system. The sentiment expressed in this research, however, is that perhaps the process could be improved whereby there is a balance between ensuring the best use is made of resources

available, whilst still ensuring that digital technology is something that could be maximised to best effect for Victoria Police:

> They've got to change it, it's such an antiquated system, the amount of paperwork you have to do. But from what I do know they've gone to electric running sheets where everything needs to be handwritten, like what you did during the shift, I think now it's all on there, MDTs which is their mobile data terminals in the car and I think they're getting iPads or portable computers to do reports and that on. Victoria Police didn't go digital until about 2006 so it's a long process but they've got so much stuff they've got to do and processes they've got to implement and to make sure that it's all going to stand up to the court processes and everything. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

The findings contained in this study indicate that there are many factors, including resources, that have an impact on the police being able to operate in such a way that maximises trust in that institution. One of the most prominent factors is the effect that ethnicity has on perceptions of the police.

6.8   Ethnicity as a factor in trust in the police

Ethnicity is a prominent theme in the wider academic conversation to date in relation to factors that influence police legitimacy and trust in the police by the public (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). These Australian studies found that ethnicity is the primary factor in relation to explaining differing perceptions of the police within diverse communities. The current study corroborates this. This research in Monash LGA demonstrates that ethnicity is a significant factor on the part of ethnically diverse residents which manifests as them having an opinion of Victoria Police that is influenced by their experiences as a member of a diverse community. Moreover, ethnicity also influences European-Australian communities' views regarding problems with policing in the area. When asked, Euro-Australian residents of Monash LGA automatically assume that issues in relation to policing ethnically diverse communities are the main cause of declining trust and satisfaction with Victoria Police. Increasing ethnic diversity in Monash LGA (discussed in Chapter 4), has occurred concurrently to the declining NSCSP results which has fuelled this assumption.

In terms of trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA, the theme of ethnicity preoccupied participants from all backgrounds. There are different views, not surprisingly, but most express the view that ethnicity is a factor that affects trust in Victoria Police amongst the populations of Monash LGA. The domain of ethnicity encompasses representation of diverse ethnicities within the police force itself, police responses to the diverse ethnicities that comprise Monash LGA and whether Victoria Police are perceived to be racist by representatives of the various Monash LGA communities. The data suggests that ethnicity has ramifications for trust in the police in that participants from ethnically diverse backgrounds are more likely to be critical of the police and regard any shortcomings as related to lack of ability or desire to engage appropriately with whichever community that participant represents. Further complicating the picture, Euro-Australian participants assume that dissatisfaction with the police in Monash LGA, such as that evidenced by the NSCSP results, must be related to ethnically diverse

communities' views and experiences of Victoria Police. Indeed, this research reveals that there is likely an element of this (see Chapter 4). However, it is too simplistic to assume that this is the only factor, even within the domain of ethnicity, which impacts trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA.

6.8.1   Representation of ethnic diversity within Victoria Police

Ethnically diverse participants in this study, such as Benny who was Sri-Lankan Australian, raised whether it would make a difference to the organisational culture and operating ability of Victoria Police if the force better represented the ethnic communities that constitute Victoria today. He thought it would make a positive difference:

> When I came to Australia, which was 40-odd years ago, I always said, "I'd love to join" I don't know why, "I'd love to join the police force", but at that time you had to be an Australian citizen, well, born in Australia. I don't know how long ago they allowed different nationalities to join Victoria Police. The good thing about having that is, if you had an area that had issues with certain ethnic communities, you could put someone from that community in there. Some people say, "The same nationality, you could help me" sort of thing. (Benny, 50s, Sri-Lankan-Australian, Chadstone)

Members of the Monash LGA communities perceived it as crucial that the police represent them in terms of ethnicity to provide a mechanism for the police to understand how different ethnic groups may interpret situations. As Benny's excerpt demonstrates, participants who were from ethnically diverse backgrounds remarked that communities feel more comfortable about asking for assistance from figures in authority of the same or more similar ethnic backgrounds. Mike (70s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley) also made the point that there are very few ethnically diverse police members in Monash Police Services Area in his experience. Correspondingly, Jeff was pessimistic about the current situation. He suggests that ethnically diverse police members, whilst a worthy idea, would be solely a token gesture within an overwhelmingly hostile organisational culture which does not have a good record in this arena:

> How would a few multicultural people change the overall police perspective? Would these people not just be subjected to the existing culture within Victoria Police? (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Alternatively, an example of how different communities in Monash LGA have different views on this issue, is provided by European-Australian resident Dave. He cited the police recruitment process as illustrative of how lack of ethnic diversity in Victoria Police is not a result of the process in his view:

> Anyone can apply for the police as long as you're an Australian citizen. They don't discriminate against anybody. You can come from any background, whatever, and they actually like that because that provides them with diversity. Woman, man, any religion, any place on planet earth, if you're an Australian citizen and you can pass the requirements, which are very tough, you're in. (Dave, 40s, Euro-Australian, Mulgrave)

Yet the following extract, also from Dave, reveals that there might after all be inherent discrimination built into the Victoria Police recruitment process:

> My daughter's partner's a cop, she told me there was a guy, I think he was Sikh, so Indian, who had a lot of trouble passing a particular point in the recruitment process which was understanding Australian slang. He was smart enough to pass the literacy because he's literate and he understands English but when it came to… she gave me some examples like… because they do scenarios, they do role playing at the academy. And someone said, "Oh this is about to go balls up" and he didn't understand and it wasn't just that it was several things. Eventually he must've done a crash course because he did pass but I think Victoria Police's hands are tied. I think they would be happy for a lot of the cultures to apply and have a go but you will get vetted out at some point if you don't pass their requirements. Their requirements come down from the top and they're there for a reason. (Dave, 40s, Euro-Australian, Mulgrave)

The 'Aussie slang' test echoes the discredited Dictation Test of the White Australia Policy (Maclean 2015). Without doubt, the recruitment and training process for police members has to be rigorous but it is worth speculating whether there are elements structured into the process that are restricting recruits from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There are certainly many instances in contemporary, multicultural, multi-ethnic Victoria where linguistic diversity would be an asset for Victoria Police. In addition to inherent barriers to ethnically diverse members joining the police force, participants alluded to problems with the organisational culture of Victoria Police which may also discourage ethnically diverse recruits.

6.8.2   Police organisational culture and responding to ethnic diversity in Monash LGA

Existing Victoria Police organisational culture, as it is perceived by ethnically diverse members of the Monash LGA communities, is not conducive to engaging with residents from diverse backgrounds. Jeff expressed his view that many of the international students he represents in Monash LGA would not see a career with Victoria Police as an option that is open to them if they decide to stay in Australia, even if they fulfil the permanent residency or citizenship requirements. They perceive Victoria Police as an unattractive employer for migrants who do not speak English as a first language, especially for migrants of Asian backgrounds who comprise a large proportion of the people Jeff works with:

> One of the challenges about representation is would an ex-international student or someone from different multicultural background consider a job in Victoria Police if all the cultural issues are not addressed? I mean, all my contacts in the Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Group in Monash, they are fantastic and I've had the chance to meet with their superintendent, one of their key people and they are fantastic. But the thing is that again it's still a very small group within Victoria Police. (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

Jeff's comment reveals another important point which is that the existing multicultural liaison capacity of Victoria Police is an excellent innovation, indeed he praised them very highly for the work they do, but they are few in number and do not represent the predominant organisational culture in Victoria Police. This research also reveals that some Monash LGA community members perceive racism to be a component of traditional police organisational culture and this may also constitute a barrier in terms of trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA.

6.8.3   Racism

Racism is a firm part of the history of Victoria Police (Anderson & Killingray 1991; Finnane 1994; Haldane 1995). Hence, it is hardly surprising that contemporary discussions around public perceptions of the police should encounter it (Hinds & Murphy 2007). Indeed, issues such as accusations of racial profiling, especially of young men of African appearance, by Victoria Police are an ongoing affliction to the reputation of Victoria Police in relation to controversial 'stop and search' tactics by police members (Lewis 2017). In this study, non-European participants described the presence of racism in Australian society more broadly as a feature of their everyday, lived experience. In relation to institutions such as the police, one participant explained how she deals with its constant presence:

> If I need to get service anywhere I stand as tall as I can and I speak in my best English, just to make sure that people can't write me off. Generally, I would say that if you're not white, you're pretty much invisible, even in the most ordinary social situations in Australia. It's something that surprised me because Australia prides itself on being the melting pot nation, but the majority ethnic group has absolutely no clue what goes on in the lives of other groups. However, I find in general Australians are very well mannered and kind and will listen to you when you have a concern if you go up to any institution and say, "I've got a problem, I'm not sure what to do". (Anita, 50s, Singaporean-Australian, Mount Waverley)

In the above situations, Anita uses her status as a proficient English speaker as currency. Despite her standing out in Australia as a Singaporean woman with Indian heritage, she speaks English with minimal accent having lived in Australia for 15 years and having migrated from Singapore where English is also widely spoken. Colic-Peisker (2005) highlights that, although 'whiteness' is seen as an advantage for migrants to Australia in terms of being able to assimilate, in fact, being proficient in the English language is also a notable advantage and a benefit migrants like Anita are able to utilise. Anita's own view was that the everyday experience of non-European migrants like herself has improved since she first arrived in Australia in 2002. Her opinion was that racism may diminish with more and more ethnically diverse migrants coming to Australia each year and this will eventually flow through to influence the long-standing organisational culture of institutions such as law enforcement. Nevertheless, Anita is highly educated, eloquent in English and has had time to become accustomed to the Australian cultural landscape. It is possible that other migrants may feel more marginalised than Anita by the same experiences with Australian institutions.

Jeanette (who worked with refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom were ethnically diverse) was of the view that Victoria Police employs different rules for how they treat young men of African backgrounds, for instance, as compared to treatment of European-Australians, a view that is corroborated elsewhere (Lewis 2017). These rules were racist in her view:

> I hear a lot of stories from young people who come from African nations and they come here and the police, they might be well-behaved, but just because they are of African descent the police stop them for no apparent reason just to ask them what are you doing, where you going. (Jeanette, 30s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Other participants from ethnically diverse migrant backgrounds described Victoria Police's response to the large, heterogenous East Asian communities in Monash LGA as deficient at times. To give an example, Jeff explains the frustration of East Asian international students (mostly from Chinese, Singaporean and Malaysian backgrounds) when Victoria Police respond to incidents involving them. Previous research has shown that East Asian international students are vulnerable to becoming victims of crime, particularly because they are visibly not local, that is, they look and behave differently (Forbes-Mewett, McCulloch & Nyland 2015). Nonetheless, the police's attitude in the past had resulted in many of this large group also feeling that there is no point in going to the police for help as they will be treated in a certain manner (patronised) because of their ethnicity and social position (stigmatised, stereotyped and pigeonholed). Jeff explained that Victoria Police tends to use the same narrative over and again to explain these Asian international students disproportionately becoming victims of crime and this causes frustration amongst this group as well as reflecting poorly on Victoria Police in terms of the way they respond to the East Asian communities in Monash more broadly:

> Sometimes the police response could be improved, you read the police response always if there's an international student attack. First, they always say, "This is not race-motivated". I understand the investigation process but is there another way to write it that you do not actually stigmatise and they always say, "International students put themselves at risk by showing their iPad around." Recently I was in a session for international students and one of the presenters rightly pointed out that even Australian students are doing this so why are they just stigmatising international students? If the police keep thinking that way what is the point of going to them for help? (Jeff, 30s, Singaporean-Australian, Oakleigh)

It is very clear from the data that ethnic background plays a role in perceptions of police racism in relation to the dominant ethnicity of Victoria Police (European-Australian). Most of the Euro-Australian participants in this study, for example, reacted to insinuations of the police being racist as 'political correctness gone mad':

> I don't think people perceive that the police are racists at all or picking on one particular group. As soon as something happens now, you can't even say that they were "of Asian appearance". How do you describe someone then? Well, they weren't Australian. I don't think that they're racist or they target any particular group. There are Australians that are criminals, there are Asians, there are Sudanese, there are Indians…I think we're just so politically correct now as well. (Rhonda, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Rhonda was one of several Euro-Australian residents of Monash LGA who believed that the work of Victoria Police is being impeded by the force having to operate under an excess of so-called 'political correctness'. The police are no longer able to act spontaneously or even exercise discretion as they were in the past. Getting the balance right in this area and satisfying all the communities of Monash LGA will clearly be a difficult task for Victoria Police going forward.

The issue of ethnicity is significant in varying ways for many representatives of the Monash LGA communities. As such, it should not be ignored. In addition, the domain of ethnicity again emphasises the significance of relationships between the police and communities when it comes to augmenting trust and ultimately ensuring the cooperation needed to make policing a successful endeavour throughout Monash LGA.

6.9   Relationships

A relationship model (Weber 1968; Bancroft, Rogers & Stapley 2010; Bottoms & Tankebe 2012), described in Chapter 2, foregrounds a reciprocal framing of legitimacy of authority. Trust in the police is connected to legitimacy because the public are unlikely to trust the police if they do not also believe them to be exercising legitimate authority. Evidently, in view of the domains already analysed in this chapter, a relationship model of authority is relevant to the communities of the Monash LGA as regards police legitimacy and, hence, trust in Victoria Police. Ex-police members, for instance, explained the way that they exploit the benefits of a prior connection with Victoria Police in any dealings with the police that arise in their current roles:

> It's kind of a situation where you ring up and you speak to someone and you can just see that their care factor might be a bit, "I don't care, I've got so much work on and paperwork to do" but as soon as I say, "Look I'm an ex-member" you hear the tone of voice change, they relax and it's just a conversation back and forth. (Rachel, 40s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

A relationship or connection is an impetus for the police to make time to deal with a problem and it prompts the police to take these former members more seriously. Equally, as a member of the public if something untoward happens, it is preferable to deal with someone who is already familiar. Former Victoria Police member Phil described the significance of relationships in police/community interactions more generally. His comment demonstrates the informal nature of such relationships, but also the potential of such systems to improve police responsiveness given adequate resources:

> You always want to talk to somebody you're comfortable with. If you have those opportunities to know the beat person, then you'll speak to them. For us, it's more about if you had a, oh you know she's married to a policeman I'll ring them and ask for their advice. And that's what you get a lot. A lot of police will get those kind of things, people that know somebody. Whereas you should have a more formal thing because there's going to be lots of questions out there that people have and lots of issues and difficulties they're having. And it could be resolved a bit more effectively if they have

someone at the front line. It could eliminate crime from happening. That's always been the thing. Instead of being a responder all the time, they need to get out and be into the community. And I think they recognise that but at the moment there's more responding because you haven't got time to do the other. (Phil, 50s, Euro-Australian, Clayton)

Naturally, being a former member gives Phil an advantage in terms of cultivating constructive relationships with local police. However, this research revealed how community organisations are a similar means by which the public can benefit from relationships with local police representatives. Organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch advocate on behalf of the community and are also a way that the police practice public relations, disseminate information and maximise limited resources by being able to reach more people in communities. Nurturing networks of police/community relationships leads to more effective and satisfactory policing than a top-down system of authority (Weber 1968; Bottoms & Tankebe 2012).

Although community organisations are discussed in Chapter 4, it is important to emphasise again their significance as a factor in trust in the police. Community organisations are vital facilitators of relationships between the police and the communities in Monash LGA. Chapter 4 discusses how some diverse ethnic groups in Monash LGA are not accessing the organisations that facilitate relationships with the police like Neighbourhood Watch. On top of that, Victoria Police are not engaging as much as they could with community organisations to make the most of this opportunity from a police perspective. Bill summed up the importance of bilateral engagement: 'It is vital to have police presence at Neighbourhood Watch meetings; without this, these meetings are pointless' (Bill, by email, Glen Waverley). Dave had a similar view and offers a possible explanation which aligns with the issue of resourcing that has already been highlighted:

They don't come as often as what they used to a few years back. I think their time is very precious but the Crime Prevention Officer is the one who always comes. We've had several come down over the years, currently it's a Senior Sergeant, he's really nice. (Dave, 40s, Euro-Australian, Mulgrave)

Other participants took the opposite standpoint concerning police/community engagement in Monash LGA, although Jenny conceded that her experience is of a more official partnership between Victoria Police and community health services. The more formal nature of the relationship may have been why her experience has been so positive:

We don't run to the police for just anything but the occasions when we do need to engage the police, we've always had really positive responses. I think an organisational approach is probably very different than an individual approach. As an organisation, they have supported us magnificently. We do welfare checks and the police are always responsive with that. Particularly in drugs and alcohol, we get welfare checks done quite a bit. The police always make it clear, we'll respond as quickly as we can, and they're always good at feeding back too. I keep thinking you know we've worked pretty hard to better that relationship with, particularly Police Command, and I think it's very different than just ringing up the station cold. (Jenny, 50s, Euro-Australian, Glen Waverley)

Community organisations are, therefore, imagined as providing a bridge between the police and wider communities: 'I guess we see ourselves, when I say "ourselves" I mean Neighbourhood Watch, as an organisation, as mediating between the neighbourhood and the police' (Ray, 70s, Euro-Australian, Mount Waverley).

Relationships between the police and communities are envisaged as vital to the successful functioning of both. These partnerships have to be supported by real commitment such as police presence at meetings, as Bill underlined in his comment above. Community organisations then assume the role of intermediary between the police and members of the community and facilitate a relationship model of policing as Francine recounted:

> I belong to the Ashwood Chadstone Together Lecture Group and we did a lot of work explaining to the police, over a period of five years, things that we thought were required in the area. (Francine, 60s, Euro-Australian, Chadstone)

Using representative groups to access communities is more practical than the police trying to reach out to a myriad of individuals. Moreover, the frameworks of community organisations already exist and, thus, represent efficient use of resources. Also, worth considering is that constructive relationships take time and effort to sustain. Police/community engagement via community organisations is a long-term 'investment'. The relationship between local Victoria Police representatives and the communities they serve was very important to the participants in this study, in relation to engendering trust in the police in Monash LGA. This relationship ideally consists of normalised, everyday contact as well as a response when incidents occur. Community organisations such as the Neighbourhood Watch, the Ashwood/Chadstone Together Lecture Group or the Monash Multicultural Advisory Committee all have a key role to play in facilitating a relationship model which provides the foundations for the Monash LGA communities' trust in the police.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has considered subsidiary research question three: Does the community in Monash LGA trust Victoria Police representatives in their area? It found that several domains impacted levels of trust in police representatives in Monash: Named police members, which referred to knowing the name of a local member that the communities could use as a contact in dealings with police. Continuity, which meant dealing with the same police personnel during the lifetime of an incident not, therefore, having to keep explaining the problem and feeling that you were getting lost in the system. Next, the element of contact which referred to regular, non-threatening contact with Victoria Police being normalised so that community members got to know their police. An example was used, the Police in Schools Program where police members go into schools on a regular basis normalising the relationship. The next domain, visibility, was similar to contact in its mechanisms but had the added benefit that the communities believed greater police visibility would have a deterrent effect on possible wrongdoers. PSOs were

examined as an example of a method by which law and order has become more visible on the Melbourne public transport network, including in the Monash LGA.

Following visibility, a discussion of the procedural justice approach to policing described how encounters between the police and the community should be carried out to maximise trust. Most importantly, the way the police treated the public in Monash LGA was of the utmost importance to residents. The procedural justice domain also introduced the question of resources, that is, whether lack of resources impacted on the police's capacity to successfully deliver law enforcement under this model. A longer discussion of resourcing followed, widening the focus from procedural justice to whether lack of staff impacted on the other domains that the Monash LGA communities believed to be important in relation to levels of trust in the police. It eventuated that, indeed, adequate resources of both manpower and funds affected whether the police were able to carry out their job in a way that augmented trust in the organisation. After resourcing, another critical domain determining trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA was explained: ethnicity. This complex topic encompassed representation of ethnic minorities in Victoria Police, responding to diversity under existing police organisational culture and racism within and by the police. Ultimately, all the domains represented a relationship model of authority, which linked the issue of trust to the wider concept of police legitimacy and demonstrated in a practical sense how trust and legitimacy informed perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Community organisations were again raised in this last section as illustrative of how formal and informal relationships can be stimulated between Victoria Police and communities, again, fostering heightened trust.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Community perceptions of the police have repercussions for their legitimacy. Perceptions of police legitimacy impacts local community satisfaction with police performance, which influences how likely the public are to cooperate with them. This study entailed an in-depth investigation of community perceptions of the police and factors that influenced them in the Monash Local Government Area in the South-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne (in the State of Victoria, Australia). The findings from this research enable conclusions to be drawn about legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation. After re-establishing the parameters of this research, this final chapter will attempt to draw out the implications of the findings from this study for police/community relations in the Monash LGA, for the field of police legitimacy studies more broadly and for methodology - especially the usefulness of qualitative methods in this field.

Following this introduction, the background and aims of the research are re-iterated and the contributions this study makes to the wider field are revised. The subsequent section is based around the response to the main and subsidiary research questions. It comprises a reminder of the key findings of this study, the implications of these findings are emphasised with reference to legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation with the police. The findings from this research are also positioned within the wider conceptual framework of police legitimacy studies. This section also discusses why the findings are relevant to understandings in this field. Discussion of the implications for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation is followed up by a suite of practical recommendations for police practice as well as acknowledgement of the most salient limitations encountered during this research. Suggestions for further research building upon the ideas contained in this thesis bring to a close this final chapter.

7.2 Background, aims and contributions

Monash LGA is a multicultural research area that has seen rapid population growth in the past 10 years. The LGA is served by the Victorian state police via four local police stations. The police's own satisfaction survey, the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP), has seen declines over the past decade in normative satisfaction measures with Victoria Police in the Monash Police Services Area (PSA). The primary methodology of past research in this field has been quantitative. In contrast, this study produced a qualitative analysis of police legitimacy based on interviews and focus groups with community members and representatives in Monash LGA. This method resulted in detailed discussion of factors that are believed to impact on police legitimacy, with the anticipation that these findings, though not generalisable, may be useful for wider application. This study was a chance for Monash LGA representatives to assess the state of police/community relations in their area - nuances that have not been revealed by large survey responses. The current study yielded data that comprises people's perceptions and interpretations of situations. The study was designed to

capture a range of views from the many different people who live, work and study in the Monash LGA communities. It is important to acknowledge that the researcher contributed to the interpretation of the data. However, the aims and research questions acted as a guide allowing the data to lead the narrative.

The research aims were:

1. To generate knowledge as to why the NSCSP results for the Monash Police Services Area may have been declining;

2. To document the Monash LGA communities' perceptions of their local police;

3. To understand the factors that influenced positive and negative perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA; and

4. To highlight areas where improvements could be made as well as aspects of their role Victoria Police were perceived to be doing well.

The research questions structure the findings and implications in the next section below, which demonstrates how they have been answered and where the findings are positioned in the field of police legitimacy studies to which this research contributes in the following ways:

1. The majority of previous work in police legitimacy studies has been quantitative, this study provides rare qualitative insights. The qualitative methods utilised have resulted in data which has emphasised the central role of relationships in police legitimacy and the relevance of the concept of 'dialogic' legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012) to this context. Therefore, the methodology employed was able to identify, describe and further analyse the empirical processes that underpin the relationship between the police and communities in Monash LGA which impact on legitimacy and trust in the police.

2. This research contributes in relation to the significance and role of encounters between the police and communities. There are disagreements in the literature between the Tyler and Skogan perspectives. This research contributes to this debate, providing evidence both about the topic of encounters and the mechanisms of how encounters best work to augment police legitimacy. This research indicates that encounters are a vital nexus where police legitimacy is negotiated. This study also found that procedural justice principles represent the optimal framework, in terms of the way the police should act and behave during encounters with the public, in order to improve perceptions of legitimacy and levels of trust within communities.

3. Further research is needed on the topic of ethnicity as a factor in police legitimacy. It was rightly assumed to be an important factor, but its machinations are highly complex. It is not clear from the existing literature exactly how it operates and what are the best actions towards mitigating it. This project contributes to this topic area by asking people on the ground in ethnically diverse communities their perspectives. The key perspective revealed by the current study is that Victoria Police as an organisation must aim to be more representative of contemporary ethnic diversity in Victoria. Furthermore, ethnically diverse communities believe that the police are racist. This represents an entrenched, tenacious view which will be difficult for Victoria Police to completely overcome. This moniker is particularly likely to stick as long as the issue of representation is not dealt with.

4. This study also contributes to the procedural justice debate. Although not designed specifically to capture the dynamics of procedural justice policing, procedural justice was utilised by participants in this research to frame the way they assessed the police and to frame the way they thought the police should be operating in Monash LGA. This contribution is intricately connected with the encounters findings in that the principles of procedural justice, outlined theoretically in the thesis and demonstrated in the empirical data, provide the optimal paradigm for the way encounters with communities could be performed by the police to improve legitimacy and trust.

7.3 Community perceptions of Victoria Police: Implications for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation

This research study is structured around one overarching research question, addressing the aims above: How do the communities in the Monash Local Government Area perceive Victoria Police and what influences these perceptions? The key findings below formulate a reply to this question. The subsidiary research questions are addressed in turn, each one responding to a key theme that emerged from this study. In addition, conclusions are drawn pointing to why the findings are significant and what they mean for police/community relations in Monash LGA.

7.3.1 Change: Responding to subsidiary research question 1

Research findings concerning change were enshrined in the first subsidiary research question: Has the rapid change and growth in Monash LGA over the past decade influenced public perceptions regarding law enforcement? What this research discovered around this theme is reinforced below together with the implications the findings have for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation with Victoria Police in the Monash LGA.

7.3.1.1 Change in the community of Monash LGA

To address the research question above, rapid change, growth and urbanisation in Monash were explored, juxtaposed against the perceived stagnation of law enforcement services and infrastructure over a similar timeframe (approximately the last 10 years). It eventuated that the area has undergone a lot of change in the last decade; the timeframe for the NSCSP results declining. Analysis of change was organised along three sub-themes: The first sub-theme explored change in general, such as what effects participants thought change was having on their community and the liveability in Monash LGA. A perceived decline in 'community spirit' was how this phenomenon was often represented in the interviews and focus groups. The key finding here was that participants believed community change was impacting people's perception of Victoria Police because the changes were making residents feel less secure generally. In addition, participants thought the police did not have the capacity to adapt to all the changes. This was due, in part, to structural factors – discussed as the next sub-theme in findings about change – partly due to a lack of resources and, lastly, police organisational culture was believed

to play a role. Community change was not something Victoria Police could control but perhaps the views of the community could enable them to better plan for it in the future.

7.3.1.2   Structural change versus stagnation

The next key sub-theme, structural issues, explored change and development versus stagnation of police infrastructure in Monash LGA. Essentially, although there has been a large amount of building and development in many areas of Monash LGA, participants worried that development meant more potential social problems that adequate policing was needed to combat. Subdivision of housing blocks was a key preoccupation in this sphere, together with expansion of the hospital and the university. Police services and infrastructure were not believed to have been sufficiently developed or invested in given this context. Notably, the four police stations themselves had not been adequately invested in. This was a concern both practically and in terms of the message it sent to residents about how law enforcement was not a priority despite the other rapid urbanisation and development underway in Monash LGA. Indeed, whether the police were to blame for how the stations had ended up, the findings indicate strongly that the state of the police stations is a major factor in negative perceptions of Victoria Police as an organisation in Monash LGA. In the past, plans have been discussed to re-configure police services in the Monash PSA. The findings from this study suggest that it may be time to re-visit those plans or come up with a fresh solution to an issue that is only perceived to be getting worse.

7.3.1.3   Demographic change

This research also reveals the significance of demographic change in Monash LGA. This final sub-theme around change referred to the increased ethnic diversity of the population in Monash LGA and how this had repercussions for police/community relations. Although the study showed that other community and structural changes were clearly significant, it was increased ethnic diversity resulting from migration shifting from predominantly European to South and East Asian that emerged as the principal factor that influenced communities' perceptions of the police. As such, it was relevant not only to the theme of change but also to police legitimacy and trust, the other two major themes in the findings.

In relation to demographic change, European-Australian participants thought that newer migrant communities receive special treatment from the police with multicultural liaison and attention given to police partnerships with ethnically diverse groups. Some participants from established Monash LGA communities interpreted this as the police trying to be 'politically correct' and appease ethnically diverse communities because they are terrified of being accused of racism. Yet, the ethnically diverse groups themselves thought that the police are not going far enough to adjust their practices to appropriately serve a multicultural community. Inter-cultural competency in Victoria Police (outside of specific multicultural liaison) was not perceived to be widespread with most members, still mono-lingual, European-Australians. Therefore, ethnically diverse participants thought that a fundamental problem with Victoria Police was lack of representation of the ethnic diversity of Monash LGA among their

ranks. Addressing representation of diversity in Victoria Police would be the obvious response to this aspect of the findings. However, as a strategy this will take time to filter through and, as discussed later, creating an environment conducive to ethnically diverse recruits being welcomed in numbers would also be something that Victoria Police would need to plan for specially and work towards.

A related finding that emerged was that another reason for the decline in satisfaction with Victoria Police, shown in the NSCSP, may be that there has been an increase in migrants in the area and these migrants have retained negative feelings about the police based on their experiences in their countries of origin. The solution in this situation was believed to be time for communities to get used to the Australian system, provision of more orientation concerning justice issues for all migrants and continuing engagement between Victoria Police and ethnically diverse communities. This latter initiative did currently happen for certain migrants, notably international students at Monash University, and was acknowledged as a positive thing by participants who have been involved. Nonetheless, participants also thought its implementation should be more widespread. Judging from the findings of this study, more police/community engagement initiatives and greater multicultural liaison provision would help improve perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA. Of course, additional resources would be required for this to be properly feasible.

Lastly in relation to demographic change, the current study found that there was concern that the changing demographics in the area meant that there is more crime and the streets are not as safe as they were perceived to have been in the past. Some Euro-Australian residents equated ethnically diverse migrants with an increase in gangs and, especially Asian, organised crime. These same participants were also concerned that ethnic minority young people are hanging out on the streets of Monash LGA, particularly near the train station in Glen Waverley which is a busy transport hub. Clearly, the Monash LGA is undergoing a period of intense change characterised by increasing ethnic diversity in the population. The changes are proving difficult for some older residents to adapt to which is having repercussions for perceptions of security in their area. It is likely that over time the community would adapt to the changed demographics as well as other changes to the way of life in Monash LGA. In the meantime, it would be useful for Victoria Police to be aware of the feelings of the various communities. Awareness would mean that the changes that are taking place could be accounted for when planning police services and provision of community engagement; the key way the police could mitigate these changes.

7.3.2   Police legitimacy: Responding to subsidiary research question 2

Legitimacy and trust are the two main theoretical concepts on which this work is based. Police legitimacy is the subject of the second subsidiary research question: Are the law enforcement expectations of the Monash LGA communities met by police and what are the implications for police legitimacy? The following sub-section puts the findings about police legitimacy into the context of the existing literatures and draws out the implications of the findings and why they are important. Findings around the concept of trust follow with discussion of the third subsidiary research question's findings.

7.3.2.1 Relationships in authority

Max Weber (1968) suggests that an authority's legitimacy is key to them being successful and maintaining power. Weber also outlines three ideal types in his definition of legitimacy of authority: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic with rational-legal generally recognised as most relevant to modern democracies. Weber's definition highlights the importance of the process by which legitimacy of authority is negotiated taking place in a relationship framework (Weber 1968; Bancroft, Rogers & Stapley 2010), a process also captured in Bottoms and Tankebe's 'dialogic' legitimacy (2012: 119). The current study also found that relationships are a key part of legitimate authority and trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA. The significance of phenomena such as having named police members, regular contact between the police and the community and visibility of the police in informing perceptions of the police all show that a relationship or 'dialogic' model is one that people value in Monash LGA. Furthermore, if Victoria Police could find a way to enhance this aspect of their policing practice, it would have very positive impacts on community perceptions of them likely leading to greater satisfaction rates and greater propensity for community cooperation. The significance of relationships is highlighted further in the following section outlining the findings from subsidiary research question three concerning trust.

7.3.2.2 Normative and instrumental factors influencing police legitimacy in the Monash LGA

Factors that influence police legitimacy and trust are referred to as either normative or instrumental approaches. Normative includes process-based measures such as perceptions of how the police treat the public, whether they employ procedural justice, for example. Instrumental captures outcome-based measures such as police effectiveness at apprehending criminals. As has been shown to be the case before in Australia, this study reveals that police legitimacy in the Monash LGA is based on a combination of both (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Indeed, most research participants had some positive things to say about their local police and these views were expressed using both normative and instrumental measures of legitimacy. The police in Monash LGA made a reasonably good impression with the public most of the time and were thought of as decent individuals overall. The prevailing opinion was also that the police were effective most of the time and, certainly, the police in Monash LGA were better than in a lot of places. Participants reflected that community perceptions about the police are likely to be diverse in Monash LGA, mirroring the diversity of the population itself, which could explain why the police in Monash were struggling in the areas indicated by the NSCSP results to adjust to the diversity.

Resourcing was also found to be a negative issue with participants observing that the police would be able to do a better job if there were more of them with more visibility. Furthermore, failure to tackle public drinking and other deleterious street behaviours was a source of frustration in the community towards Victoria Police. Participants believed that the police not getting on top of these minor crimes paved the

way for more serious community and urban disorder on the streets of Monash LGA. Instead, this study reveals that the police are perceived to prioritise revenue-raising offences. This was a key source of dissatisfaction, and the police's public image was also an area that could be improved. The level of diversity in the force, hence the police being able to represent the community more appropriately was a factor that participants thought should be addressed because greater representation would enhance social cohesion overall. Lastly, so-called 'box-ticking' policing was also a source of dissatisfaction found by this research. This referred to the police appearing to be unwilling to address crimes that would be hard to solve and make the crime reporting figures look poor, in contrast to being hyper-vigilant about minor matters such as noise disturbance. Opinions of the Monash police found by this study therefore, contained both positive and negative elements expressed via both normative and instrumental measures.

7.3.2.3   Procedural justice and encounters

Procedural justice is a factor that has been widely shown to affect perceptions of police legitimacy and trust, as such it is a key preoccupation of researchers in this field, notably Tom Tyler (1990; Tyler & Huo 2002; Tyler & Fagan 2008). Other researchers criticise the prominence of procedural justice theory in police legitimacy studies. Skogan has carried out extensive research examining the effects of encounters with police on people's perceptions (2006; 2009; 2012). He concludes that it is of little consequence whether a procedural justice approach is used by police or not in encounters with the public (Skogan 2006); encounters impact negatively on perceptions of the police, notwithstanding the way they are carried out.

This research found that encounters between the police and the public are highly significant and can be used to the police's advantage. What is more, a procedural justice approach is clearly described as the most effective method as far as improving police legitimacy via encounters is concerned. The participants in this study were not heavy users of police services but, in the small encounters they do have, the way they are treated by police matters a great deal. Unfortunately, Victoria Police according to these findings do not have adequate resources to be able to assure an optimal approach to the public, anchored by procedural justice principles, at all times - the way this method of increasing police legitimacy would best work. This research also indicates that legitimacy is complex for the police because the interpretation by the community of police behaviour is not constant across situations. For instance, generally participants were supportive of a procedural justice approach to law enforcement centred around treating everyone in the community equally. But when it was them in trouble, for something that perhaps could be considered minor, they wanted the police to be able to use discretion. The detail this study reveals with qualitative methods illustrates, above all, the complexity of the role that contemporary police have and why maintaining legitimacy with the whole community may not be straightforward.

7.3.2.4   Responding to complexity in the contemporary policing environment

This research uncovered multiple contemporary challenges to the police role, indicating that the job of policing in contemporary Victoria is likely very problematic at times. Policing was envisaged as more sensitive and highly stressful than it had been in the past due to phenomena such as lack of respect towards the police, continuous scrutiny due to the pervasiveness of all types of media and devices like mobile phones, political interference, staff shortages and inadequate resourcing. Those were all found to be possible barriers to the police employing procedural justice approaches as well as to their effectiveness. Examples of challenges for the police in this environment include the ongoing debate in Victoria about whether the police should get involved in high speed car chases which potentially endanger other members of the public or whether pursuits should not be permitted to avoid this risk. This research found generally that the police are perceived to be in the wrong either way regarding the issue of police pursuits and, further, that this dispute has created a climate of risk-averse policing which is not conducive to public satisfaction either. Therefore, the controversy around pursuits would probably impact negatively on perceptions of the police, whatever way the police approach it with similar negative implications for public satisfaction.

Other instances where this study found the police have contemporary challenges which are affecting perceptions of them are in relation to family violence directives and in the counter-terrorism space. This study revealed widespread support for new family violence directives and counter-terrorism policing but also found that boosting up these services has impacted an already stretched force. These priorities have meant negative implications for more everyday community policing and possible repercussions for perceptions of local police through those police not being seen as appropriately responsive to local needs. Another challenge identified that might have been impacting on perceptions of the police was the police having to step in when other social agencies (especially mental health) are overwhelmed. It was found that Victoria Police having to fill in here impacts both the police having the capacity to carry out the more day to day tasks in the community and affects the image of the police when they are seen dealing with, for example, mental health situations in a heavy-handed way when such situations should be dealt with by other agencies before they get to the acute stage.

The current study also suggests that there is a disparity between what Police Command wants local forces to do and the way policing actually works on the ground, day to day. Captured by Punch as the 'official paradigm' versus the 'operational code' (2009: 2 & 3), in practice this means that participants thought Police Command are unaware of the challenges in the Monash LGA especially around a growing population and resourcing. Resources are, consequently, being directed into other areas of Melbourne, such as the North, West and South-East growth corridors, whereas the Monash LGA has been overlooked. Therefore, more resources would go some way to mitigating this concern. This study has suggested several areas where additional resources could be deployed to beneficial effect to enhance community perceptions with implications for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation. These areas are in community engagement, multicultural liaison and reassurance for victims of crime.

7.3.2.5   The context of police legitimacy in Monash LGA

Another significant area in the literature is context and what implications context has when it comes to the process by which police legitimacy is constructed. Relevant contextual factors that emerged from this research include interpretation, vicarious experience and ethnicity. The implications of ethnicity for community perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA is extensively discussed elsewhere in these findings. Interpretation, however, involves the mechanisms by which people make up their minds about the legitimacy of police actions and behaviours and it includes mechanisms such as media portrayals of the police.

This research substantiates previous studies which show the extent to which the media can influence public perceptions of the police (Weitzer & Tuch 2005; Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015). The main point found by this research was that the media focuses too much on negative portrayals of law and order and not enough on the positive role the police have in the community. Coverage of the negative encourages the public to adopt cynical views about the police. The perspective on crime and policing generated by the media is also perceived to be unbalanced, giving the public false impressions. Findings indicate that the media encourage perpetuation of misleading perceptions of the police, heightened by the opportunity for the public to get involved in rolling coverage of events via social media. The findings from this study also suggest that the media often deliberately inflame tensions in communities relating to law and order by distorting the way they report events which augments dissatisfaction with the police. Mediated accounts of the infamous 'Moomba Brawl' of 2016 are cited as an example of the media being irresponsible in their coverage of law enforcement to the detriment of both police and African communities, encouraging the public to believe negative depictions of the police and those communities. This research shows that the way the media choose to cover stories frightens the community at the same time as affecting perceptions of Victoria Police. Public relations also formed part of this topic, with some suggestion that Victoria Police should be doing more to ensure the positive coverage was not overwhelmed by the negative, as was perceived to now be the case. The police are never going to be able to control the media, nor would that be appropriate. Nonetheless, the police can try to ensure that the media are provided with information about the positive community engagement initiatives and other community outreach the police are involved with so that the public has the police perspective to inform their perceptions of legitimacy created by the media.

Also relevant to the context for police legitimacy, is vicarious experience which captures the way that the public sometimes bases their perceptions of whether the police are legitimate on what they see around them. That is, the experiences of others in their family, communities or even what they see on television or other mediated sources (Weitzer & Tuch 2005; Reiner 2010; Jewkes 2015)). To illustrate, in Monash LGA this study found that film and television portrayals of police work are in some cases to blame for communities having unrealistic, unfulfilled expectations regarding police responsiveness.

Reassurance to victims of crime was also found during this study to be understood as a key part of the police's role; a normative measure of police legitimacy. Notwithstanding, reassurance requires resources which the police might pragmatically be better off employing solving the crime - taking an instrumental approach. But the reassurance role is very important to the communities in Monash LGA; part of a procedural justice approach and a normative method of securing police legitimacy and trust with implications for satisfaction and cooperation further down the line. Therefore, from the perspective of communities' perceptions, a balance is clearly required between the police being available to respond to and reassure the public and having the personnel to solve the crime. Having the resources to do both would positively influence perceptions of Victoria Police.

7.3.3   Trust: Responding to subsidiary research question 3

Trust is integral to the relationship between communities and law enforcement (Giddens 1990; Bradford & Jackson 2010). Trust ensures that police authority means the same to both parties (police and communities) and the police do not have the opportunity to abuse that due to a framework of accountability being in place. Legitimacy is a pre-requisite for trust in the police because the public are unlikely to trust an authority they do not believe is legitimate. Trust has been conceived as 'encounter-based interpersonal trust' and 'institutional trust' (Bradford & Jackson 2010: 2) which refers to trust in both individuals and the organisations they represent - a two-dimensional conception of trust relevant to trust in the police. In the current study, the third subsidiary research question addresses the issue of trust: Does the community in Monash LGA trust Victoria Police representatives in their area? As it turned out, there were eight key elements or domains that impacted trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA. These were:

7.3.3.1   Named police members

This refers to communities having the benefit of a named, designated police member. This is an officer who communities got to know, to whom they could refer if they had to approach the police for anything. Findings from this study showed that participants who benefitted from this arrangement described feeling more confident and comfortable about accessing police services. A named police member model makes policing more like a partnership, as if the police are really committed to communities. This paradigm increases levels of interpersonal trust in the police force (Bradford & Jackson 2010), it is likely that positive outcomes in terms of legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation follow the cultivation of trust by this model. However, it was perceived that this model is not occurring as often as it could and should have been in the Monash Police Services Area. The Neighbourhood Watch organisation was identified as one example of a forum where community members were able to be familiar with police members. If Victoria Police involvement with such organisations can be facilitated wherever possible, positive implications for perceptions of the police would be the result. This would have ramifications for police legitimacy and community satisfaction with cooperation between the police and the public also benefitting.

7.3.3.2   Continuity

Continuity as a domain refers to having the same police member/s deal with a situation for its duration rather than having to explain an issue to someone new each time. The findings from this study suggest that the continuity model is not being frequently implemented due to practicalities like staff shortages, rosters, promotions and acting positions. Greater continuity in the police process is seen by participants as a more efficient way of conducting police business as well as more pleasant, therefore, there are normative and instrumental aspects to it. This element often resulted from knowing a police member or having other connections with the force like being a former member. In these circumstances, community members use this connection to ensure greater continuity, thus, improving trust even further. Identifying continuity as important to communities and as influencing perceptions could inform the way police work is planned. It is not always going to be possible to achieve this model but it may be worth trying to implement it more often than is currently perceived to be done, given its importance.

7.3.3.3   Contact

Formal and informal contact were also found to be important aspects influencing trust in Victoria Police. It was found that contact could be facilitated, for instance, by the police being down at local football games, routinely visiting local schools (the Police/Schools Involvement Program) and by the local police walking a beat around the area more regularly. Indeed, this research uncovered evidence of existing, highly productive involvement between Victoria Police and community organisations in the Monash LGA, such as through the Neighbourhood Watch. The domain of contact also provides evidence that encounters with the police, when carried out in accordance with the principles of procedural justice, are an effective way to increase both trust in the police and police legitimacy. This is because contact augments interpersonal trust (Bradford & Jackson 2010) in police members which translates to wider institutional trust (Bradford & Jackson 2010) in Victoria Police.

Findings also suggest that there is a discernible level of fear amongst communities in general about having to approach the police when an incident has occurred. Normalising the police's place in the community through greater opportunities for contact would mitigate this. Such a model would also work to favourable effect amongst newer migrant communities who have not had a history of an established relationship with Victoria Police. Furthermore, increased contact would influence the views of younger members of communities who would then grow up with positive experiences to inform their impressions of the police. As with other factors that were shown to influence perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA, increased police resources would be required to achieve greater levels of contact between the local police and communities on a more regular basis but this research suggests that it would be a good use of resources in terms of positive perceptions of Victoria Police and the accompanying benefits for satisfaction and cooperation.

7.3.3.4 Visibility

This research found that Victoria Police in Monash LGA should try to increase their visibility and this would increase community trust in the police by providing a forum for it to develop, in the same way as contact. Visibility in the context of increasing trust means the police walking about on the streets of Monash LGA in an accessible way, not just more car patrols. Lack of visibility was found to be a symptom of the stagnation of police infrastructure discussed in relation to the theme of change; a consequence of lack of resources and lack of prioritisation of police services and infrastructure in the Monash LGA. Visibility as a domain to enhance trust was found to be highly significant but it is a matter of how police are deployed, what they do and how they do it when it came to building and maintaining trust. Only by operating by the principles of procedural justice, for example, could encounters facilitated by more visible police on the streets actually serve to increase trust in the police and lead to increased satisfaction and likelihood that the public would cooperate with them.

7.3.3.5 Procedural justice

Procedural justice has been a central focus of police legitimacy research to date. As an approach to policing to enhance trust and promote police legitimacy, it was found to be relevant in this study too. Findings suggested that if Victoria Police in the Monash LGA gave the impression of being genuine individuals who were prepared to treat the public well, trust in the police increased. Some participants mentioned effectiveness, by generally expressing that the police did a good job, for example, but process-based assessments of Victoria Police took precedence.

Connected to a procedural justice approach, lack of staff, resources and high levels of stress were found to be making the police's job more pressurised and stressful. This study suggests that this has led to less capacity for members to be in the right frame of mind to employ a procedural justice approach to policing consistently. Furthermore, non-acute programs such as engagement with ethnically diverse communities suffer if there is a lack of resources. This research found that this impacts the way police members relate to diverse communities, also demonstrating that procedural justice approaches are applicable to representatives of diverse communities in Monash LGA - something that has not been clear in previous studies (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). Essentially, the finding that procedural justice policing increases trust was clear from this data. Nonetheless, this approach is also dependent for its implementation on there being adequate resources, including enough police personnel, to undertake it properly.

7.3.3.6 Resources

The element of resourcing was found to be integral to community perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA concerning change, legitimacy and trust. The study found that many of the measures the police could have undertaken to improve perceptions (especially continuity, contact and visibility) are

dependent upon adequate or additional resourcing being provided. Either more police members are needed or other resourcing issues are at the heart of many complaints. For example, the evidence demonstrates that technology could be better employed to alleviate police workload and make scarce resources go further, whereas, currently it takes too long to implement new technologies by which time they are obsolete or the police end up with sub-standard versions of new technologies which do not perform well. Fundamentally, this research confirms that communities believe that it is not possible to have a world class police service on an inadequate budget. Adequate funding would not only enable continuity, contact and visibility to be enhanced, it would also improve conditions for current police members which would have repercussions for overall trust in the organisation and satisfaction as well. This would lead to increased likelihood that the community would cooperate with Victoria Police which would represent a maximisation of police resources.

7.3.3.7 Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a prominent theme in Australian police legitimacy scholarship, including in relation to trust in the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). The element of ethnicity is significant in the findings of this research also. In fact, ethnicity influenced both ethnically diverse participants' perceptions of Victoria Police, and had an impact on European-Australians' views on the declining satisfaction rates with Victoria Police in Monash LGA. These latter participants assumed that increasing ethnic diversity in their area was a factor because the two phenomena had occurred virtually simultaneously (declining satisfaction in Victoria Police and increasing ethnic diversity in Monash LGA). The qualitative methods employed in this study, however, reveal that the situation is more complex than this.

The findings around ethnicity in relation to trust in Victoria Police in the Monash PSA encompass three main sub-themes: Representation of diverse ethnicities within Victoria Police, police organisational culture and racism. This study shows that Victoria Police should be aiming to be more diverse with respect to ethnicity to more accurately reflect the Victorian, and certainly the Monash LGA populations. Representation of ethnic diversity is one significant way to improve police understandings of the way diverse ethnic groups respond to law enforcement and would ensure diverse groups feel more comfortable about seeking help when needed. Ethnically diverse participants observed that 'token' diverse members are not the answer, rather, issues with the organisational culture in Victoria Police need to be addressed so that, for instance, policing is seen as an attractive career option by Asian migrants.

This research highlights that Victoria Police as an organisation is currently seen as unamenable to the changes required to make ethnically diverse police members in significant numbers feel welcome. Furthermore, the data reveals that there is entrenched discrimination in the Victoria Police recruitment process - illustrated by the 'Aussie slang' test. Existing multicultural liaison capacity is highly thought of but, unfortunately, the police members involved in this are not perceived to be representative of the wider Victoria Police organisational culture. Moreover, current provision is inadequate for the needs of

a growing, increasingly multicultural, multi-ethnic population. Therefore, this research indicates that more still needs to be done by Victoria Police in terms of representation of the public it serves which should increase positive community perceptions in their organisation over the longer term.

This study also indicates that the local Victoria Police members, who are overwhelmingly European-Australian in ethnicity, are perceived as racist by ethnically diverse Monash residents. Ethnically diverse participants describe racism as a contemporary reality for them when dealing with Australian institutions including the police. However, several ethnically diverse participants expressed feelings of hope that institutional racism would diminish over time due to the increasingly diverse nature of Australia's population. Participants who worked with refugees and asylum seekers also described hearing stories from their clients about targeted 'stop and search' strategies from the police towards African youth which also make the police appear racist. Another participant described the way Victoria Police handled incidents involving ethnically diverse international students as racist. Not surprisingly, the study found that if you were a Euro-Australian respondent in this study, you were less likely to perceive the police as racist, whilst all ethnically diverse participants believed the police were racist. The domain of ethnicity was revealed to be highly significant as a factor influencing trust in Victoria Police and, as such, should be a priority area to focus on in terms of improving community perceptions of Victoria Police over time. Many of the elements described above in relation to trust in the police in the Monash LGA, including ethnicity, are fundamentally about the relationship between the police and the communities they serve. A relationship model of legitimacy of authority emerged from these findings as the optimal framework to aim for to improve community perceptions of trust and police legitimacy in Monash LGA.

7.3.3.8   Relationships

Trust is related to legitimacy for the police because the circumstances under which legitimacy is fulfilled – participation in the policing process, treating the public with respect, police neutrality and trustworthiness (Mazerolle *et al.* 2012) – are predicated on trust in the police both interpersonally and institutionally (Bradford & Jackson 2010). To promote trust in the police in Monash LGA, the above seven domains were found to be highly significant. These domains are all dependent on there being a relationship between the police and communities to begin with. This research found that a relationship style of policing is already being achieved to some extent in Monash LGA via police involvement in community organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch. This study indicates that the police should aim for relationships to be at the core of police/community relations to improve perceptions of them with benefits for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation flowing through. This consolidation of findings and discussion of their implications clarifies the contributions this research makes to the police legitimacy scholarship concerning encounters, ethnicity and procedural justice. It is also vital at this point to highlight the contribution this study makes in terms of methodology and the implications of this contribution.

7.4 Reflecting on the value of qualitative methodologies in police legitimacy research

This research utilises a qualitative methodology. Qualitative approaches have not been the norm in police legitimacy studies. The findings of this research demonstrate that this method reveals intricate detail about the mechanisms of police/community relations, especially in the areas of encounters, ethnicity and procedural justice. The resulting data is complex as was the task of extracting a coherent narrative to address the main and subsidiary research questions. Nevertheless, this detailed data has resulted in the deductions and discussion in this concluding chapter regarding the implications of what has been found for legitimacy, satisfaction and cooperation with Victoria Police in the Monash LGA. With respect to the key findings, several recommendations can be determined in terms of Victoria Police practice.

7.5 Recommendations for practice

1. Consideration should be given to ways to restructure and revitalise police services and infrastructure in the Monash Police Services Area.

2. Prioritise partnerships with *all* communities. Involvement with community organisations has proven to be an effective method to improve satisfaction in the case of Neighbourhood Watch. Implementation of named police members could also be linked to this where possible. Increased use of partnerships with organisations such as Monash University, such as the Police on Campus initiative (Forbes-Mewett 2018), would also be a way to start achieving more partnerships in Monash LGA within another structure and framework that already exists.

3. Increase representation of ethnic diversity in Victoria Police via recruitment of greater numbers of ethnically diverse police members.

4. Increase numbers of police members and resources for the Monash PSA. Increased resources should be accompanied by guidelines around the procedural justice principles that should become the basis for everyday police practice in order that satisfaction with the force be increased. Concentrating on the manner in which everyday encounters between the police and the public in non-critical situations are carried out would be a good place to start in order to cement procedural justice principles as routine practice in Victoria Police for all members.

5. Above all, this study demonstrates significant goodwill within the Monash LGA communities towards Victoria Police so this should be nurtured and built on going forward by prioritising the partnerships and relationship-building focus described above.

The police cannot control all the factors that impact public perceptions of them, but those they can control such as employing a procedural justice approach, prioritising the way encounters are carried out and involvement with community organisations would provide useful areas to focus on in practice. Representation of diverse ethnicities in the force is also not a straightforward issue to address. These findings have reiterated again its significance, however, and efforts to work towards more proportionate representation should be another key priority over the longer term.

7.6   Limitations of study

This thesis presents a comprehensive overview of perceptions of Victoria Police in the Monash LGA in Melbourne, including factors that influenced perceptions of the police in terms of legitimacy and trust as well as the ramifications rapid change in the area is having for perceptions of the police. However, there are limitations to this research that must be acknowledged. Firstly, there has been a wealth of research demonstrating the relevance of ethnicity in relation to perceptions of the police (Hinds & Murphy 2007; Sivasubramaniam & Goodman-Delahunty 2008; Murphy & Cherney 2011; Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney 2013). In this study, despite several rich and detailed contributions from ethnically diverse residents of Monash LGA, the data would have been strengthened if more ethnically diverse community members had participated to represent the demographics of the area more proportionately. Secondly, many of the research participants who volunteered were reasonably supportive of Victoria Police in general, in spite of having both positive and negative feedback to share. It is possible that residents who have overwhelmingly negative views of Victoria Police did not want to volunteer for this project, although considerable effort was made to secure a selection of such participants. Lastly, in relation to the limitations of research of this nature more generally, it is important to acknowledge the problem of unreliability; previously highlighted by Waddington *et al.* (2015). In this data, this manifests as participants offering a general view about the police such as their support of the police treating everyone equally. Yet, if they are themselves the target of police actions, they prefer the police to be able to use discretion, as they view themselves as an otherwise law-abiding citizen deserving of a more nuanced approach by police. Given such discrepancies, unreliability is a problem in this type of research that must be recognised.

7.7   Suggestions for future research

Qualitative methods have hitherto been the exception in police legitimacy studies. Therefore, the potential such methods could bring to this discipline area would be best illustrated by carrying out more, similar studies in other areas or with other populations. There are several immediate topics that arise as a result of the current study. Firstly, it could prove fruitful to carry out similar studies in other urban areas, both in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia using the same qualitative methods. This would give an indication about generalisability of findings and yield more information about what qualitative methods can add to current knowledge about police legitimacy. This exercise would reveal which issues are specific to Monash LGA, for example, and which issues are more widespread. Secondly, it would be useful to undertake interviews and focus groups with more people from different diverse ethnicities and migrants who have been in Australia different lengths of time to track changes in perceptions and explore specific issues that different migrants may have. Although the current study contributes to this topic area, more research is undoubtedly needed given the complexity of ethnicity as a factor informing perceptions of the police. Further research would also reveal more about the response of established, often European-Australian communities, towards demographic change in relation to the police who they see as increasingly making special provisions for ethnically diverse communities while they are left out.

Thirdly, the current study, by coincidence, captures the views of older representatives of Monash LGA. It would potentially enlighten other relevant issues undertaking a similar exercise with a younger cohort. Lastly, a more detailed study examining community organisations and access to police could prove useful. Carrying out some of the above research, as well as resulting in useful information for police forces and the wider conversation, would also start to build up an idea of what qualitative research methods can bring to the discipline, a topic this research has made a start on.

7.8   Conclusion

Reflecting on how communities in the Monash Local Government Area perceived Victoria Police and what influenced these perceptions leaves several key impressions. Essentially, communities in Monash perceived Victoria Police in a relatively favourable light most of the time. That was not to say that they did not think there were areas that could be improved. Indeed, the areas that have been discussed in this thesis as amenable to improvement may provide the answer as to why the NSCSP results for Monash LGA had declined over the past 10 years, and satisfaction with Victoria Police in this area of Melbourne appeared to be on the wane. Breaking the findings down in terms of the subsidiary research questions, leaves three areas to focus on to address the main question: The Monash LGA was changing rapidly, becoming busier and more urbanised as are many other areas of Melbourne. Correspondingly, police services had not kept up and this had resulted in negative perceptions of Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Furthermore, the demographics of the communities in Monash LGA, also like many others across Melbourne, were changing and this change was making people feel uneasy, impacting feelings of security overall, which was also having a corresponding effect for perceptions of the police.

Despite the issues with change however, Victoria Police were meeting many of the expectations of the Monash communities, which meant they still enjoyed reasonable perceptions of legitimacy with the public. However, there were areas that showed how things could be improved further with positive implications for legitimacy. Topics here included increased community engagement, maximising the potential of encounters between the police and the community by practicing procedural justice approaches to policing more widely, considering the way the police were responding to the complexity of the contemporary policing environment and considering contextual factors like how the police use the media to promote themselves positively in response to negative portrayals.

The third subsidiary research question found that the Monash LGA communities had mixed levels of trust in Victoria Police. Levels of trust in Monash towards the police were dependent on several factors, particularly ethnicity. There were eight domains in all that impacted perceptions of trust in Victoria Police in Monash LGA. Addressing any of these would have positive implications for trust and would have an influence on perceptions of police legitimacy and satisfaction, and on cooperation with Victoria Police. In one Police Services Area, this study has demonstrated that there is no quick solution to improving communities' perceptions and satisfaction. Yet this study has also confirmed that it is possible to identify factors that influence communities' perceptions of the police. Addressing factors such as these could inform the way that the police seek to work with communities in the future.

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Appendix A   Interview/focus group questions

Topic 1: Background

1. How long have you lived in the Monash LGA?

2. What are some of the positives about living in this area?

3. Are there any negatives to living in this area?

4. Have you noticed many changes in the community?

Topic 2: The community and diversity

1. The community in Monash LGA is very diverse in terms of factors like age, cultural background, religion, socio-economic status. What kinds of challenges do you think this might create for policing?

2. What are some of the benefits of having a diverse community in terms of policing?

3. Do you feel the police have a good working relationship with the community here in Monash? In what ways is it good? In what ways is it challenging?

4. Are you aware of any initiatives have been instigated either within Victoria Police generally or the Monash police services area specifically to improve police/community relations?

   IF YES:

   o   What are these?

   o   What effect have they had?

5. Do you have any suggestions for improvements that could be made either in police practices or certain areas of policing that you think may help improve police/community relations?

   IF NO:

   o   Do you have any suggestions for improvements that could be made either in police practices or certain areas of policing that you think may help improve police/community relations?

Topic 3: Satisfaction with the police

1. Overall would you say you were satisfied with your local police?

   Why/why not?

2. What do you perceive Victoria Police generally and your station in particular are doing well in relation to policing? (e.g. reducing crime, youth/police relations etc)

3. What if any areas do you think could be improved upon? Why? How?

Topic 4: Shaping perceptions of the police

1. Have you had an encounter with the police yourselves?

   If YES:

   - o Could you tell me about it?

   - o Did it affect your views of the police?

2. What do you think the community bases its views of the police on?

3. Are there any specifically local issues that you think may be affecting your or the community's views of the local police?

Topic 5: Police responsiveness

1. Do you think the public sometimes has unrealistic or unfair expectations of the police?

2. Is police visibility important to you?

3. Do you think the local community feels that it can approach the police with their problems if they need to? Why/Why not?

4. In your view, is there a difference between policing 'on the ground' and the way that the government, police command and the public would perhaps like policing to be carried out?

   IF YES:

   - o Why might this be the case?