

Project title:

Developing consensus amongst NSW Police Officers (Sworn) on addressing Hate Crime.

Project Description:

Defining hate crime is complex due the various forms that make up this crime type. Within the UK, the College of Policing (2014: 2) defined Hate Crime as any crime or incident where the perpetrator's hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised, identifying five types of hate crime:

- disability
- race
- religion
- sexual orientation
- transgender status.

The various forms of hate crime recognised by the UK College of police are also captured in the recent work of Hambly, Rixom, Singh, & Wedlake-James, 2018) who documented that '*A hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability, or the perception of the person of having any of these characteristics*' (pp.3).

Much research into hate crime has focused on the police and their subsequent response to hate crime (see the work of Harlow, 2005; Perry, 2012; Hall *et al*, 2014; Allen & Boyce, 2015 for an example). Of this research a problematic picture is presented, primarily where the police are considered racist, homophobic and Islamophobic to name but a few (Rowe, 2012; Bernstein, 2004; Stenson & Silverstone, 2013) lending itself to low levels of reporting.

The proposed project follows a systematic literature review as well as a review of Australian sentencing decisions in cases that contain an aggravated hate incident. In sum, this prior research has led to analysis which has generated several themes. These themes offer insight into the context, setting and prevalence of Hate Crime, as well as evidencing nuances that reveal the complexity of Hate Crime and that a 'one size fits all' approach is complex.

Nevertheless, it has also become evident that the vast body of research does not capture the full breadth and depth of hate crime, and while much commentary is offered on police practice, seldom does the research actually employ a sample of rank and file police officers. This is a notable omission in most policing research (Birch *et al*, 2017). Hence, the proposed study aims to extend the existing knowledge base of hate crime by questioning experts (sworn in police officers) working in the field. Therefore, a Delphi method will be employed. This is a structured, iterative process seeking to establish consensus amongst 'expert' panel members. Only those individuals will be eligible to participate, namely the sworn in police officers of NSW Police Force. Beyond the identification of factors deemed relevant to hate crime, the proposed study should yield insight into practical issues that need to be addressed by not only the police force, but the wider criminal and community justice sector.

Methodology:

This study will employ a Delphi method, in which questionnaires are distributed amongst experts in a structured manner and over several feedback rounds to reach a consensus concerning hate crime. Only those individuals eligible to participate will take part.

The inclusion criteria are all sworn in police officers currently employed in NSW Police Force. All communication will be via their work e-mail addresses. The initial contact information will include the rationale and goals of the study, the general outline of the Delphi method and a link to complete the online survey, to be delivered through eSurvey. The initial contact information will outline there will be three rounds of surveys. Once a participant clicks on the eSurvey link they will be presented with a declaration of consent. Once read, participants will be asked to tick a box in order to acknowledge consent and gain access to the survey questions.

The remaining two rounds of surveys will be sent out on specific dates outlined in the original contact information. In each round, e-mails will contain a date by which the survey must be completed. This is due to the fact that for each round, the data must be collated, analysed and developed into the survey for the next phase of the Delphi. As mentioned above, the study will be terminated after a maximum of three iterations or when no additional insight is expected. A maximum of two reminders per round will be sent.

The data will initially be stored online in the questionnaire database of eSurvey. The datafile will then be saved on the researchers work area, which is password protected and deleted from eSurvey. Participants will be recruited via my CSU e-mail address contacting their publicly available e-mail addresses. Thus, emails will be sent and received from a secure network, which will also be password protected.

The Delphi will not require collection of participants' names and e-mail addresses as each round of the process will be sent to all sworn in police officers. A participants rank, length of service and whether they are based in a metropolitan or regional or rural post. These basic demographics cannot lead to identification, but can provide an insight into police resourcing and/or training implications.

Responses will be downloaded into a word file and stored on a password protected network, some questions will require SPSS analysis. Once each round of the Delphi has been completed the responses will be analysed using thematic analysis, a process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The thematic analysis will be undertaken allowing for the creation of higher order themes by collapsing the categories into thematic groups. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis allows for:

... identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic (pp.79).

By adopting a thematic analysis, a rich description of the dataset can occur. By using an inductive approach to analysing the data the themes emerge from within the data, and are not imposed from existing theoretical frameworks (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In relation to the thematic analysis themes will be identified using a semantic approach, not a latent approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 90). In other words, the themes emerging from the dataset related to the explicit meaning evident in the transcripts; they reflect what the participants actually said. Themes will then mapped on to existing knowledge e.g. the findings of the systematic review, facilitating the generation of new knowledge, leading to a new theoretical framework to understand policing of hate crime.

Mechanisms to withdraw from the study/not take part are varied. In the initial approach, the participants will be informed via an information sheet that participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous. It will be stated that participants are free to withdraw from the study at any given point by either not responding or exiting the survey prior to completion (i.e. not clicking the 'Submit'-button on the last page of the online survey). Furthermore, participants will be required to give their consent in the form of ticking box on the initial information sheet that states *"Please check the box below to confirm that you have read the information sheet and consent to participate in this study"*. After their answers have been submitted participants will not be able to withdraw them, because the anonymised data is merged with the group data. Hence, individual data cannot be singled out anymore. The participants will be made aware of that circumstance in the initial information sheet. Furthermore, participants can choose not to engage in one or all stages of the Delphi.

After participants have completed each online survey, a debrief page will be available. The debriefing will inform them about the dates for the next survey round and will give the opportunity to note down any useful information such as contact details of the researcher and supervisor. This information will stay on the screen until the participant exits the page. The nature of the Delphi also means that participants who engage will receive summarised group feedback of the results of the round they have engaged in (from survey 2 onwards).

Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Consent

Examining consensus of hate crime amongst police officers

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study exploring hate crime. While there is an increasing understanding of hate crime in general, seldom does research capture this from the perspectives of sworn in police officers. This study aims to obtain your views on this crime type. It is part of a three phased study NSW Police has commissioned Charles Sturt University (CSU), in partnership the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), to explore.

What is the purpose of the study? Who should take part?

I want to explore views of those with experience in either working with hate crime. Please note that I am not requesting identifiable details about cases, I am only interested in your insights.

What does taking part in the study involve?

There are is much written in the current literature regarding hate crime, however, seldom does the research obtain the views, insights and experiences of rank and file police officers. I would like to ask your opinion about hate crime. There are a series of questions that seek you views on the definition of hate crime, who perpetrators it, who is the victim of hate crime as well as the responses to hate crime. The survey should take about 30 minutes each time, with two more rounds of surveys to follow. Each round summarises the prior round of responses. The aim the study is to reach a consensus view amongst NSW Police. You can stop taking part any time you like.

After reading this information sheet, you will be asked to provide your consent to participate. You do not have to provide any person details. Your responses will be collected, collected and analysed on a secure network at the university (both CSU and UCLan). We will add your responses to the large pool of responses from the rest of our *expert panel* (NSW rank and file police officers) and look for patterns and trends in the opinions of the panel as a whole.

Please do not provide any identifiable details in your responses.

Why am I being asked to take part?

We have chosen you to take part in this study because you have experience of working with the issue of hate crime, and seldom does research include rank and file police officers.

Do I have to take part?

You should only take part if you want to. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to consent prior to joining the study. You can decide to withdraw after you have consented to taking part. If you decide to withdraw after starting the study, you can simply stop answering the questions. However, once you have submitted your answers, they cannot be withdrawn

anymore. This is due to the fact that we merge your anonymised response with the rest of the group data, making the identification of individual responses impossible.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me (pbirch@csu.edu.au). If you have any concerns or complaints about the study you may contact the University Officer for Ethics at the Charles Sturt University (INSERT EMAIL). Please provide them with the name of the study and ID number (Consensus on Hate Crime: ID: INSERT) and researcher's name (Dr Philip Birch).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. The research teams details are below:

Dr Philip Birch

Charles Sturt University, Major Innes Road, Port Macquarie, 2444.

Email: pbirch@csu.edu.au

Professor Jane L. Ireland

University of Central Lancashire, Fylde Road, Preston, PR1 2HE and Lead for the Ashworth Research Centre (ARC)

Email: jireland1@uclan.ac.uk

There will also be research assistants from the Ashworth Research Centre (ARC), under the direction of Professor Jane L. Ireland, supporting the analysis and data collection.

I have read and understood this information sheet, and I consent to participate in this study.

Appendix 2: Delphi questionnaire***SECTION 1****Demographic questions**

1.1: Police Rank:

1.2: Length of Service in NSW Police:

1.3: Are you located in: (please tick only 1 box)

- a) a Metropolitan Command
- b) a Regional Command
- c) a Rural Command

1.4: To what extent do you consider yourself knowledgeable about hate crime (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

- 1 2 3 4 5

**Note to ethics. At rounds 2 and 3 there will be a question asking if they have been involved in the prior rounds. This will allow for a consensus to be gained from those who have engaged in the rounds prior but also to ensure new participants can join as they wish. This will be ascertained by a simple yes/no question.*

SECTION 2**Relevant aspects of the definition of 'hate crime'**

As you are aware from your work, there are multiple definitions regarding 'hate crime'. In this section, we are interested in what you deem the most relevant to be considered in a definition.

2.1 What do you consider to be the important aspects of hate crime that needs to be captured in a definition?

2.2. What do you consider are the most common misconceptions about hate crime?

SECTION 3**Nature and Extent of Hate Crime**

3.1. To what extent is hate crime related to race' (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

1 2 3 4 5

3.2. To what extent is hate crime focused on religion' (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

1 2 3 4 5

3.3. To what extent is hate crime focused on sexual identity/orientation? (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

1 2 3 4 5

3.4. To what extent is hate crime focused on disability' (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

1 2 3 4 5

3.4. In your experience, what is the cause of Hate Crime?

SECTION 4**Perpetrators of Hate Crime**

4.1. Who commits Hate Crime?

4.2. In your experience do Hate Crime perpetrators specialise in one type of hate crime e.g. race hate crime? Please explain your answer:

4.3 In your experience do Hate Crime perpetrators commit other types of crimes? Please explain your answer:

SECTION 5

Victims of Hate Crime

5.1. Who are the most likely victims of Hate Crime?

5.2. What are the most common types of victimisation experience? (where '1' indicates 'not at all' and '5' 'extremely'): (please tick only 1 box)

- Verbal Assault

1 2 3 4 5

- Physical Assault

1 2 3 4 5

- Sexual Assault

1 2 3 4 5

- Threats/intimidation

1 2 3 4 5

- Property/Criminal Damage

1 2 3 4 5

- Other (Please State):

5.4. In your experience, what is the usual relationship between victim and perpetrator?

SECTION 6

Police response to Hate Crime

6.1. What do consider to be the most appropriate response to dealing with Hate Crime?

6.2. In what ways is your response to the prior question, 6.1, consistent with:

- Your colleagues response to dealing with Hate Crime?

- Your organisational response to dealing with Hate Crime?

SECTION 7

Additional Information

7.1 Is there anything further you want to add about Hate Crime that has not been captured in your previous answer?

Appendix 3: Debrief sheet

Thank you for taking part in this study; your time is very much appreciated. This study aimed to examine hate crime from the perspective of rank and file NSW Police Officers.

The findings of this study aim to contribute to the evidence base and to subsequent research that seeks to support the prevention, disruption and reduction of hate crime. These findings will also contribute to the development of a Hate Crime Assessment/Screening Tool for possible use amongst operational police officers.

If you have any questions regarding this research or your participation, or if you would like a copy of the overall findings, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my co-investigators.

Dr Philip Birch

Charles Sturt University, Major Innes Road, Port Macquarie, 2444.

Email: pbirch@csu.edu.au

Prof. Jane L. Ireland

University of Central Lancashire, Fylde Road, Preston, PR1 2HE

Email: jireland1@uclan.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Initial e-mail contact

Hello,

My name is Dr Philip Birch from Charles Sturt University, I am working alongside my colleagues Professor Jane Ireland and <INSERT> who is a research assistant on a study exploring hate crime. While there is an increasing understanding of hate crime in general, seldom does research capture this from the perspectives of sworn in police officers. This study aims to obtain your views on this crime type. It is part of a three phased study NSW Police has commissioned Charles Sturt University (CSU), in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), to explore.

As part of this research, I will be conducting a Delphi study, in which I aim to recruit a panel of experts, namely rank and file NSW Police Officers, to give their views on this area. Ethical approval has been obtained from the ethics committee at Charles Sturt University.

This study will commence on today with a further two more short surveys being sent out at a later date. For the first round, I will provide you with some short questions over 7 sections, informed from the findings of systematic review of the literature into Hate Crime. As a member of the expert panel, you will be asked to support a response based on your own experience.

You can access the information sheet for the study and subsequent online survey via this link: <INSERT LINK>.

The deadline for the completion of the questionnaire is XXXXXX.

If you would like to ask any further questions before you decide to participate, please contact me on the e-mail provided below and I will respond to you directly regarding your participation.

Kind regards,

Dr Philip Birch, Centre for Law & Justice, CSU.

pbirch@csu.edu.au

Appendix 5: Second round email

Hello,

As part of the Hate Crime study commissioned by NSW Police, conducted by myself, Dr Philip Birch from Charles Sturt University, working alongside my colleagues Professor Jane Ireland and <INSERT> who is a research assistant. I email you with the second round of the Delphi study. You will have previously been sent an email from me inviting you to part take in the first round of this study. You do not have had to participated in the first round of the data collection in order to part take in this second round.

For this round, the data of high consensus from the first round has been included for validation of consensus. This round will also include any additional questions that have been generated from the information provided all members of the expert panel in the previous round. In this round, you will be provided with a list of statements regarding Hate Crime and asked to rate the extent to which you agree with them, based on your own professional experience. You will also be given the opportunity to add further insights that you feel are relevant to staff responses.

If you still wish to participate, please follow the link below which will direct you to an online survey.

<Insert link>

The deadline for the completion of the questionnaire is XXXXXX.

Kind regards,

Dr Philip Birch, Centre for Law & Justice, CSU.

pbirch@csu.edu.au

Appendix 7: Third round email

Hello,

As part of the Hate Crime study commissioned by NSW Police, conducted by myself, Dr Philip Birch from Charles Sturt University, working alongside my colleagues Professor Jane Ireland and <INSERT> who is a research assistant, I email you with the third round of the Delphi study. You will have previously been sent an email from me inviting you to part take in the first 2 round of this study. You do not have had to participated in the previous rounds of data collection in order to part take in this third round.

For this round, the data that reached high consensus in the previous rounds have been included to explore whether in your view, remain to be significant information with regards to understand and responding to Hate Crime. You will be provided with statements and asked to rate the extent that you agree with them as factors relevant to dealing with and addressing Hate Crime. It is anticipated that this will be the final round of data collection in for this Delphi Study.

If you still wish to participate, please follow the link below which will direct you to an online survey.

<Insert link>

The deadline for the completion of the questionnaire is XXXXXX.

Kind Regards

Dr Philip Birch, Centre for Law & Justice, CSU.

pbirch@csu.edu.au