

## **Transcript of 2021 3MT® presentation by Emma Kelly, MA Criminology & Criminal Justice Policy candidate at the University of Guelph**

Canada is widely considered to be a haven to queer and trans people. However, there is significant evidence that LGBTIQ2S+ Canadians are more likely to be violently victimized from their heterosexual cis-gendered counterparts.

This is all the more concerning because those in the community, particularly if they are black, indigenous, and people of colour have reported lower confidence in the police who are often first responders to these incidents.

In fact, the relationship between the queer and trans community and police has been fought with tension for decades. The disproportionate exposure of marginalized queer individuals to police and questions raised about police investigations of crimes against queer and trans people of colour has led to scrutiny.

Despite this living history of tensions and struggle, there is surprisingly little research on perceptions of police legitimacy by the Canadian LGBTIQ2S+ community. And which aspects of policing are most important to queer peoples' judgement of legitimacy is not well understood.

A large body of research has found that across diverse groups, perceptions of procedural justice are strongly related to the perception in police legitimacy. Procedural justice are quality of treatment and quality of decisioning making by police is more important in these contexts than notions of police performance or distributive justice, which captures the fairness by which police distribute their services.

To address this gap, I partnered with five LGBTIQ2S+ organizations across Canada who distributed a survey that I developed based on validated scales via through social media channels. Preliminary analysis of my sample of 366 using multiple linear regression, demonstrates several noteworthy findings.

First, procedural justice far surpasses distributive justice and police performance in determining police legitimacy, leaning that how queer and trans individuals are treated by police is primary concern. Second, perceptions of police legitimacy are troubling low. The average response to questions evaluating perceptions of legitimacy is disagree, which points to the legitimacy crisis that has been suspected, and publicly debated but never directly measured.

In open ended questions, participants cite how police treat queer and trans people of colour as influencing their responses. Lastly, cis-gendered men have significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy than cis-gendered women and individuals who are trans, suggesting feelings of acceptance and safety vary greatly based on identity within the community.

These findings are important for two reasons. First, they provide evidentiary foundation to support the points being laid by activists, whose arguments that queer people do not served by police have met with resistance in part due to lack of evidence. Secondly, these findings suggest the safety of LGBTIQ2S+ individuals will not be ensured until changes are made to policing in this community.

– **End of transcript**