

POLICE RELATIONS WITH ARABS AND JEWS IN ISRAEL

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Remarkably little research has been conducted on police relations with citizens in Israel compared with other societies that are deeply divided along ethnic lines. This paper examines the views of Arabs and Jews regarding several key aspects of policing in Israel. The findings indicate, first, that Arabs are consistently more critical of the police than Jews, and these ethnic differences persist net of the influence of other variables. Second, in addition to the role played by ethnicity in explaining public assessments of the police, a number of other variables influence such attitudes. The results are interpreted within the context of the divided society model of policing, which originated in research on other ethnically polarized societies.

Policing Ethnically Divided Societies

Ethnic minorities and the police have troubled relations in many societies (Antonopoulos 2003; Bowling and Phillips 2003), but, in *deeply divided societies*, such conflicts are especially deep-rooted. These societies are characterized by extreme polarization along ethnic lines, and policing is organized first and foremost ‘for the defense of a sectarian regime and the maintenance of a social order based on institutionalized inequality between dominant and subordinate communal groups’ (Weitzer 1995: 5). This model of policing has the following features: (1) police policies or practices are institutionally biased against members of the subordinate minority group; (2) over-representation of the dominant ethnic group within the police force, especially in the top ranks; (3) politicization of the police force and police repression of the regime’s opponents; (4) dual responsibility for ordinary crime control and internal security; (5) legal powers giving police great latitude in their control of the minority population, including the use of force; (6) an absence of effective mechanisms of accountability; and (7) conflicting orientations to the police among the subordinate group and dominant groups: on key issues of legitimacy, trust, confidence and support, the dominant group is a champion of the police and the subordinate group is largely estranged from the police (Weitzer 1995: 3–9; see also Brewer 1990; 1991). Some of these factors are present, in varying degrees, in many nations, but what distinguishes deeply divided societies is their *magnitude* and *combination*—constituting a distinctive policing model (Brewer 1990).

In divided societies, citizens’ relations with the police are shaped, in large part, by their allegiance to or alienation from the *state*—a factor that is less prominent in shaping perceptions of the police in more integrated societies, where the state enjoys diffuse legitimacy and is not an object of fundamental contention (Marenin 1985). In other words, it is not just what the police do, but also what police *represent* to people. In ethnically divided societies, the symbolic status of the police force, as pillars of state domination over ethnic

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minorities, is crucial. The general pattern is that the minority perceives state institutions as instruments of the dominant ethnic group and withholds legitimacy from the state, whereas the dominant group sees the minority population as posing a threat (either manifest or latent) to internal security or to the supremacy of the dominant group (Enloe 1980).

Of course, there is variation in the extent to which empirical cases fit the divided society model outlined above. First, the reality of the threat presented by the minority group varies from place to place. In some societies, the minority threat is diffuse and latent or intermittent. In other societies, threats to the dominant group are much more immediate and severe, and may involve frontal attacks on the state. But, in either case, the threat perceptions of the dominant group matter greatly, and the greater the perceived threat presented by the minority group, the greater the level of suspicion and conflict between the police and the minority.

Second, in divided societies, ethnic minorities experience significant residential segregation from the dominant ethnic group. They typically live in areas that are mainly populated by members of their own group and some distance from the dominant group, and this very isolation may function as a mechanism of informal control. That is, segregation reduces the mobility of the ethnic minority and insulates the dominant group from crimes committed by members of the subordinate group. Under these circumstances, crime is largely concentrated inside ethnic minority areas, where the police may or may not vigorously enforce the law. The latter—under-enforcement of the law and ‘benign neglect’ of highly segregated and isolated communities—has been documented in some societies (Liska and Chamlin 1984; Liska *et al.* 1985) and may exist in Israel as well (Mesch and Talmud 1998). Such patterns of segregation and policing may, in turn, influence citizen attitudes toward the police. Insofar as police are less likely to intervene in ethnic minority areas and are perceived as providing inadequate protection, this might lower residents’ overall opinion of the police. On the other hand, in societies in which the ethnic minority is hostile toward the police, a minimal police presence in minority communities may be greeted with relief. This was the case in many staunch Nationalist neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland (Mulcahy 2006: 76; Weitzer 1985, 1995).

Policing Arabs and Jews

This article examines policing within Israel proper, not in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank (on the latter, see Milton-Edwards 1997). Comprising about 17 per cent of the population, Israeli Arabs are full citizens of Israel but are also politically marginalized and economically disadvantaged relative to Jews. Although there is an urban, middle-class sector, a large number of Arabs live in rural towns and villages and continue to abide by traditional forms of social organization. In fact, 90 per cent of Israeli Arabs live in small towns populated by Arabs exclusively; only eight cities are ethnically mixed, and they are extremely segregated residentially (Mesch and Talmud 1998). Such segregation is accepted by many Israelis: only a minority of Arabs (47 per cent) and Jews (22 per cent) stated in a survey that they were willing to live in a mixed neighbourhood (Smootha 1989: 137).

Policing in Israel largely conforms to the divided society model sketched above. There are some qualifications, however. First, there are political divisions within the dominant

group that are more significant than in some other divided societies. Israeli Jews identify with political parties that range from the far right to the far left, with implications for how they view state policy and practices. Among Jews, it is the ultra-orthodox who have the worst relations with the police, as documented in some surveys (State of Israel 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002), and there has been a history of violent clashes between the police and ultra-orthodox Jews over issues such as a gay parade, advertisements for swimwear, archaeological excavations and other breaches of religious norms (Brewer *et al.* 1988). Second, the police were somewhat less involved in the day-to-day control of the Arab minority compared with some other nations, such as Rhodesia, South Africa and Northern Ireland (Brewer 1994; Brogden and Shearing 1993; Frankel 1980; Mulcahy 2006; Weitzer 1990; 1995). In Israel, socio-economic marginalization and geographical segregation serve as powerful mechanisms of control over the Arab population (Lustick 1980). Furthermore, historically, agencies other than the police—such as the Israeli Defense Force and the General Security Service (GSS, similar to MI5 in Britain)—played a central role in controlling the Arab minority, with the police providing support in making arrests (Gilon 2000; Hofnung 1991).

These qualifications notwithstanding, the divided society model applies fairly well to Israel. The police harbour diffuse bias against Arabs (Cohen 1990; Lehman-Wilzig 1993; Or Commission 2003); are predominantly composed of Jews, with Arabs accounting for less than 3 per cent (not including Druze);¹ identify politically with the Jewish state and have been involved, to some extent, in repression of the regime's political opponents (Gamson and Yuchtman-Yaar 1977; Sprinzak 1999); enjoy extensive legal powers under the emergency laws (Hofnung 1991); lack adequate accountability (Herzog 2000); and are involved in 'dual policing' of ordinary crimes and internal security, though playing a subordinate role to other agencies in the security area (Brewer *et al.* 1988).

Strained relations between Arabs and the police have been a chronic problem. Such strains are evident in a variety of contexts (e.g. during the frequent police stops of individual Arabs, during periodic public order situations, etc.). Moreover, the police culture appears to cultivate and reinforce a host of stereotypes about Israeli Arabs—typifications that manifest themselves in discriminatory treatment. A recent commission of inquiry—the Or Commission—criticized such ethnic profiling:

It is important to assimilate, at every level of the police force, the importance of level-headed and moderate behavior in relations with the Arab sector. At the same time, it is important to uproot the phenomena of negative prejudice toward the Arab sector that have shown themselves among veteran and esteemed officers in the police force. The police force must impress upon its policemen the comprehension that the Arab public in its entirety is not their enemy and that it should not be treated as such. (Or Commission 2003: 768)²

In addition to chiding the police for stereotyping Arabs as disloyal citizens, the Or Commission expressed concern about erratic enforcement of the ordinary criminal law in Arab communities (the benign neglect phenomenon) and noted that many Arabs believe that the police are mainly interested in suppressing their political activities. The

¹ The Druze are distinct from Muslim and Christian Arabs in Israel in terms of their treatment by the state, which has historically regarded them as a privileged minority, separate from other Arabs. The Druze are drafted into the Israeli army, contrary to the other Arabs.

² Supreme Court Justice Theodore Or headed the commission.

commission described a ‘vicious cycle’ in which mutual distrust provokes altercations that, in turn, amplify Arabs’ alienation from the police, reinforce their belief that they are not full citizens of the country, and hinder police crime-control efforts in Arab communities due to distrust of the police (Or Commission 2003). Indeed, it seems that the very legitimacy of the police institution is limited; in one poll, only 53 per cent of Arabs felt that they should obey the police (compared with 85 per cent of Jews) (Cahanman and Tzemach 1991).

Chronic suspicion and frictions between the police and the Arab minority are periodically reinforced by major, controversial public-order incidents. The most recent and serious incident occurred in October 2000, after former Defence Minister Ariel Sharon paid a visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Sharon’s visit was viewed by Arabs as violating the sanctity of the Al-Aksa mosque there, and it sparked a wave of rioting lasting eight days. The police responded to the disorders with harsh countermeasures and, in the end, 13 Arabs were killed by the police. Surveys carried out between 2000 and 2002 (Rattner and Yagil 2002) allow us to track changes in perceptions before and after the October 2000 incidents. One-third of Arab respondents and 38 per cent of Jewish respondents agreed in a February 2000 poll that the police carry out their role in a fair manner, which dropped after the October clashes (in a January 2001 poll) to 21 per cent among Arabs but remained unchanged among Jews. One year later, in February 2002, Arabs’ views on police fairness had improved only slightly (26 per cent). Similarly, the number of Arabs who reported a great deal of trust in the police dropped by half between 2000 and 2001 (from 35 to 17 per cent) and increased only slightly in 2002 (20 per cent). Jew’s trust in the police also dropped between 2000 and 2001 (from 47 to 33 per cent) but their confidence fully rebounded by 2002 (49 per cent) (Rattner and Yagil 2002).³ A plausible explanation for the fluctuation in public opinion is the harsh police response to public disorder in October 2000. The impact of controversial policing incidents on citizen confidence in the police has been documented in other societies as well (Kaminski and Jefferis 1998; Weitzer 2002).

Surprisingly little research has been carried out on police–citizen relations in Israel. Occasional surveys have been conducted, but they are few and far between. The scarcity of such data can be regarded as a major deficiency—one that the present study was designed to help to remedy. The article examines recent survey data on Arab and Jewish attitudes regarding a variety of policing issues.

Methodology

Data for this study come from a March 2003 telephone survey of adult Arabs and Jews (over the age of 18) residing within the police force’s Northern District. The Northern District ranges from the Hadera Valley (Wadi Ara) to the Lebanese border. The majority (70 per cent) of the Israeli Arab population resides in this district, and they typically live in communities that are entirely Arab and isolated from the Jewish population.

The sample was drawn from locales with more than 1,000 residents. The sample included 250 Jewish and 444 Arab respondents (including Muslim, Christian and

³ Interestingly, a 2004 poll found that 43 per cent of Jews agreed with the Or Commission’s recommendation that the police officers who had killed Arab protesters during the October 2000 clashes should be identified and prosecuted and 52 per cent agreed that the police should change their policies toward Arabs (Smooha 2004: 121). The question was not asked of Arabs.

Bedouin Arabs).⁴ Cluster sampling was used to ensure that each group was adequately represented in the sample, and the overall response rate was 40 per cent. The interviews were conducted both in Arabic and Hebrew by Arab or Jewish interviewers matched to the respondent's background.

Dependent variable

In our study, four areas of citizens' attitudes toward the police were examined: overall satisfaction, police ethnic bias, police misconduct, and citizen receptivity to the police. *Overall Satisfaction* includes questions on trust in the police, general job performance and crime prevention (see Table 1). *Police Bias* measures opinions on equity of police treatment of Arabs and Jews, on the behaviour of Arab and Jewish police officers, and on the treatment of Arab police officers within the police organization (see Table 2). *Police Misconduct* was measured by questions about police use of excessive force and violation of citizen rights (Table 3), and *Citizen Receptivity* to the police was captured by several questions listed in Table 4.

Independent variables

Our independent variables include the standard demographic factors of age, gender and social class (measured by educational attainment). Most studies of police–citizen relations find that age is a significant predictor, with young people more likely than older age groups to hold negative views of the police (Brown and Benedict 2002). Gender and class, however, are less consistent predictors. In some studies, men are more likely than women to hold unfavourable opinions of the police, but, in other studies, gender is not a predictor. The same is true for social class: in some studies, it is not a predictor at all, whereas in studies in which it is significant, some find that lower class position is associated with more negative views of the police, while others find the opposite (Brown and Benedict 2002).

People who are fearful of crime may blame the police for the crime that they fear. This may affect citizens' overall opinion of the police as well as their attitudes toward more specific aspects of policing. *Fear of Crime* is measured here by the following question: 'To what extent are you afraid of becoming a victim of violent crime?'—on a scale of 1 (not afraid at all) to 5 (very afraid).

In a society as politicized as Israel, a person's political orientation might be expected to influence evaluations of the police. Our variable *Party Affiliation* is measured by the political party the respondent voted for in the election preceding the survey, in January 2003. Options included all political parties, which we then dichotomized for analysis: among Arabs we distinguished between those who voted for Arab parties (scored 1) and for Zionist/Jewish parties (scored 0); among Jews, we distinguished voting for left and centre parties (scored 1) versus right-wing and patriotic parties (scored 0).

Many Israeli Jews believe that Israeli Arabs have either a 'dual loyalty' to Israel and the Palestinian cause or identify completely with the latter (Smooha 1989; 2004). We expected that Arabs who have strong Palestinian identity would be more critical of the

⁴ Druze Arabs were excluded from the sample due to their privileged 'middleman minority' status and socio-political differences from other Israeli Arab sub-groups (see note 1, above).

police. Our variable *Palestinian Identity* was measured by asking Arab respondents about the degree to which they self-identify as a 'Palestinian Arab in Israel'.

As indicated above, highly controversial incidents involving the police may have an immediate and powerful effect on citizen opinions, particularly when the incident involves members of one's ethnic group. In Israel, it is possible that communities that experienced a violent conflict with the police in October 2000 would evaluate the police negatively. Arab respondents were asked whether their community had experienced such an incident (variable labeled *Police-Community Clash*). Approximately half of our Arab respondents reported that such a clash had occurred in their community (scored 1) and the other half reported no such incident (scored 0).

Analysis

We compared Arabs' and Jews' attitudes and preferences regarding four key dimensions of police-citizen relations—general satisfaction with the police, perceptions of ethnically biased policing, assessments of police misconduct and citizen receptivity to the police. Both bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted. In the multivariate models, a linear regression analysis was performed for each of four indexes reflecting the main dependent variables. The *Overall Opinion* index combines four items: trust in the police, 'Police do a good job', feelings of safety around police officers and the perception of police crime-prevention efforts near the respondent's residence (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.72$). The *Police Bias* scale includes four items: 'Police treat Israeli Arabs as a security threat'; 'Police treat Arab drivers more severely than Jewish drivers'; 'Arab police officers are discriminated against within the police force' and 'Arabs are prevented from joining the Israel Police because of their ethnic background' ($\alpha = 0.51$). The *Police Misconduct* index combines 'Police use excessive force during protest events' and 'Police violate citizen rights on many occasions' ($r = 0.25$) and the *Community Receptivity* scale combines willingness to report property crime and willingness to report a violent crime to the police ($r = 0.31$).

Findings

Overall satisfaction

Table 1 presents frequencies for several items related to overall satisfaction with the police and views regarding their job performance. On these general questions, which cover issues that are much less controversial than others, there are significant disparities between Jews and Arabs. The two most general questions tap trust in the police and overall job performance. Jews express a higher level of trust in the police than Arabs (60 and 42 per cent, respectively) and about half of Jews agreed that the police do a 'good job' compared with 36 per cent of Arabs. Jews were also more likely than Arabs to report feeling safe when they encounter police officers (53 and 45 per cent, respectively) and to approve of police crime-prevention efforts (42 and 32 per cent, respectively).

At the same time, it is noteworthy that substantial numbers of *both* Arabs and Jews hold negative views on these general policing issues. On none of the issues is the level of satisfaction extensive. Apart from the six out of ten Jews who express trust in the police, the other items register only modest approval ratings. In some other deeply divided societies, including Northern Ireland and South Africa, members of the dominant

TABLE 1 *Overall opinion of the police*

	Percentage agreeing Mean (standard deviation)	
	Arabs (N = 444)	Jews (N = 255)
Police do a good job***	36 3.09 (1.33)	47 3.36 (1.10)
Trust the police***	42 3.29 (1.33)	60 3.72 (1.10)
Safety around police officers*	45 3.10 (1.58)	53 3.38 (1.37)
Police work to prevent crime near your residence**	32 2.93 (1.35)	42 3.21 (1.19)

Percentage agreeing strongly or somewhat with statements. Asterisks denote significance levels from *t*-test: * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001.

group were much more likely to be staunch champions of the police—an institution considered a bulwark against threats from the minority population. For Israeli Jews, mediocre opinion of the police arguably stems from the low status of the police in Israeli society (Brewer *et al.* 1988) and/or negative perceptions of police effectiveness (i.e. only a minority of Jews are confident in police crime-prevention efforts or think that the police are doing a good job overall).⁵ Furthermore, although Israel is a deeply divided society and internal security is a major concern among Jews, the role of the police in security remains secondary to other institutions. The Army and the General Security Services, which are more highly rated by the Jewish public than the police (Cahanman and Tzemach 1991), play the lead role in fighting terrorism, with the police usually limited to a supportive role. This means that the Israeli police get little of the ‘security dividend’ in terms of how they are regarded by the dominant group. Still, overall opinions of the police track, to some extent, changes in the security situation. For instance, Jews’ trust in the police peaked in 2002, during a wave of attacks by Palestinian suicide bombers (59 attacks). Police officers were seen repeatedly in the media assisting the rescue teams. With the decrease in such attacks in the last three years, Jews’ trust in the police seems to have ebbed.

Biased policing

In some nations, the overwhelmingly majority of the dominant ethnic group believes that the minority should be denied equal treatment by the authorities. This was the case in Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, to cite just a few examples (Weitzer 1990). In Israel, one survey reported that fully 84 per cent of Jews thought that the state should favour Jews, while only 16 per cent thought Jews and Arabs should be treated equally by the government (91 per cent of Arabs took the latter view) (Smootha 1989). The police and other state institutions may share the views of the dominant group regarding police treatment of the minority population. Research on racial and ethnic minorities in many countries documents the widespread view that the police treat them differently from

⁵ By way of contrast, the dominant group in Northern Ireland had a better overall view of the police than is true for Israeli Jews. For example, in a 1987 poll, four-fifths of Protestants in Northern Ireland felt that the police did a ‘good job’ (CHS 1989).

the dominant group, actively discriminate against them or hold animus toward them. These patterns are especially pronounced in deeply divided societies, but are also evident in less polarized, multi-ethnic nations such as Britain, Canada and the United States (Antonopoulos 2003; Bowling and Phillips 2003; Clancy *et al.* 2001; Rowe 2004; Weitzer and Tuch 2006).

It can be argued that the greater the degree of residential segregation between dominant and subordinate ethnic groups, the greater the likelihood of differential policing of areas populated by each group. Due to the high level of segregation of Arabs and Jews in Israel, including in the Northern District studied here, this may condition differential police practices in Jewish versus Arab areas and, insofar as this is the case, such disparities may be perceived as police bias and discrimination. Our data do not directly address this ecological dimension of biased policing, but an unpublished 2003 poll⁶ found that 75 per cent of Arabs believed that the police treat them worse than Jews (45 per cent of Jews agreed). In the present survey, six out of ten Arabs believe that police do not treat all citizens equally compared with just 31 per cent who think that police perform impartially.

Police stops of motorists is one site in which citizens might experience unequal treatment on the basis of race or ethnic background. The police routinely stop and search Arab drivers and their cars. Some Arabs view the stops themselves as discriminatory while others report having been verbally or physically abused during the encounter (Human Rights Association 2004; Mossawa Center 2002). In the present survey, about half of Arabs believe that when police officers stop motorists, they treat Arab drivers more severely than Jewish drivers (see Table 2).

Equal justice has long been a contentious issue in Northern Ireland. In 1990, 38 per cent of Catholics believed that the police treated Protestants and Catholics equally, while 55 per cent thought that the police treated Protestants better (NISAS 1990). Three-quarters of Protestants, however, thought that the police treated members of both groups equally. Subsequent to the 1998 political settlement, Catholics' views regarding equal treatment have improved. In a 2006 poll (NIPB 2006), 54 per cent of Catholics said that they were satisfied that the police treat members of the public equally (18 per cent of Catholics reported that they were dissatisfied with the police on this issue). Two-thirds of Protestants in 2006 said that they were satisfied with the police record in delivering equal justice in Northern Ireland.

In ethnically divided societies afflicted with armed insurgency, the subordinate ethnic group is often viewed as a security threat, and both the dominant group and state officials tend to typify the entire minority population in this way. In Israel, there is no doubt that many Jews view the Arab minority as a threat to the state. The sources of these perceptions include the larger, regional Arab–Israeli conflict as well as the real or perceived attitudes of the Arab minority itself (Smootha 2003; Smootha and Hanf 1992). Their Arab identity raises suspicion that they hold either dual loyalties (to Israel and to the Palestinian cause) or are fully sympathetic with Israel's enemies. In a recent survey, for instance, overwhelming majorities of Israeli Jews believed that Arabs' high birth rate endangers the state (67 per cent); that Arabs are intent on changing the state's Jewish

⁶ Poll conducted by the Center for the Study of Crime, Law and Society, University of Haifa. Arye Rattner provided the authors with this unpublished data.

TABLE 2 *Biased policing*

	Percentage agreeing Mean (standard deviation) Arabs (<i>N</i> = 444)
Police treat Israeli Arabs as security threat	43 3.10 (1.57)
Police treat Arab drivers more severely than Jewish drivers	47 3.15 (1.64)
Arab and Jewish police officers treat Arab citizens similarly	46 3.16 (1.65)
Arab police officers are discriminated against within police force	52 3.42 (1.47)
Arabs prevented from joining the police because of their ethnic background	31 2.64 (1.56)
Police treat all citizens equally	31 2.79 (1.35)

Percentage agreeing strongly or somewhat with statements.

character (72 per cent); that Arabs might assist enemies of the state (78 per cent); that Arabs might launch a popular revolt (72 per cent); fear Arabs because of their support of the Palestinian people (84 per cent); and that most Israeli Arabs would be more loyal to a Palestinian state than to Israel (66 per cent) (Smootha 2004).⁷ Israeli Arabs are aware that they are regarded as a threat by many Jews, yet Arabs are split on whether they believe that the police view them in this way. In the present survey, 43 per cent of the Arab population felt that the police regard Israeli Arabs as a security threat, while 39 per cent disagreed. Arab respondents who do feel that Arabs are regarded as a threat were more likely to report that their community had experienced a clash with the police in October 2000.

Although there are very few Arabs in Israel's police force, it is nevertheless important to consider whether citizens differentiate between Arab and Jewish officers. The data displayed in Table 2 show that the Arab population is split almost evenly on the question of whether Arab officers differ from Jewish officers in their treatment of the Arab population. In other words, a substantial number of Arabs believe that police officers behave similarly, regardless of their ethnic background. Regarding the reasons for Arab under-representation in the police force, almost one-third believed that Arabs have been blocked from entering the police force because of their ethnic background and a majority thought that Arabs fear that they would face institutional discrimination if they decided to enlist in the police force.

In Northern Ireland, a 1990 poll inquired about whether it would be better for the country if there were more Catholic police officers. One might expect to find broad approval of this reform, especially among Catholics, who have long complained about the gross under-representation of Catholics in the RUC (3–7 per cent). In fact, a majority of both Catholics (63 per cent) and Protestants (54 per cent) agreed with the idea that more Catholic officers would be an improvement. However, among the politically radical sections of the population, support for the idea was much lower—viewed favourably by only one-third of staunch Loyalists (supporters of the Democratic Unionist Party)

⁷ These figures are similar to those of an earlier poll by the same scholar (Smootha 1989), indicating that Jews' threat perceptions have remain fairly constant at a high level over two decades.

and less than one-quarter of staunch Republicans (supporters of Sinn Fein) (NISAS 1990). This suggests that an increase in minority representation in the police force is not necessarily seen as a positive change in deeply divided societies. Many members of the dominant ethnic group may be wary of greater representation of the minority within the police force, while many minority group members see the need for more fundamental reforms in addition to, or instead of, personnel changes (Mulcahy 2006; Weitzer 1993; 1995).

Police misconduct

Although the police engage, to a greater or lesser degree, in various types of misconduct in all societies (e.g. corruption, excessive force, unwarranted stops or arrests, verbal abuse of citizens), the power structure characteristic of deeply divided societies serves to concentrate misconduct toward subordinate racial and ethnic groups, while members of the dominant group are treated more favourably. This can approximate a *dual system of justice*. It is not surprising, therefore, that research uncovers rather stark differences in minority and dominant groups' beliefs regarding the degree to which the police abide by norms of impartiality, fairness and equality of treatment of citizens. Minority group members tend to be rather critical of the fidelity of the police to these principles of good policing, whereas dominant group members tend to downplay or deny that police practices vary depending on the ethnic or racial group in question.

Two survey items tapped perceptions of police misconduct—the use of excessive force during public protests and the more general violation of citizens' rights. Public protests occur frequently in Israel, and a 2004 survey found that a large percentage of the Israeli Arab population (27 per cent) had ever participated in a legal demonstration or protest event (Smootha 2004: 120). Such occasions sometimes include violent clashes between protesters and the police. Table 3 shows that while a majority of Arabs felt that the police used excessive force during public protests, only one-third of Jews subscribed to this view. The traumatic events of October 2000 may have contributed to the number of people, both Arabs and Jews, who feel that police overreact during protests, but we have no way of knowing with certainty whether the incident inflated these opinions. Police abuse of human rights is a standard grievance among minority ethnic groups. In Israel, four out of ten Arabs believe that police violate citizens' rights 'on many occasions' compared with three out of ten Jews. Group differences on both questions were statistically significant, although it is noteworthy that Arabs and Jews are not that far apart on the abuse-of-rights issue.

Citizen receptivity to police

In some divided societies, the minority population, or a segment of it, is so alienated from the police that they are opposed to having officers in their neighbourhoods or towns and are wary of contacting the police when a crime occurs. South Africa and Northern Ireland illustrated this dynamic prior to the political settlements in 1994 and 1998, respectively. In both the black townships in South Africa and hardcore Republican communities in Northern Ireland, the police were viewed as an occupying force rather than as protectors, and people who were observed talking to police officers were suspected of collaborating with the enemy, which could jeopardize their own safety (Brewer 1994; Brogden and Shearing 1993; Frankel 1980; Meduna 1993; Mulcahy 2006; Weitzer

TABLE 3 *Police misconduct*

	Percentage agreeing Mean (standard deviation)	
	Arabs (N = 444)	Jews (N = 255)
Police use excessive force during protest events**	53 3.46 (1.53)	34 2.98 (1.32)
Police violate citizen rights on many occasions*	40 3.08 (1.40)	30 2.87 (1.20)

Percentage agreeing strongly or somewhat with statement. Asterisks denote significance levels from *t*-test: * < 0.05, ** < 0.001.

1995). This fear extended even to the reporting of minor crimes (Ellison and Smyth 2000; Weitzer 1995).

Several of the survey questions tap citizen receptivity to the police (see Table 4). When asked whether the police should provide services to all communities, Arabs and Jews are equally likely to answer affirmatively (87 and 85 per cent, respectively). This is not surprising because it is fairly easy to endorse the general principle that all communities deserve police services. At the same time, 35 per cent of Arabs said that they believe that the police are 'not welcome' in *their* community. Thus, there is a tension between the widespread feeling that police should operate everywhere and the perception of more than a third of Arabs that their communities are not hospitable toward the police.

In Arab communities in which police are under-involved in crime control, informal social control may help to fill the vacuum. To a certain extent, Arab society is still governed by traditional modes of social organization, and deviant behaviour may be punished by family or clan members instead of formal authorities (Cohen 1990; Ginat 2000; Hasan 2002). The social and ecological isolation of many Arab towns and villages helps to reproduce traditional mechanisms of social control, though the balance between formal and informal crime control varies from place to place.

Police work depends largely on public cooperation but, in ethnically divided and politically polarized societies, the act of reporting offenders to the police may be seen as dangerous or otherwise problematic. In Israel, there is a disparity in Arabs' and Jews' inclination to use police services. Although a majority of both groups were prepared to report crimes to the police, Jews were more likely to express a willingness to do so (see Table 4). There are also differences in the visibility of their contacts with the police. Fully two-thirds of Arabs preferred to report crime at the police station and only a fifth would call the police to their homes. By contrast, a majority of Jews said that they would call the police to their homes. Another dimension of this dynamic is suggested by the question asking whether reporting criminals to the police is the same as 'informing on' them. (Informing on someone in Israel has a decidedly political meaning.) This view was endorsed by 29 per cent of Arabs compared with 16 per cent of Jews. The data do not reveal why people hold these preferences, but it is almost certain that the political situation in Israel, and specifically in Arab communities, contributes to Arabs' reluctance to summon police officers to their homes: they may not want neighbours to see them interacting with the police for the same reasons (e.g., personal safety) as their counterparts in other divided societies like South Africa and Northern Ireland.

TABLE 4 *Receptivity to the police*

	Percentage agreeing	
	Mean (standard deviation)	
	Arabs (<i>N</i> = 444)	Jews (<i>N</i> = 255)
There should be police services in every community	87 4.53 (1.11)	85 4.52 (0.98)
Police officers are not welcome in my community*	35 2.78 (1.59)	16 1.82 (1.38)
Reporting criminals to the police is the same as 'informing on' them*	29 2.52 (1.61)	16 1.87 (1.36)
Willingness to report property crime to police*	70 4.05 (1.38)	86 4.49 (1.08)
Willingness to report violent crime to police*	66 3.89 (1.45)	82 4.41 (1.07)
Call police to home to report crime*	21	55
Report crime at police station*	67	25

Percentage agreeing strongly or somewhat with statements. Asterisk denotes significance levels from *t*-test: * < 0.001.

Recall that our Arab sample includes Christians, Bedouins and (non-Bedouin) Muslims. This raises the question of whether Arab respondents differ by subgroup, namely whether one of them holds significantly different attitudes from the others. To answer this question, we disaggregated the Arab sample and found that the three subgroups differ little in their views on the policing issues covered in this study. Generally, Muslims are more critical of the police than the other two groups, although the differences are not usually statistically significant. Significant differences were found, however, on the question of whether the police treat all citizens equally: Muslims were the least likely of the three Arab groups to subscribe to this opinion. Our results are consistent with another study that found Muslim Arabs to be more critical of the Israeli police than other Arab groups (Zureik *et al.* 1993).

The data presented above point to ethnic differences on virtually every policing issue examined in this study, but two questions remain. First, do these differences persist net of the influence of other variables? Second, what other factors, in addition to ethnic background, predict perceptions of the police in Israel? The survey included questions regarding respondents' demographic attributes and other potentially relevant predictors.

Our multivariate results address these questions. First, ethnic differences persist, net of the other factors, in the three models that include both Arabs and Jews (these results not presented in a table). Compared with Jews, Arabs are more likely to hold negative overall views of the police, to believe that the police engage in misconduct and to be less than receptive to the police.

Second, some other variables are important predictors. Table 5 presents four explanatory models capturing the four substantive areas covered in the survey. In general, the models are more powerful in accounting for Arabs' attitudes toward the police than for Jews' attitudes, as indicated by the adjusted R^2 figures in the models.

Regarding specific variables, recall that social class was measured by educational attainment. For Jews, education has little effect, predicting only their receptivity to the police: the higher the education, the greater their receptivity. Among Arabs, by contrast, higher education is associated with a more negative general evaluation of the

TABLE 5 *Regression estimates for effects of predictors on perceptions of police*

	Arabs (β)	Jews (β)
<i>Overall opinion of the police</i>		
Age	-0.01 (-0.03)	0.01 (0.05)
Education	-0.37 (-0.27)***	-0.11 (-0.08)
Party affiliation	-3.23 (-0.34)***	-0.80 (0.20)*
Gender (1 = male)	-1.00 (0.11)*	-1.30 (0.17)*
Fear of crime	0.29 (0.12)*	-0.13 (-0.05)
Palestinian identity	-0.23 (0.08)	NA
Community-police clash (October 2000)	-0.16 (-0.02)	NA
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.27 (0.25)	0.09 (0.06)
N	250	152
<i>Biased policing</i>		
Age	0.02 (0.06)	NA
Education	0.24 (0.19)**	
Party affiliation	1.07 (0.11)	
Gender (1 = male)	0.14 (0.02)	
Fear of crime	-0.16 (-0.06)	
Palestinian identity	0.43 (0.16)*	
Community-police clash (October 2000)	1.10 (0.13)*	
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.14 (0.12)	
N	237	
<i>Police misconduct</i>		
Age	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Education	0.15 (0.20)**	-0.11 (-0.16)
Party affiliation	0.50 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.04)
Gender (1 = male)	0.32 (0.07)	0.09 (0.20)
Fear of crime	-0.17 (-0.12)*	0.14 (0.09)
Palestinian identity	0.32 (0.21)**	NA
Community-police clash (October 2000)	0.22 (0.05)	NA
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.13 (0.11)	0.04 (0.02)
N	251	144
<i>Community receptivity to the police</i>		
Age	0.00 (0.04)	-0.01 (-0.10)
Education	-0.04 (-0.05)	0.15 (0.24)**
Party affiliation	0.35 (0.07)	0.24 (0.13)
Gender (1 = male)	-0.87 (0.18)**	-0.52 (0.15)*
Fear of crime	0.31 (0.21)**	0.04 (0.03)
Palestinian identity	-0.11 (-0.07)	NA
Community-police clash (October 2000)	-0.07 (-0.02)	NA
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.10 (0.08)	0.11 (0.08)
N	252	155

NA's differ from previous tables largely due to missing cases in response to the party affiliation question. Asterisks denote significance levels from t -test: * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001.

police, the belief that police treat Arabs in a biased manner and the view that police misconduct is a problem. One reason why highly educated Arabs might be critical of the police has to do with the fact that they typically live not with middle-class Jews but with poor and working-class Arabs, and therefore experience the same kind of treatment from the police. Another reason may have to do with relative deprivation: middle-class Arabs, more so than their disadvantaged counterparts, may be acutely aware of police discrimination due to an expectation that their class position should protect them from

mistreatment. Perceived police bias may thus be heightened when it conflicts with class-based expectations. Such relative deprivation has been advanced as a possible explanation for the critical views documented in some studies of middle-class African-Americans (Hagan and Albonetti 1982; Weitzer and Tuch 1999; 2002).

Gender has some impact. Among Arabs, women tend to express more favourable views than men in their overall evaluation of the police and with respect to citizen receptiveness to the police. Similarly, Jewish women are more likely than their male counterparts to express overall satisfaction with the police.

Fear of crime may affect one's overall opinion of the police insofar as the police are evaluated for their performance in preventing or solving crimes (Brown and Benedict 2002). Our findings indicate that fear of violent victimization affects general views of the police among Arabs but not Jews. Among Arabs, the higher the fear, the more positive the overall assessment of the police.

Political party affiliation is a major determinant of public opinion toward the police in deeply divided societies, precisely because both the police institution and the state itself are objects of fundamental contention. In Northern Ireland, for instance, there have been long-standing internal cleavages along party lines within both the Catholic and Protestant populations (Weitzer 1995), though there remain substantial Catholic-Protestant differences as well (Ellison 2000). Similarly, in Israel, we found that political party affiliation influences public attitudes toward the police. Arabs who vote for Arab parties were less satisfied with the police overall than those who vote for Zionist/Jewish parties. Among Jews, those who support rightwing or nationalistic political parties held more positive general views of the police, whereas those who vote for left or centre parties were less satisfied. The latter parties historically have been more critical of state policy toward Israeli Arabs (Smootha 1989: 185–90), and our findings are consistent with another study that found that Jews who identified with left-wing parties were more likely than right-wing Jews to believe that the police are involved in corruption, brutality and other misconduct (Zureik *et al.* 1993).

We expected that Arabs with a strong Palestinian identity would be more critical of the police. This was confirmed in two models: Arab respondents who identify as a 'Palestinian Arab in Israel' were more inclined to perceive the existence of biased policing toward Arab citizens and more likely to believe that police misconduct is a serious problem in Israel. In other words, ethno-political identity among Arabs is most salient regarding the two most contentious policing issues in the survey.

Finally, police-community conflict during October 2000 had a significant effect on perceptions of biased policing. Arabs who reported that their community had experienced a violent clash with police officers were more inclined to believe that the police discriminate against Arab citizens more generally, net of other variables, compared with those whose communities had not experienced such a conflict. This finding is consistent with other studies that document the effects of highly controversial policing incidents on citizens' perceptions of the police (Kaminski and Jefferis 1998; Weitzer 2002).

Conclusion

Remarkably little research has been conducted on policing in Israel, and the present study is one of the few to examine relations between the police and Israeli Arabs and Jews. The findings document group differences: on almost every issue, Arabs view the

police more negatively than Jews, and these differences are almost always statistically significant. These findings are consistent with a large body of research on racial and ethnic group relations with the police throughout the world as well as the specific literature concerning deeply divided societies.

However, there is much more to the story than ethnic differences alone. Our findings point to three additional conclusions regarding police–ethnic relations in Israel. First, we find that Jews have lower confidence in the police than we might expect from the literature on deeply divided societies, in which dominant groups are typically enthusiastic supporters and defenders of the police. Israeli Jews appear to be more critical of the police than is true for their Protestant counterparts in Northern Ireland and white people in apartheid South Africa. Among the possible reasons for the more tepid orientation of Israeli Jews toward the police is the perception that the police are not particularly effective in performing their crime-control duties and the fact that they have only a limited role in the ‘prestige’ work of homeland security, where the military and security services enjoy primacy. In Northern Ireland and South Africa, by contrast, the police played a major role in counter-insurgency operations and internal security more generally—which arguably explains part of their esteem within the dominant Protestant and white populations in their respective countries (Brewer 1994; Brogden and Shearing 1993; Ellison and Smyth 2000; Mulcahy 2006; Weitzer 1990; 1995).

Second, Arabs are somewhat less critical of the police than their counterparts in the subordinate ethnic group in Northern Ireland and South Africa. While they are consistently more likely to harbour unfavourable views of the police than Jews, the gap between the two is narrower than the analogous gaps in Northern Ireland and South Africa. Part of the explanation may be the differential political orientations to the state among the subordinate groups in the three societies. The modal view among Northern Ireland’s Catholics was rejection of the state of Northern Ireland as well as its status within the United Kingdom—a fundamental delegitimation of the political order shared by moderate nationalists and radical republicans alike. In South Africa (as well as Rhodesia and Namibia), the black population was historically denied full citizenship rights and equal treatment under the law. It is not surprising, therefore, that large sections of the subordinate population in each of these societies condoned or actively supported political violence to overthrow the regime. Israeli Arabs, by contrast, have greater formal rights within Israel, on a par with those enjoyed by Jews. And the vast majority of Israeli Arabs associate themselves with the State of Israel: only 10 per cent reject the right of Israel to exist; just 9 per cent define their identity as non-Israeli Palestinian; and less than 2 per cent support the use of political violence (Smooha 2004: 131). In short, Israeli Arabs’ orientation to the state helps to explain why their perceptions of the police are somewhat less negative than what we would expect from the divided society model of police–minority relations, outlined at the beginning of the article. Having said this, it is important to reiterate that Arabs’ views of the police are consistently more unfavourable than is true for Jews. Arabs are far from enthusiastic fans of the Israel Police force.

Third, almost no studies of police–minority relations in deeply divided societies have been based on multivariate analyses, and most of the literature reports only bivariate comparisons of the attitudes of dominant and subordinate ethnic groups. Our multivariate findings show that, in addition to between-group differences, there are some important within-group variations as well. In one or more of the models—and especially

for Arabs—perceptions of the police are shaped by education, gender, fear of crime, party affiliation and/or socio-political identity. These findings suggest that there is more to the story than simple inter-ethnic polarization vis-à-vis the police—that is, that there are some important internal divisions within each group that shape assessments. Such intra-group differences have been well documented in more integrated, multi-ethnic societies such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Bowling and Phillips 2003; Brown and Benedict 2002) and the present study indicates that they can be important in deeply divided societies as well, in addition to fundamental ethnic cleavages in citizens' relations with the police.

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