

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF INSTITUTION-BUILDING IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

Aisha suspected trouble as soon as the police officer approached her. “Where are you from?” he asked, code in Baghdad at the time for “to what sect do you belong?” Aisha, a twenty-five-year-old housewife, is Shia, but at that moment she was walking down the street in Saidiya, one of the city’s predominantly Sunni neighborhoods. To Aisha’s relief, however, the officer was a fellow Shia. “When he saw how I talked [with an accent], and I told him I’m from Karbala [a Shia city], he said ‘welcome, you are one of us, and since you are one of us you will leave here without trouble.’ He protected me like I was one his family members; his treatment was different.”¹

Ahmed, a thirty-two-year-old Sunni, describes a very different encounter with the police. Officers initially stopped Ahmed at a checkpoint because his name was similar to a wanted man’s name. When it became clear that Ahmed was not the man they were looking for, the officer who stopped him, who was Shia, told him he could fix the mix-up. At the officer’s request, Ahmed gave him 100,000 Iraqi dinar, about \$85 US, and the officer told Ahmed he would receive an official letter in a week. “A week passed [without any resolution] and people told me to be thankful that the officer did not do anything to me or arrest me at the checkpoint. It’s about sectarianism. There are some people who read the surname [which signals sect] and get you into trouble at the checkpoint . . . he took 100,000 Iraqi dinar just because I’m from

¹ IACSS interview 06SF, Baghdad, February 2019. As with all references to civilians in this book, the name is a pseudonym.

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[Anbar, a mainly Sunni province].” Ahmed says that if the officer had been Sunni, he would not have taken his money.²

Interactions like these between civilians and rank-and-file police officers occur millions of times every day around the world. In divided societies like Iraq, where political competition and violence occur along group divisions like religion, ethnicity, or race, it stands to reason that officers’ identities shape citizens’ perceptions of encounters. This book argues that the demographic makeup of the police shapes attitudes and expectations far beyond these specific interactions. The police are the primary point of contact between citizens and the state and play a central role in enforcing the government’s laws, making rank-and-file officers the face of both government service provision and state coercion. Citizens’ experiences with the police, therefore, have far-reaching effects on their broader relationships with the law.

Rank-and-file officers’ demographic makeup signals to citizens the way the government intends to treat their group. In doing so, it serves as an important intervening variable in the bridge between law and society. Inclusion in the police rank and file gives citizens reason to expect better treatment on two main dimensions, protection under the law and service delivery. In the anecdotes mentioned earlier, there is no conclusive evidence that either citizen would necessarily have been treated differently had the officer been from a different sect. Yet, each citizen perceived that sect played a role in their treatment by the police, and these perceptions will undoubtedly shape their future behavior toward the police and the government. Officers rely on citizens’ cooperation for everything, from crime prevention (Skolnick and Bayley 1988; Tyler 2004; Weitzer and Tuch 2006) to counterinsurgency (Department of the Army 2006; Kalyvas 2006; Berman et al. 2011b; Lyall et al. 2015). A breakdown in this cooperation threatens the very fabric of society.

THE ARGUMENT: POLICE INCLUSION SHAPES
EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE TREATMENT

Rank-and-file officers possess a unique combination of three key characteristics, namely, visibility, discretion, and capacity for violence, which shape citizens’ expectations of how they will be treated. Police

² IIACSS interview 09NM, February 2019

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officers are in the public eye as they conduct patrols and provide services, and ordinary civilians interact far more frequently with police officers than with elected officials. Government uniforms and vehicles branded with the name of the jurisdiction ensure that citizens associate officers' actions with the government. Media reports and conversations with family and friends reinforce personal experiences and observations (Mazerolle et al. 2013; Saunders et al. 2013). Thus, in settings in which group identity is highly salient, citizens observe the police's demographic makeup and associate what they see with police and government intentions.

Unusually high levels of discretion amplify the importance of these interactions. While it is technically illegal to drive even slightly faster than the posted speed limit, officers stop and punish only a small subset of offenders. When applied correctly, this discretion makes service delivery more efficient by allowing rank-and-file officers to use their knowledge of the community to allocate their time and energy appropriately (Lipsky 1980). In conflict-prone societies, however, officers' discretion allows them to differentiate service delivery and harm civilians.

Finally, the police distribute the most important service of the modern state, public safety (Olson 1993), and are typically the only institution legally authorized to use violence against civilians. The importance of public safety raises the stakes of policing above other service-providing bureaucracies. When the state represses civilians, it often does so through the police.

These characteristics of the police mean that when citizens perceive that their well-being is linked with their identity, their group's inclusion in the police rank and file shapes expectations of how the police will treat them. Citizens may interpret exclusion from the police as a signal that the police do not care to serve their community. Officers may fill ticket quotas by over-policing certain neighborhoods where out-groups live or develop a department culture of "roughing up" suspects from certain groups. Even if exclusion does not affect officers' *actual* behavior, it creates the *perception* that mistreatment by the police, including insufficient devotion of resources, lack of effort by officers, or harassment, is due to identity. If left unchecked, these perceptions can spiral into poor citizen–state relations and anti-state violence. It is not for nothing that US officials informally referred to anti-government insurgents in Iraq as "POIs," or "pissed-off Iraqis" (Patel 2015). On the other hand, just as citizens may attribute mistreatment by the police to sectarianism if

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the officer comes from an out-group, they may be more willing to discount mistreatment by a coethnic officer in an integrated institution, viewing it as the behavior of a single bad apple that does not reflect on the police or government overall.

Group-based police inclusion shapes citizens' expectations of whether the state intends to harm them. Included groups have access to weapons, vehicles, equipment, and information that rebels could use to identify and exploit government vulnerabilities. In the event of attempted repression, officers might refuse to help the government harm members of their own group. When fighting broke out in Syria in 2011, the rank and file of Syria's security forces included a diverse range of religious and ethnic groups. Police officers and soldiers from groups that rose up against the regime found ways to defend their coethnics without defecting. According to one soldier, "I would never [shoot to kill] ... I'd shoot into the air, shoot everything but the fighters. A lot of people do that."³ Of course, in more extreme circumstances, officers might turn their guns against the state. Enloe (1980, 98–99) cites an example of Bengali officers in the Pakistani police force engaging in mutiny when asked to suppress Bengali dissidents in 1971.

The police's visibility, discretion, and capacity for violence shape citizens' perceptions of how the police treat them on a day-to-day basis, an important but well-established outcome (Lasley 1994; Weitzer and Tuch 2004; Weitzer and Hasisi 2008; Mazerolle et al. 2013). I argue that in addition to shaping current perceptions, inclusive policing shapes citizens' expectations of how the state will treat them in the future. Inclusion in the police is costly for the state to reverse once it occurs. Sudden attempts to purge a particular group's officers may be met by armed resistance. After the US invasion of Iraq, purged members of Saddam Hussein's security forces took off their uniforms and went home, but they brought their weapons with them, equipping the insurgency (Dodge 2005; Hashim 2005; Spain and Turchie 2013). Globally, purges of police force are exceedingly rare (González 2019). Even if the government were able to purge all of a group's officers, doing so would leave a substantially understaffed police force, degrading its ability to deliver public safety and maintain order. Thus, citizens should expect that any effects of police inclusion on the way the police treat

³ Khazan, Olga. "A defector's tale: Assad's reluctant army." *Washington Post* January 9, 2013. www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/01/09/a-defectors-tale-assads-reluctant-army/?utm_term=.4dc7470f7876

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them today will persist into the future. As such, inclusion allows the government to send a credible signal of its future behavior.

This credible signal of future behavior makes police inclusion a powerful response to the commitment problem which frequently plagues divided societies. Because it is more powerful, the state cannot commit to future treatment of a weaker group (Fearon 1995a; Lake and Rothchild 1996; Mattes and Savun 2009; Tezcür 2016). The resulting “security dilemma” (Posen 1993) provides the weaker group with an incentive to invest in its defenses and increases the likelihood that either side misinterprets the other’s actions as aggressive. If the weaker group fears that its relative power will erode even further, perhaps due to government consolidation or divergent population trends, its members may take up arms in anticipation of becoming even more vulnerable in the future. The commitment problem is especially problematic in states with prior communal violence, where a history of negative interactions exacerbates mistrust. Asymmetric power across groups characterizes conflict between Shias and Sunnis in Iraq, Jews and Arabs in Israel, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, Turks and Kurds in Turkey, and dozens of other ethnic or religious groups in conflict across the globe.

While existing research deals primarily with the commitment problem in terms of threats to physical security, governments struggle to commit to future treatment of weaker groups on any number of dimensions, for example, providing public goods and services. Concerns about future mistreatment on these less extreme dimensions also affect citizens’ behaviors. In Israel, the government is concerned not just with reducing the likelihood of suicide bombings but also with increasing Arab citizens’ social and economic integration into the state (Levi and Suchi 2018). Arab-Israeli citizens who do not expect the police or other arms of government to provide them with adequate goods and services may look to tribal or informal justice systems, foreign donors, and political parties rather than to the government.

Heterogeneity and Credible Commitments

The extent to which inclusion in the police rank and file shapes expectations about police behavior depends not just on how many individuals are included but also on how those individuals are distributed within the police. The impact of the former is relatively straightforward: the greater a group’s representation in an institution, the more

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influence that group likely has over the operations of the institution and its treatment of citizens. While there are certainly factors which can interrupt the link between representation and influence, for example, a “glass ceiling” preventing minorities from advancing beyond a certain rank, the discretion that rank-and-file officers hold over their treatment of citizens means that where group identity is salient, more representation in the rank and file should correlate with more power.

The impact of officers’ distribution within the institution is less obvious. It would be natural to assume that a group with a history of marginalization at the hands of the state should wish to minimize contact with out-group police officers, implying a preference for in-group policing in which each group’s officers serve only that group’s citizens. It may also be that individuals prefer to be policed by coethnics out of intrinsic coethnic bias (Lyall et al. 2015) or to benefit from improved communication and shared norms (Habyarimana et al. 2007; Laitin 2007).

However, isolating officers in homogeneous units erodes some of their power. When officers serve in homogeneous units, the state can withhold equipment or information from certain identity groups by selectively providing those items to some units and not to others. Sunni police officers leading the charge to retake Iraq’s Nineveh province from the Islamic State in January 2015 complained that the government dragged its feet in arming and equipping them. The Shia militias “have support, they have weapons, equipment and salaries from the government,” said Lt. Hardan Khalaf, a Sunni police recruit. “We are the official security forces. We belong to the Ministry of Interior and are part of the state, but we get nothing.”⁴ It is much easier for the state to stratify equipment at the unit level than at the level of individual officers. Similarly, it would be extremely difficult to keep information secret from officers who patrol together. Local-level heterogeneity ensures that officers from the marginalized group receive the same equipment and access as their dominant-group colleagues.

Second, the distribution of officers determines whether dominant-group citizens rely on minority-group police officers for services. When

⁴ Morris, Loveday (2015), “Iraqi police at Nineveh Liberation Camp aim to help free Mosul but lack food and guns.” *The Washington Post*, January 15. www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/these-iraqis-are-preparing-to-liberate-mosul-as-soon-as-they-have-guns-and-food/2015/01/14/297efc30-95be-11e4-8385-866293322c2f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7564175935f5

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officers are organized into heterogeneous patrols, minority officers can impose costs on the state by withholding participation or reducing their effort, leading to poorer service provision in dominant-group areas. The inability to provide policing services harms the state's legitimacy and weakens the regime in the eyes of its citizens (Akerlof and Yellen 1994). Officers may go on strike, significantly affecting the police's capacity to prevent crime or, in conflict zones, defend the government against rebel forces. In addition to the anecdote above about Syrian security forces shooting over the heads of rebels to avoid harming members of their own group, thousands of Sunni police officers and soldiers defected outright, dramatically cutting the strength of pro-regime forces.⁵ In a less extreme measure, officers may engage in a "slowdown," coming to work but refusing to exert effort on certain types of tasks. In May 2015, police officers in Baltimore, Maryland, refused to carry out basic tasks like writing traffic tickets or responding to calls for service to protest the arrest of six of their fellow officers for their alleged involvement in the death of citizen Freddie Gray while in custody. Slowdowns harm both the regime and its citizens, with the government losing revenue from unwritten citations and citizens suffering from reduced service provision. In Baltimore, arrests dropped 43 percent and the city suffered its most violent month in more than thirty-five years.⁶ Other public service providers also used strikes to impose costs on the state. In November 2015, Arab-Israeli employees of schools, municipal governments, and the trash collection agency went on strike to protest what they called a discriminatory action by Israel's cabinet, causing an interruption in public services.⁷ Arab teachers went on a similar strike in response to Israel's management of the Temple Mount in October of the same year.⁸ Officers who serve only in-group citizens do not have these opportunities, as withholding participation would primarily hurt

⁵ Oweis, Khaled Yacoub. "Syrian secret police defect, Arab deadline passes." *Reuters* December 5, 2011, <http://in.reuters.com/article/syria-idINDEE7B400B20111205>

⁶ Bouie, Jamelle. "Criminal neglect." *Slate.com* June 18, 2015. www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/06/baltimore_police_are_virtually_on_strike_the_city_deserves_something_better.html

⁷ *Times of Israel*, November 19, 2015. "High follow-up committee protests decision to outlaw northern branch of Islamist organization." <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arabs-on-strike-after-islamic-movement-ban/>

⁸ Weiner, Stuart. *Times of Israel*, October 11, 2015. "Israeli Arabs to strike over move 'to keep Muslims from Temple Mount.'" www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arabs-to-strike-over-move-to-keep-muslims-from-temple-mount

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citizens from their own group. For similar reasons, patrol-level heterogeneity makes it more costly for the state to purge officers from the out-group, as doing so would damage the police's ability to maintain order and deliver services even in pro-government areas.

Next, patrol-level heterogeneity positions minority-group officers to monitor the behavior of dominant-group officers. Officers often patrol in pairs or groups, and multiple officers respond to calls for service. If the police use heterogeneous patrols, officers from multiple groups are likely to be present for most interactions. Coupled with institutional arrangements for reporting abuses or the possibility of external pressures via the media, monitoring can deter mistreatment of citizens (over-policing) or shirking (under-policing). While group-based autonomy over law enforcement would also prevent identity-motivated over- or under-policing, citizens in mixed neighborhoods would remain vulnerable, as would citizens traveling outside of their group's neighborhood. Ordinary citizens recognize this opportunity for monitoring. When asked how the police can ensure that officers from different ethnic and religious groups behave professionally toward all citizens, a Jewish Israeli focus group participant recommended, "Put the Arab police officer and the Jewish officer [together] in the same situation."⁹

Finally, while this book deals primarily with citizens' attitudes and resulting behavior, it bears mentioning that heterogeneity may influence the attitudes and behaviors of officers as well. Working for an integrated police force provides significant exposure to non-coethnics, first during training and then as colleagues and partners. These interactions occur in the context of equal-status individuals working together toward a common goal, conditions which "contact hypothesis" suggests will improve attitudes toward out-group members (Allport 1954; Zajonc 1968; Ball and Cantor 1974; Blair et al. 2016). In turn, officers who have more positive attitudes toward out-groups may be less likely to harass or withhold service from citizens based on their sectarian identity.

I refer to local-level heterogeneity among rank-and-file officers as *police integration*. Integration contrasts with *segregated inclusion* in which officers largely serve in homogeneous units and provide services in areas where their group is the majority. Regardless of whether these mechanisms actually change police officers' behaviors, I propose that citizens

⁹ FG3J, Haifa, March 2019

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from weaker or marginalized groups *expect* patrol-level heterogeneity to lead to better treatment for their group, both now and in the future. While marginalized groups may prefer segregated inclusion over exclusion, I argue that integration is more likely to lead to durable, long-term improvements in citizen–state relations because it makes citizens feel more secure in the long term.

ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENTS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REBELLION AND CO-OPTATION OF OUT-GROUPS

Worryingly, the same characteristics of police integration which empower the weaker group to defend itself against mistreatment also empower would-be rebels to attack the state. A predominant strand of research on civil war proposes that a rebellion’s likelihood of success is an important limiting factor in whether or not conflict occurs (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). That is, there is always *someone* who holds grievances against the government or fears future mistreatment, but they only turn to violence when they believe that doing so is likely to advance their interests. By this argument, integrating a marginalized group into the police might actually increase the likelihood of conflict, as a group with access to weapons, equipment, and information would be more likely to prevail in an armed confrontation.

Violent conflict ends lives, destroys property, and diverts resources away from more productive uses. Rather than fighting, both sides would be better off agreeing to a settlement which avoids such destruction (Fearon 1995b). The costliness of sectarian violence suggests that marginalized groups prefer not to fight if negotiations can solve their underlying motives for fighting. Police integration improves a group’s bargaining position and sends a clear, credible signal that the state intends to treat them fairly, creating space and trust for negotiation and peaceful political competition.

A second alternative argument suggests that police officers from the marginalized group will treat their coethnics worse than dominant-group officers treat them, further degrading relations between the marginalized group and the police. For example, the police may recruit only individuals who are most sympathetic to the government and identify least strongly with their identity group. I show in Chapter 4 that the Israel Police struggle with this perception. Arab officers are frequently accused of being collaborators rather than representatives of

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their community. A related possibility is that if the marginalized group hesitates to join the police, the police may recruit less-qualified individuals from that group, leading to lower-quality service provision.¹⁰

A final possibility is that in an effort to fit in with their colleagues, officers from the marginalized group treat their coethnics harshly to prove themselves when observed by officers from another group. In a study by Weitzer and Hasisi (2008), an Arab-Israeli citizen told an interviewer that he prefers to be policed by Jewish officers than by Arabs. “Next to each Arab officer there is a Jewish officer and then he has to prove [to the Jewish officer] that he is strong.” Similarly, in Adida and Robinson’s (2019) study on African immigrants in the United States, a Black subject told researchers, “You’re lucky if you get a black police officer, but if he is with one white officer then he won’t spare you either, because he doesn’t want the other officer to think he is not giving you a ticket just because you are black. He makes a show of it.” These anecdotes suggest that police departments and governments seeking to use police integration to improve relations with minority communities must be cognizant of the perception that officers treat the marginalized group more harshly when out-group officers are present than they otherwise would have.

These possible mechanisms suggest that integration might worsen citizen–police or citizen–state relations if citizens expect it to lead to worse treatment. The question will ultimately be settled empirically. Regarding the possibility that marginalized-group officers are lower quality, I describe the substantial lengths to which the Israel Police go to ensure that their Arab officers are highly qualified. If anything, Arab officers are likely to be better educated than their Jewish colleagues. For their part, the Iraqi police face an oversupply of qualified individuals from all groups wishing to join, so there is little reason to worry that minority officers will be substandard. Regarding branding of officers as collaborators rather than representatives, the quotes mentioned earlier flag a distinction between representation in numeric terms and perceptions of integration. Integration is more than just the likelihood of interacting with an officer who is a coethnic; it is the perception that a group is empowered to impact the police’s treatment of citizens. It is unlikely that the Arab-Israeli citizen quoted above would

¹⁰ I point out in Chapter 2 that while plausible, this particular mechanism is far less dangerous for police integration than for integration of law-making institutions, which require more specialized skills and provide members with little to no training.