

## **Governability and Effectiveness in Policing Divided Societies: Police Commanders' Perspective of Arab Society in Israel**

Badi Hasisi & Yael Litmanovitz

Policing multicultural, divided societies presents many challenges to the performance of the police. These challenges may be exacerbated by widening cultural, economic and political chasms between the majority and minority groups. Deeply divided societies such as Israel occasion extreme tensions between minorities and the police due to political divisions and the framing of what should be ordinary police-citizen interactions as related to internal security threats.

In this paper we describe the perspectives of commanders in charge of police stations serving the Arab society: how they understand the challenges they face and the paths to addressing these challenges. Analysis of their narratives reveals two overarching themes: governability and effectiveness.

The first theme – governability – has to do with exploring the sociopolitical reality of the generally low governability of the Arab society, which consequently leads to reduced police governability, as an arm of the (weak) state. Against the backdrop of diminished governability and the illegality it fosters, we uncover the development of alternative paths to governability, describing the mechanisms used by the station commanders, which help them operate in – or bypass – the reality of low public trust and low legitimacy. These mechanisms include deviation from traditional police roles, turning to new collaborations with the community, and the practice of procedurally fair policing.

The second theme – effectiveness – has to do with the sociology of crime in the Arab society, from the police commanders' perspective. Here we are dealing with the difficulties and obstructions that stem from the current sociocultural attributes of the Arab minority in Israel, such as an unwillingness to cooperate with the police and unique crime patterns requiring a complex police response, as well as the different pathways proposed for dealing with these singularities.

This paper allows an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities of policing deeply divided societies, from the point of view of police commanders. Furthermore, it discloses the opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship in policing minorities.