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BLACK CITIES/WHITE CITIES: Evaluating the Police

Susan E. Howell, Huey L. Perry, and Matthew Vile

It is well known that African Americans and whites hold different views of the police, but nearly all of the previous research has been conducted in majority white settings. This research examines the relationship between race and evaluations of the police in majority black versus majority white contexts. Social dominance theory and the research on racial threat predict that when the racial majority changes, the relationship between race and attitudes toward police will change. We find that, in majority black contexts, the traditional relationship between being black and having negative evaluations of the police disappears, and it disappears because whites' evaluations of the police become more negative. Black evaluations of the police are relatively consistent across racial contexts. Also, white racial attitudes affect police evaluations in majority black contexts, but not in white contexts, while African American racial attitudes are inconsequential in both contexts. Furthermore, if a white citizen is victimized by crime in a black city, it has greater ramifications for evaluations of the police than if the victimization had occurred in a white city. All of this suggests that whites' views of the police may be more racialized than the views of African Americans.

Key words: attitudes toward police; race and police; racial context.

It is well known that African Americans and whites hold different views of the police. The underpinnings of these differences are both historical and current, having their basis in both the role of the police in maintaining social order and the position of African Americans as a minority group. Historically, the relationship between blacks and the police has been problematic, fluctuating from being mildly strained to openly confrontational. For more than half of the twentieth century, the police enforced Jim Crow laws in the South, and they did so in ways that ranged from being simply disrespectful of blacks to being

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brutally oppressive. Current issues involve police brutality, racial profiling, and generally more aggressive policing of blacks and their neighborhoods. Furthermore, the crime problem in the United States has become racially charged due to higher crime rates in minority neighborhoods, exaggerated media portrayals (Entman, 1992; Peffley, Shields, and Williams, 1996), and the political rhetoric of politicians who talk about crime in racially coded language (Edsall and Edsall, 1991; Jamieson, 1992; Mendelberg, 2001). Given all of this, racial differences in attitudes toward the police are quite predictable.

However, most of the research on racial differences in attitudes toward the police has been conducted in majority white contexts. There is reason to believe that in majority black contexts, such as majority black cities, the attitudes of blacks toward the police are more positive, and possibly more positive than whites' attitudes. This research examines the relationship between race and attitudes toward the police in majority black versus majority white cities and addresses the following questions. (a) Does racial context change the "typical" relationship between race and evaluations of the police? (b) What are the effects of race compared to perceptions of crime and actual victimization on evaluations of police? Do these effects vary with racial context? (c) What role do racism (among whites) and black consciousness (among African Americans) play in evaluating the police? Does the effect of racial attitudes change from white to black contexts?

These questions address a fundamental issue of legitimacy. The police make it possible for American citizens to enjoy a peaceful and orderly life. Nevertheless, a second, and more controversial, interpretation of their role is that the police maintain racial oppression in the interest of the majority (white) society. Does the racial composition of one's context affect attitudes toward law enforcement and thus the legitimacy of local government? As the United States becomes more ethnically diverse, white citizens will increasingly live in circumstances where they are the racial or ethnic minority, and blacks and Hispanics will increasingly live in circumstances where they are the majority. How will these changes affect citizen evaluations of the local authorities, especially the most visible arm of local government, the police?

AFRICAN AMERICANS' RELATIONS WITH THE POLICE

Research has demonstrated that African Americans and whites have different experiences with the police. Blacks are more likely than whites to report having experienced involuntary, uncivil, or adversarial contacts with the police; to be stopped, questioned, and/or searched without cause or due process; and to experience verbal or physical abuse personally (Browning, Cullen, Cao, Kopache, and Stevenson, 1994; Flanagan and Vaughn, 1996; Harris, 1997). In the largest survey ever conducted in the United States regarding contacts

with police, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that African Americans and Hispanics were more likely to experience a threat of force, or the actual use of force, by the police as a result of contact with the police (Langan, Greenfield, Smith, Durose, and Levin, 2001, p. 7). Also, African American drivers stopped by the police were more likely than white drivers to be ticketed, arrested, or have their vehicle searched (Langan et al., 2001, p. 22).

The relationship between African Americans and the police is complicated by the pattern of greater criminal activity in black neighborhoods, which creates a dilemma for the police in terms of what should be the proper balance between maintaining public order and civility and aggressively fighting crime. Vigil (1989) studied police relations in a high crime Los Angeles housing project and described the duality of residents' relations with the police. Either there is no police presence whatsoever and crime is uncontrolled, or the police engage in violent and aggressive attempts to control crime. Naturally, residents are upset by this duality of underpolicing vs. overpolicing (Vigil, 1989, pp. 45–49). Mark Moore (1991) has also studied police/community relations in areas with high levels of youth violence:

The police could make two responses that would be racist and perceived as such. One is to ignore the problem because neither victims nor offenders are judged worth saving. The other is to use broad fears in the wider community as an occasion for cracking down. (p. 19)

Thus, the central dilemma in African Americans' relationship with the police is fear of the police because of historic abuse, while at the same time desiring police protection from criminal elements that are disproportionately present in their communities.

RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN VIEWS OF POLICE

In addition to the literature on police/minority interactions, there is a well-established body of research demonstrating substantial differences in the way that African Americans and whites view the police. Race has long been a strong predictor of the attitudes toward the police, with African Americans more likely than whites to express unfavorable attitudes toward various aspects of policing (Campbell and Schuman, 1968; Decker, 1981; Smith, Graham, and Adams, 1991). A report produced by the Bureau of Justice Statistics finds that, while overall satisfaction with law enforcement is high, black Americans are twice as likely as whites to be dissatisfied with the police in major metropolitan areas (Greenfield, Langan, and Smith, 1997). More recently, another Bureau of Justice Statistics national survey confirms the results of earlier studies and reports that, while the police enjoy a generally favorable image among the

public, racial differences continue to exist. African Americans are less likely than whites to express a favorable opinion of the police, to have confidence in the police, or to think the police should use force in any situation (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). Finally, in studies of both the Los Angeles area and the Detroit area, wide interracial gulfs were found in perceptions of the extent of racism and discrimination among the city's police (Sigelman, Welch, Bledsoe, and Combs, 1997; Tuch and Weitzer, 1997; Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, and Combs, 2001, pp. 144–149).

Even on matters regarding the efficiency with which the police provide their services to communities, African Americans hold less favorable views than whites. On the issue of response time, which is universally regarded to be an important standard measure of the efficiency of police service, African Americans express a higher level of dissatisfaction with police than whites (Bloch, 1974, pp. 22–25; Fogelson, 1968, pp. 217–247; Furstenberg and Wellford, 1973, pp. 393–406).

This evidence of racial polarization in police evaluations is suggestive of a relationship between racial attitudes and police evaluations. White racial attitudes have been shown to predict a wide variety of attitudes and behaviors (Bobo, 2000; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, and Kosterman, 1997; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman, 2000). Furthermore, the effects of racial attitudes are demonstrably stronger than any personal disadvantage a white person may have experienced (Bobo, 2000; Sears et al., 1997). Therefore, we expect whites with conservative racial attitudes to have more positive evaluations of the police in white cities, but more negative evaluations of the police in black cities. Black racial attitudes also have empirical significance in existing research, particularly the concept of black consciousness (Dawson, 1994; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson, 1989; Verba and Nie, 1972). We hypothesize that blacks with greater levels of black consciousness will have more positive evaluations of the police in black cities, but more negative evaluations of the police in white cities.

CRIME-BASED FACTORS

In addition to racial factors, perceptions of crime and experiences with crime are criteria by which citizens may evaluate the police. Since the primary purpose of the police is to prevent and solve crime, it is reasonable to assume that these crime-based factors will play an important role in the formation of police evaluations. Research from Atlanta and Washington D.C. indicate that, as the actual rates of crime in respondents' neighborhoods increase, their evaluations of the police become more negative (Parker, Onyekwuluje, and Murty, 1995). Also, fear of crime relates negatively to evaluations of the police in four communities in Los Angeles (Hennigan, Maxson, Sloane, and Ranney, 2002).

Nevertheless, the question of the independent effects of the crime-based factors while controlling for other variables remains largely unanswered. The previous research relies on bivariate correlations to demonstrate relationships, and none of this research has considered the effects of racial context as a conditioning factor. Thus, our model of police evaluations must include crime-based factors as explanatory variables.

THE ROLE OF RACIAL CONTEXT

The relationship between race and attitudes toward the police may well be different in majority black cities, defined in this research as having a majority black population, an African American mayor, and a majority black police force. One of the outstanding results of black political development over the last 30 years has been the election of numerous African American mayors in majority black cities. New Orleans, Detroit, Atlanta, Birmingham, and Washington D.C. have had continuous African American mayoral leadership for more than 20 years. What is lacking is a rigorous comparison of the racial polarization in these black "empowerment" cities to majority white cities. Perry's (1997, 2000, 2002) research on Birmingham and New Orleans suggests that leadership provided by African American mayors can play a critically important role in improving the relationship between the city's police and its black citizens. But the analysis lacks the crucial comparison to whites in New Orleans and Birmingham, and is not based on individual level attitudinal data. Other research cited earlier comes from either majority nonblack settings, for example, Los Angeles, or from national data.

What is it about a majority black setting that potentially changes the relationship between race and police evaluations? Social dominance theory tells us that societies are organized around the notion of dominant and subordinate groups with the dominant groups possessing a disproportionate amount of wealth, power, status, and so forth. The dominant group will naturally seek to maintain its dominance through instrumental and psychological means (Sidanius, 1993, Sidanius and Pratto, 1999, Sidanius, Singh, Hetts, and Federico, 2000). Thus, the "trading places" phenomenon represented by a majority black city with a black mayor is a violation of expected group positions. As such it has great significance to both the previously subordinate group and the previously dominant group. For the previously subordinate group it means that they have some hope of access to the privileges and material goods of the previously dominant group. For the previously dominant group it means anxiety about losing their privileged status and its benefits.

Research supports the impact of racial context on both whites and blacks. Among whites, the percentage of blacks in the local population has been

shown to affect animosity toward blacks and racial policy attitudes (Glaser, 1994; Taylor, 1998, 2000), as well as voting and party registration (Giles and Buckner, 1993; Giles and Hertz, 1994). Among blacks, the contextual factor utilized in most research is the presence of a black mayor, that is, actual political empowerment, not just the potential for empowerment. Having a black mayor is associated with a number of positive civic traits, such as trust in local government, efficacy, political information, and political participation (Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Gilliam and Kaufman, 1998). Empowerment clearly gives a psychic boost to blacks, which is exactly what social dominance theory would predict.

Evaluations of police are already racialized, so a change in the racial balance of power should impact these evaluations. Specifically, we predict that a majority black city with a black mayor and a black police force will improve black attitudes toward the police. At the same time, we predict that white attitudes in majority black cities with black mayors and black police forces will be more negative than in majority white cities with white mayors and white police forces, based on the notion of white anxiety about maintaining their social dominance in the face of the black majority. The result is that the racial polarization we normally observe in evaluations of police should disappear or reverse in majority black settings.

In addition, racial context is expected to influence the impact of crime-based factors on police evaluations. While negative perceptions of crime ideally should be related to negative evaluations of police in all contexts and among all racial groups, we doubt if this is the case given the racialization of crime and law enforcement. Whites' minority status, coupled with the stereotype of black criminality, is hypothesized to magnify the effect of crime on evaluations of the police in the black cities. We expect a parallel pattern among blacks, a magnification in the strength of the relationship between crime-based factors and evaluations of the police in white cities. This expectation is based on their minority status and their fear of overzealous and indiscriminant treatment from the white police force.

Finally, racial context is expected to prime racial attitudes in both racial groups. That is, white racial attitudes are primed in a black city, and black racial attitudes are primed in a white city. Thus, our expectation is that the racial attitudes of both blacks and whites have more impact on police evaluations when they are in the minority.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data for this research are from surveys of African-American and non-black (hereafter called "white" for simplicity)¹ registered voters in four large cities: Chicago, New Orleans, Detroit, and Charlotte, NC. While these data

were not originally collected to address the topic of police evaluations, the cities selected are quite appropriate for a study of race and police. The four cities represent two very different racial contexts. Two of these cities, Detroit and New Orleans, have majority black populations, black mayors, and majority black police forces. The other two, Chicago and Charlotte, are majority non-black, with white mayors and white police forces. In addition, the minority race comprises at least 20% of each city's population, and all four cities have a history of black/white racial tension. We avoided western and southwestern cities with large numbers of Hispanics in order to focus on the black/white relationship.²

With four cities the question of generalizability inevitably arises. We make no claim that these cities represent some larger population. We are, however, moving beyond the typical single-city approach used in urban research to conduct identical studies in four cities representing two very different racial contexts.

There is also the question of other differences between the black and white cities that could account for the findings, such as levels of crime, actual police behavior, or the racial composition of respondents' neighborhoods. Some of these explanations will be examined empirically and eliminated. However, other differences between the black cities and the white cities, such as level of poverty, are impossible to eliminate. Our central argument, given the previous research supporting the impact of a black racial context and the role of race as the primary social and political cleavage in the United States (Kinder and Sanders, 1996), is that the "color" of one's environment has an impact over and above any related specific factors.

Within each city a nearly equal number of African Americans and whites were interviewed. Thus, instead of a cross-sectional representation of each city, we have maximized variation on the key variable of race (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994).³ Cross-sectional random digit dialing samples of each city's blacks and whites were utilized with a screen for registered voters. In order to reach an equal number of minority race respondents, whether white or African American, oversamples of 40% or more minority race concentration were used to obtain the needed number. More detail on the sampling procedure is provided in the appendix. The final data contain 253 blacks and 251 whites from New Orleans, 282 blacks and 250 whites from Detroit, 273 whites and 255 blacks from Charlotte, and 250 whites and 262 blacks from Chicago.

The dependent variable, *evaluations of police*, is an additive scale composed of respondents' ratings of five items: the overall quality of police protection, police response time, police effectiveness in apprehending suspects, police courtesy, and how well the police avoid excessive force. The scale was recoded to range from 0, the lowest evaluation of the police, to 1, the highest evalua-

tion. The reliability of this scale is quite high as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of .81 or .82 in all four cities.

Respondents were also asked whether they thought crime was increasing or decreasing in their city, whether someone in their household had been a victim of crime in the past 3 years, their racial attitudes, political party, ideology, and some standard demographics.

Among white respondents, *symbolic racism* is measured by a four-item scale composed of whether respondents think blacks are getting less than they deserve, whether they think blacks should just try harder, whether blacks should "work their way up" like other minorities, and whether past slavery and discrimination have limited blacks' opportunities (Cronbach's $\alpha = .55$). These four items were selected due to their inclusion in the 1986–1994 American National Election Studies.

Racial *group conflict* is measured by four items developed by Bobo and Hutchings (1996) that measures whites views of racial competition for resources. The items ask whether respondents agree or disagree with statements about whether good jobs for blacks mean less good jobs for other groups, whether more black influence in local politics means less influence for other groups, whether more neighborhoods going to blacks means fewer neighborhoods for other groups, and whether blacks try to get ahead at the expense of whites (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$).

Our measures of African American racial attitudes are Dawson's (1994) indicator of linked fate (p. 77) and four items measuring black solidarity, all of which have been utilized in one or more of the National Black Election Studies. *Linked fate* is measured by a single indicator that assesses whether African American respondents perceive a connection between what happens to blacks in the country as a whole and their own situation as individual African Americans. The *black solidarity* items ask the respondents about the importance of voting for black candidates, participating in black-only organizations, and having control over the economy and government in mostly black communities (Cronbach's α for black solidarity = .78).

RACE AND EVALUATIONS OF THE POLICE

As expected from the previous literature, there is racial polarization on the police evaluation scale, with white respondents generally giving the police more positive evaluations than African-American respondents (Table 1). The more interesting findings are the patterns across cities. First, racial polarization is clearly greater in the white cities than in the black cities, as measured by the correlations between race and the police evaluations scale. In Detroit there are no significant differences between African Americans and whites, and in New Orleans, the correlation between being black and giving the police

TABLE 1. Police Evaluation Scale by Race and City (scale ranges from 0 to 1)

Police Evaluations	New Orleans		Detroit		Charlotte		Chicago	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
Low, 0–0.25	11.1%	11.2%	15.7%	17.7%	7.9%	1.4%	14.8%	8.7%
0.30–0.50	47.4	27.3	47.5	37.7	25.9	8.8	45.1	25.7
0.55–0.75	38.0	52.4	33.4	37.7	53.4	63.2	37.0	48.0
High, 0.80–1.0	3.6	9.2	3.6	7.0	12.7	26.6	3.4	17.7
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mean	.49	.54	.47	.48	.57	.69	.46	.58
Std. Dev.	.17	.21	.19	.21	.19	.14	.18	.20
N	253	252	282	250	256	273	262	250
Correlation Between Race (Black) and Police Scale	-.136**		-.030		-.325***		-.300***	

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

positive evaluations is a weak $-.136$. However, in both white cities the same relationships are $-.30$ or stronger.

Second, contrary to our expectation, African Americans do not evaluate the police in the black cities higher than they do in the white cities. This runs counter to Bobo and Gilliam’s (1990) finding of greater black trust in government and efficacy in black “empowerment zones.” Apparently, at the bivariate level, the boost in civic attitudes associated with having an African American mayor does not extend to more positive evaluations of the police. It is also consistent with prior research on New Orleans showing that blacks do not hold more positive perceptions of city services than whites in the city (Howell and McLean, 2001). The finding is even more significant when we consider that both black cities have a majority black police force.

Perhaps police conduct is “objectively” better in the white cities. First, we should point out that crime trends or levels are no worse in the black cities than in the white cities (Fig. 1). At the time of interviewing, Detroit had the highest but a relatively stable violent crime rate, and New Orleans had the lowest and a declining violent crime rate. Second, as measured by citizen complaints of police misconduct, police in the white cities are not necessarily better. New Orleans and Chicago registered the highest number of citizen complaints with 14.4 and 13.5 complaints per 10,000 residents in 2000, followed by Detroit with 9.6 and Charlotte with 3.3.⁴ We suggest that, among blacks, the lack of a relationship between living in a black city and having positive evaluations of the police may be that concerns remain about the po-

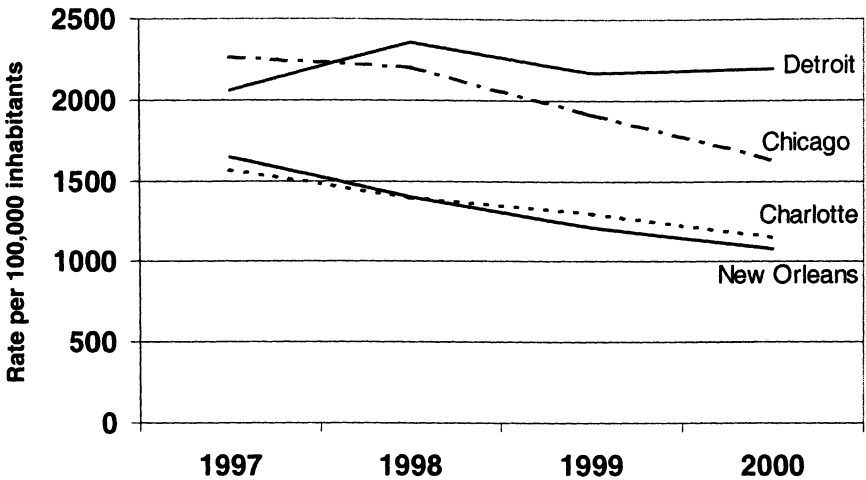


FIG. 1. Violent crime rates.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports.

lice as agents of social control, and the historic hostility between blacks and the police is unlikely to be overcome by simply having a black mayor and a black police force.⁵

White respondents, however, evaluate the police more positively in the white cities than in the black cities. Combining this with the finding that racial context makes no difference to blacks' police evaluations, we conclude that it is the white citizens who are producing the greater racial polarization in the white cities.

RACE AND CRIME-BASED FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF EVALUATIONS OF THE POLICE

Next we turn to a comparison of race versus crime-based factors as predictors of evaluations of the police. The fundamental purpose of the police is to control crime, whether it is through apprehending suspects or crime prevention programs such as community policing. Therefore, citizens' evaluations of the police should be based primarily on how effective they believe their police are in controlling crime. The crime-based factors in this research are whether the respondent thinks crime is increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same in his or her city, and whether the respondent or a household member has been a victim of crime in the past 3 years.

The crime-based measures and race are entered into multivariate models of

police evaluations along with controls for partisanship, ideology, neighborhood racial composition,⁶ and standard demographics (Table 2). The dependent variable in these models is the scale of police evaluations from Table 1. The first conclusion to be drawn from the models is that race matters more in the white cities than in the black cities; in fact, in the two black cities race is not even statistically significant. The direction of the coefficients in the white cities is in the expected direction, indicating less positive evaluations of the police among African Americans. We estimate the magnitude of this difference in black versus white cities by pooling the data and adding an interaction between race of respondent and racial composition of the city (Table 2B). The results indicate that being African American in a white city is associated with an 8.4% negative movement on the police evaluation scale. However, being African American in a black city (the interaction) eliminates all of this effect. Furthermore, the racial effect in the two white cities is robust. The bivariate regression coefficients associated with race in Table 2A retain 70% and 86% of their original value when 10 control variables, including the crime-based factors and neighborhood racial composition, are added to the models.

Second, the crime-based factors of perceptions of increasing crime and victimization are not clearly more influential in either black or white cities. The coefficients for victimization are quite similar across all cities and can be interpreted to mean that victimization results in a 6%–8% movement down the police evaluation scale regardless of the race of the victim. The effects of perceptions of increasing crime are very similar in New Orleans, Detroit, and Chicago, indicating that those who think crime is increasing are about 8%–10% lower on the police evaluation scale. In contrast, the Charlotte police, who are consistently the most highly evaluated of the four police forces studied, are barely affected by perceptions of increasing or decreasing crime rates.

Third, and perhaps most significant, is that *the racial polarization in police evaluations in the white cities is as strong or stronger than the effects of the crime-based factors in those cities*. This is a strong statement regarding the strength of racial differences in the white cities. It means that, no matter how well the police *do*, they are still disliked more by African Americans than by whites in the majority white cities. On the other hand, in the black cities, the crime-based factors are clearly more influential than race. Thus, the standard finding that African Americans are more negative toward the police than whites may only apply to majority white contexts.

RACIAL ATTITUDES AND EVALUATIONS OF POLICE

What is the impact of racial attitudes on evaluations of the police? Answering this question requires estimating separate models for African Americans and whites that incorporate the appropriate racial attitudes. Among whites,

TABLE 2. Race and Approval of the Police

A.	New Orleans	Detroit	Charlotte	Chicago
Bivariate b	-.052** (.017)	-.012 (.017)	-.117*** (.015)	-.121*** (.017)
<i>OLS Regression Model</i>				
Race (black)	-.007 (.020)	-.010 (.022)	-.082*** (.021)	-.104*** (.024)
Age	.017** (.006)	.026*** (.006)	.013* (.006)	.016** (.006)
Income	.012 ^a (.006)	-.000 (.007)	-.006 (.006)	-.005 (.006)
Education	.005 (.008)	.012 (.008)	.018* (.008)	.001 (.007)
Gender (female)	.029 (.017)	-.004 (.019)	.003 (.016)	.018 (.018)
Party Identification	.019 (.014)	-.013 (.016)	.006 (.012)	-.010 (.015)
Ideology	.009 (.013)	.016 (.014)	-.006 (.012)	.028 ^a (.013)
Black Neighbrhd	-.057 (.037)	-.012 (.043)	-.061 ^a (.036)	-.053 (.037)
Crime Increasing	-.101*** (.022)	-.096*** (.024)	-.036 ^a (.022)	-.080** (.023)
Victimization	-.080*** (.019)	-.070*** (.020)	-.075*** (.018)	-.064** (.018)
Adj. R ²	.14	.10	.17	.19
N	421	434	442	427
<i>B. Pooled Model</i>				
Race		-.084*** (.015)		
Black City		-.128*** (.013)		
Race × Black City		.082*** (.018)		
Adj. R ²		.19		
N		1724		

Note: Cell entries are unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors are given in parentheses.

^a*p* < .10, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001; all models contain a control for race of interviewer.

the expectation is that the more conservative the racial attitudes, the more positive the attitudes toward the police. Among African Americans the expectation is that the higher the black consciousness, the lower the evaluations of the police. However, the racial context is expected to alter, or even reverse, these expectations.

Table 3 presents the models for white respondents in all four cities. The results in the white cities are different from the results in the black cities in ways that confirm the racialization of whites' attitudes toward police. First, whites who perceive the most group conflict between whites and African Americans are more negative toward the police than those who perceive less conflict, but only in the black cities. This makes sense given the historical position of whites as the privileged race in America. When whites live in black cities, they may see the police as less protective of their privileged position. The magnitude of these effects is quite strong; movement from perceiving the least conflict with blacks to perceiving the most conflict with blacks is associated with a change of 16%–20% down the scale of police evaluations. In contrast, in the white cities, the effects of white racial attitudes on police evaluations are insignificant. The difference between the impact of white racism in the white cities compared to the impact of white racism in the black cities can be seen in the second column of Table 3B. The interaction between group conflict and black city approaches significance and means that the effects of white racism in the white cities ($-.073$) is more than doubled in the black cities ($-.073 + (-.090) = -.163$).

Second, the effects of perceptions of crime are much stronger for whites in the black cities than in the white cities. That is, if a white person perceives crime as increasing in a black city, it results in a more negative evaluation of the police in that city. However, there are no consequences for police evaluations in white cities if a white person perceives crime as increasing. The interaction effects in the third column of Table 3B indicate that the impact of crime perceptions in white cities is insignificant, but in black cities, perceptions of increasing crime results in a 13% movement down the police evaluations scale. So, the police in black cities are held accountable by white citizens for their beliefs about the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the police in combating crime in a way that the police in white cities are not held accountable.

In a similar vein, the effects of victimization are stronger for whites in the black cities than for whites in the white cities. In the case of victimization, the racial context effects are not as strong, but they are in the same direction and have the same substantive interpretation. That is, if a white person is victimized in a black city, it probably results in a more negative evaluation of the police in that city. However, there are no consequences for police evaluations in white cities if a white person is victimized.

TABLE 3. Racial Attitudes and Approval of the Police Among Whites

A.	New Orleans	Detroit	Charlotte	Chicago
Symbolic Racism	.061 (.071)	-.061 (.071)	.006 (.047)	.112 ^a (.061)
Group Conflict	-.200** (.056)	-.164** (.060)	-.051 (.048)	-.053 (.054)
Age	.009 (.009)	.035** (.010)	.001 (.008)	.025* (.010)
Income	.020* (.009)	-.017 (.012)	-.003 (.008)	-.006 (.009)
Education	-.014 (.012)	.016 (.013)	.018 ^a (.010)	.011 (.012)
Gender (female)	.000 (.028)	-.037 (.031)	-.004 (.019)	-.015 (.027)
Party Identification	.010 (.020)	.007 (.024)	.004 (.013)	-.003 (.020)
Ideology	.026 (.022)	.031 (.023)	.006 (.015)	.036 ^a (.019)
Black Neighbrhd	-.077 (.057)	-.000 (.061)	-.091 ^a (.050)	-.103 ^a (.055)
Crime Increasing	-.124** (.038)	-.110** (.039)	-.044 (.028)	-.044 (.038)
Victimization	-.079** (.029)	-.077* (.030)	-.026 (.021)	-.039 (.028)
Adj. R^2	.19	.17	.04	.07
N	198	189	214	198
B. Pooled Model				
Symbolic Racism	.045 (.031)	.046 (.032)	.043 (.031)	
Group Conflict	-.123*** (.027)	-.073 ^a (.040)	-.071 ^a (.039)	
Crime Increasing	-.057** (.017)	-.054** (.017)	.011 (.024)	
Victimization	-.060*** (.014)	-.059*** (.014)	-.033 ^a (.020)	
Black City	-.117*** (.013)	-.090*** (.021)	-.147*** (.030)	
Group Conflict × Black City		-.090 ^a (.052)	-.074 (.052)	
Victimization × Black City			-.049 ^a (.027)	
Crime × Black City			-.130*** (.033)	
Adj. R^2	.23	.23	.24	
N	799	799	799	

Note: Cell entries are unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors are given in parentheses.

^a $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; all models contain a control for race of interviewer.

Finally, simply living in a black city is associated with lower evaluations of the police among white residents, regardless of their racial attitudes, their perceptions of crime, or whether they have been victims. When the four cities are pooled, as in Table 3B column one, whites in black cities are 11.7% lower on the police evaluation scale, net of other factors. Additionally, the explanatory power is quite low in the white cities ($R^2 = .04$ and $.07$), while the explanatory power is respectable in the black cities ($R^2 = .19$ and $.17$), indicating that whites' attitudes toward the police in the white cities are less dependent on the factors in the models. All of these findings are even more convincing when we consider that the models control for both whites' income and the racial composition of their neighborhoods.

Turning to the impact of African American racial attitudes on police evaluations, it appears that both types of black consciousness have generally insignificant effects on blacks' evaluations of the police (Table 4). In contrast, the crime-based factors of victimization and perceptions of increasing crime are significant almost across the board. Among African Americans, victimization results in a 6%–10% decrease in police evaluations, and perceiving crime as increasing is associated with a 5%–10% decrease in police evaluations. Pooling the cities and entering Black City as a variable indicates that blacks have slightly lower evaluations of the police in black cities, but this finding is a function of the unusually high police evaluations in Charlotte only. Thus, we are reluctant to draw a conclusion on the basis of this weak coefficient.⁷

A final approach to the effects of racial context is to compare the impact of crime-based factors on evaluations of police among whites versus blacks in the same city, that is, comparing coefficients in Table 3 to coefficients in Table 4. A traditional statistical comparison of coefficients in these two tables cannot be computed because the racial attitudes are asked of only one race, and listwise deletion would eliminate all of the cases. However, a visual comparison across Tables 3 and 4 indicates that, within the black cities, perceptions of increasing crime affect whites more than blacks, and, within white cities, victimization affects blacks more than whites. When whites find themselves in the minority, they are more likely than blacks to react to collective judgments about the social environment. Blacks, on the other hand, when in their "normal" minority position are more likely than whites to blame the (white) police for their personal victimization.

Overall, whites' evaluations of the police are more responsive to racial factors. Whites' opinions of the police are affected by the racial composition of the city and by their own racial attitudes if they live in a majority black city. Also, they are more affected by both perceptions of crime and by being victimized in a black city compared to the same events/perceptions in a white city. Some observers might wonder why the whites who stay in black cities are so quick to blame the police. Why have they not become comfortable with black

TABLE 4. Racial Attitudes and Approval of the Police Among Blacks

A.	New Orleans	Detroit	Charlotte	Chicago
Black Solidarity	-.120* (.048)	.006 (.053)	-.002 (.059)	-.089 (.054)
Linked Fate	-.044 (.028)	.008 (.030)	-.047 (.032)	-.038 (.030)
Age	.019* (.008)	.018 ^a (.010)	.021* (.010)	.013 (.008)
Income	.017 ^a (.009)	.005 (.010)	-.008 (.011)	-.001 (.009)
Education	.011 (.010)	.002 (.011)	.021 ^a (.012)	-.008 (.010)
Gender (female)	.033 (.023)	.013 (.026)	.014 (.028)	.033 (.024)
Party Identification	.012 (.022)	-.040 (.024)	-.003 (.024)	-.034 (.024)
Ideology	-.006 (.018)	.001 (.020)	-.019 (.020)	.003 (.017)
Black Neighbrhd	.022 (.048)	-.054 (.062)	-.063 (.057)	.010 (.050)
Crime Increasing	-.056* (.027)	-.079* (.033)	-.012 (.037)	-.102** (.029)
Victimization	-.085** (.024)	-.069* (.028)	-.106*** (.030)	-.088*** (.025)
Adj. R^2	.14	.06	.09	.14
N	217	242	216	222
B. Pooled Model				
Black Solidarity	-.047 ^a (.026)			
Linked Fate	-.032* (.015)			
Crime Increasing	-.050** (.015)			
Victimization	-.090*** (.013)			
Black City	-.046*** (.012)			
Adj. R^2				
N				

Note: Cell entries are unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors are given in parentheses.

^a $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; all models contain a control for race of interviewer.

authority or simply fled to the suburbs? Exploring the reasons whites stay in majority black cities is beyond the scope of this research, but their lack of comfort with black authority is clearly predicted by social dominance theory. The theory stipulates that groups are acutely aware of their position in the social order, and, for whites, the social order has been reversed in majority black cities, producing anxiety about change and sensitivity to their new minority status. Just because whites in majority black contexts have "accepted" black leadership as inevitable, does not mean that they are psychologically comfortable with it.⁸

How can we reconcile these findings with the usual focus on negative evaluations of the police by African Americans, which implies that their opinions of the police are most affected by racial factors? We offer three points in the way of explanation. First, given the history of African American mistreatment by police, it is certainly the case that black wariness of police is warranted. Research has emphasized this strained black/police relationship, giving the impression that blacks respond to racial factors more than whites, when, in truth, such inferences cannot be made. Second, African Americans are sometimes openly critical of the police when public attention is brought to repeated and/or highly publicized examples of excessive use of force by the police against African Americans. This focuses attention on the negative attitudes of African Americans. Less attention is given to the subsequent reconciliation if the mayor and/or the police chief give genuine assurances that these incidences of excessive use of force by the police are being investigated and that appropriate remedies will be put in place. African Americans may then return to their preincidence level of support of the police. This is precisely what happened in Los Angeles following the Rodney King beating by the Los Angeles police (Tuch and Weitzer, 1997).

Finally, the neglect of racial context variance in the urban literature contributes to the absence of a proper understanding of African Americans' relationship with the police. Most prior research has been conducted in contexts where African Americans are the minority race. Examining majority black contexts reveals that whites' reaction to racial context is greater than African Americans' reaction to racial context. Furthermore, whites' racial attitudes come into play in majority minority contexts, whereas African Americans' racial attitudes are almost irrelevant in both contexts.

CONCLUSION

Since the mid-1960s a growing number of citizens, scholars, and policy analysts have expressed concerns about police-community relations and citizens' attitudes toward the police and police behavior. These concerns have always had a strong undercurrent of race as the lynchpin of the tensions be-

tween the police and citizens, and this undercurrent has become more manifest over the last two decades. Previous research clearly indicates that, due to a history of differential treatment, African Americans are more negative than whites toward the police, controlling for many other explanatory factors.

This study highlights a key deficiency in previous research on evaluations of the police. Racial context, that is, whether the city is majority white or majority black, alters the effects that race and racial attitudes have on evaluations of the police. In the two majority black cities studied, the relationship between race and police evaluations disappears, and it disappears because whites become more negative in a majority black context.

Our findings are indicative of the reactions of whites when the "normal" social order is reversed. In a majority black context, whites, who are accustomed to holding the dominant position in society, show a tendency to penalize the police, a social institution that they typically embrace. White racial attitudes affect police evaluations in majority black contexts, but not in white contexts, while African American racial attitudes are inconsequential in both contexts. In addition, if a white citizen is victimized by crime in a black city, or believes that crime is increasing, it has greater ramifications for his or her evaluations of the police than if the victimization or the beliefs about crime had occurred in a white city. None of this can be attributed to higher crime rates, more citizen complaints about the police, or different neighborhood racial patterns in the black cities. What this does suggest is that whites' views of the police may be more racialized than African Americans' views of the police.

Social dominance theory predicts that when groups change their positions in the social order, our models must also change. If current demographic trends continue, there will be more majority African American and majority Hispanic contexts in the future, and whites will be more likely to face minority status. Our findings imply that, when race or ethnicity is involved, models of attitudes must take into account the sociopsychological effects produced by the contexts people experience. At a minimum doing so will allow urban researchers and scholars to rethink some of the conventional understanding about the racial dynamics of urban life and at the maximum may allow urban researchers to capture the effects of racial transformations. Our research suggests that one consequence of African American urban empowerment is that whites' attitudes toward the police in these empowerment cities will become more racialized. If we are on to something here, this "trading places" phenomenon represents an important development in urban politics and should be studied in areas beyond police evaluations.

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APPENDIX

The Surveys

The Mayoral Approval Surveys were conducted between May and August 2000 in four cities—New Orleans, Detroit, Chicago, and Charlotte—by the University of New Orleans Survey Research Center. The National Science Foundation funded the research (Award # 9986165) on which this study is based. All surveys included only registered voters. Nearly equal numbers of blacks and whites were interviewed in each city in order to maximize variance on race, a key independent variable. Thus, the samples do not represent cross sections of each city's registered voters, but they do represent a cross section of whites and blacks in each city. Samples, drawn by Survey sampling of Fairfield, CT, used a random digit dialing procedure to which the survey center applied a screen for registered voters.

Response Rate #3 in AAPOR'S *Standard Definitions: Final Disposition of Case Codes and Outcome Rates and RDD Telephone Surveys and In-Person Household Surveys* was utilized. The response rates in the four cities were as follows: New Orleans 63%, Chicago 55%, Charlotte 58%, and Detroit 53%. These response rates are quite respectable when you consider that half of the sample is urban minorities, a largely low-income group that is more difficult to include in telephone surveys.

Interviewers for all four surveys were university students. The interviews were conducted from a central phone bank, with constant supervision by a graduate student. The survey center used a CATI system to manage the sample, and as many as fifteen attempts were made to reach respondents.

Question Wording

Police Evaluations: I would like to ask you about government and government services in the city. Is each of the following aspects of government very good, good, fair, poor, or very poor? Police Protection.

How would you rate the XX police on the following? The ability of the XX police to respond quickly to calls for help and assistance? The ability of the police to find the criminals after a crime has been committed? Being courteous, helpful and friendly? Avoiding the use of unnecessary or excessive force?

Symbolic Racism: (1) Over the past few years blacks have gotten less than they deserve (agree strongly to disagree strongly). (2) Irish, Italians, Jews and other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors. (3) In past studies, we have asked people why they think white people

seem to get more of the good things in life in America—such as better jobs and more money—than black people do. These are some of the reasons given by both blacks and whites. It's really just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites. 4) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

Group Conflict: (1) More good jobs for blacks means fewer good jobs for members of other groups (agree strongly to disagree strongly). (2) The more influence blacks have in local politics the less influence members of other groups will have in politics. (3) As more good housing and neighborhoods go to blacks, the fewer good houses and neighborhoods there will be for members of other groups. (4) Many blacks have been trying to get ahead at the expense of other groups.

Black Linked Fate: Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life? (if Yes) Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much?

Black Solidarity: How important is it for blacks to vote for black candidates when they run for office: extremely important, very important or only somewhat important? (not very important: volunteered). To participate in black-only organizations whenever possible? To have control over the government in mostly black communities? To have control over the economy in mostly black communities?

Crime Increasing: Turning to crime and safety . . . would you say that the amount of crime in (city) has increased, decreased, or remained about the same over the last several years?

Victimization: Have you or anyone in your family been a victim of crime in the city in the past three years?

NOTES

1. Self-identified whites dominate the nonblack registered voter samples from each city: New Orleans = 95%, Detroit = 83%, Charlotte = 91%, Chicago = 80%.
2. The original purpose of these data was a study of mayoral approval, which required that the mayor have been in office at least three years prior to data collection. We also stipulated that the black mayors must not be the first black mayor in order to avoid the novelty factor. These criteria narrowed the choice of cities.
3. As a result, we have nearly an equal number of African Americans and whites living in a city with a white majority as African Americans and whites living in a city with an African-American majority. Furthermore, it is not the location—Chicago or Detroit—that matters conceptually. It is the racial composition of the city and its leadership that is of concern to this study. Thus, the samples were designed to equally represent cells of a 2×2 table of respondent's race and race of the city and the mayor.

4. Information on citizen complaints was obtained directly from the four cities' police departments.
5. Along these lines, evidence is mixed as to whether having a black mayor and black police reduces excessive use of force against blacks (Franklin, 1989; Perry, 2003; Perry and Delmas, 1992).
6. Neighborhood racial composition is an important control because it is possible that neighborhood conditions are a determinant of evaluations of police. This was not borne out. Furthermore, an interaction of Race*Black Neighborhood was insignificant in all four cities, indicating that the impact of neighborhood racial composition did not influence one racial group more than the other.
7. To test for the impact of unusually high police evaluations in Charlotte between whites and blacks, the models for both blacks and whites were reestimated without Charlotte. The coefficient for Black City among whites was still significant, albeit smaller, at $-.069$, $p < .001$, but the coefficient for Black City among blacks was insignificant, indicating that high evaluations in Charlotte were producing the significant effects among blacks. Also, none of the interactions between black racial attitudes and black city, or between crime-based factors and black city, were significant, thus they are not included in Table 4B.
8. An alternative to the social dominance explanation is the possibility that in black cities, lower class whites suffer from poor policing because they live in racially mixed neighborhoods, while higher SES whites receive better policing. An interaction of black city*income was added to the first model in Table 3B, and its insignificance leads us to reject this explanation. Furthermore, among whites, an interaction of black city*neighborhood racial makeup is also insignificant.

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