

Accountability, Taking Responsibility and Protection of Minorities and their Influence on the Police Organization Performance

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Abstract

Transparency and accountability are the main levers of current public policy. In every public organization, citizens expect accountability, transparency and fairness. This is more intensive when we discuss about the Israeli Police which is a public organization that is allowed to activate force and to deprive the freedom of the citizen. Avidar, Sagi & Zuk (2014) argue that effective and efficient policing is the result of many factors. It depends not only on the efficiency of the police or its diligence, but also on the relationships between the police and the community that it serves. The RAND Report (2014) presents a model for efficient and effective policing which is based on procedural justice. The basis for the RAND Model (2014) is that the Israeli Police needs a more efficient strategy in developing and cultivating public support for it.

In order to influence public support for the Israeli Police, the Israeli Police should adopt a modern policing model. This is involved in adopting strategies for increasing police transparency, increasing accountability and reducing existing stigmas regarding minorities. This model has been tested and presented in this article.

Keywords: *procedural justice, transparency, accountability, fairness toward minorities, image, public sector, police.*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the discussion of the challenge faced by public representatives and public sector managers to act according to criteria of accountability and transparency has been intensifying. It is now clear that transparency and accountability are among the main levers of public policy in the twenty-first century. Using these levers can promote accountability and reporting towards citizens; improve efficiency and productivity of key government services by way of comparison and information-based supervision; could change social relations by empowering individuals and communities; could enhance economic growth. Even within the government itself, there may be a revolutionary change

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and employees are called upon to skip traditional bureaucratic barriers and boundaries, to propose ideas and to realize their "wisdom of the masses." When it comes to a public organization that is allowed to exercise force and deprive citizen of their freedom (such as is police), the subject becomes more relevant than ever. From the point of view of the police, citizen require for much greater transparency from police institution and policemen. However, only transparency does not guarantee to get the trust of citizen. One of the problems that arise is the discriminatory attitude toward minorities manifested by police officers, which occasionally provokes media storms that testify to the lack of professionalism, lack of transparency and inconsistent attitudes with accountability from police officers.

The Israeli public's perception of the Israeli Police is mixed. Although one of the common topics in the public discourse is that the Israeli Police is improving and striving for change, research shows that the dissatisfaction with the police's performance is still very widespread and prevails in all segments of Israeli society. Policemen are often described as not competent and unfair, and the quality of the police staff is perceived as not uniform. Although the majority of Israeli citizens do not come into direct contact with policemen, their positions have an influence on the performance of the police. On one hand, when the public perception that prevails is that the police suffer from many shortcomings and its ranks are populated by weak policemen, these positions may damage the collaboration with the community which is essential to the work of the police. On the other hand, when the public trusts the police, a virtuous circle is created: better policing and better results help to build citizen support, that in turn contributes to even better policing results.

A key issue in our analysis is that efficient and effective policing is the result of many factors. It depends not only on the police efficiency or effectiveness, but also on the relations between the police and the local community that it is serving. The RAND Report (2014) presents a model for effective policing based on procedural justice. The basis for the RAND Model (2014) is that the "Israeli Police needs a more efficient strategy in developing and cultivating public support for it". This is true not only when it comes to police relations with minority communities, but also when it comes to relations with all the citizen. A model of procedural justice is the key to increasing public support for the Israeli Police. The presented model of procedural justice is a model for policing which is based on the transparency of the criminal justice system and on fairness towards all citizen. There are many types of procedural justice in policing, and three common elements: police needs public support and collaboration; support and collaboration are derived from the perceived legitimacy of the police; and perceived legitimacy derives in part from police actions (Tyler, 2004).

When people believe that they have been treated fairly by police, when the procedures and decisions of the police staff are explained to them respectfully, and when they believe that their case has been heard, they are more likely to evaluate the meeting with the police as positive, even if the results of the meeting does not benefit them. Therefore,, when citizen understands police processes and rules, and

considers that they are fair, and evaluate that the police "takes responsibility" for its actions and performance, the police receives greater public support. In the State of Israel, this is of particular importance, since such an approach may also better clarify to citizen what are the purposes and procedures of the police is, and thereby make more compatible the public's expectations with the specificity and patterns of policing.

A key issue in our analysis is that efficient policing is the result of many factors. It depends not only on the police efficiency or diligence, but also on the relationships between the police and the community that it serves. The RAND Report (2014) presents a model for efficient policing based on procedural justice. The basis for the RAND Model (2014) is that the Israeli Police needs a more efficient strategy in developing and cultivating citizen support for it. There are three common elements procedural justice in policing: police need public support and collaboration; that are derived from the perceived legitimacy of the police; that derives partially from police activities (Tyler, 2004).

When people believe that they have been treated fairly by police, when the procedures and decisions of the police staff are explained to citizen respectfully, and when they believe their case has been considered, they are more likely to evaluate the contact with the police as positive, even if the results of the contact does not benefit them. More generally, when the public understands police procedures and processes, considers that they are fair, and believes that the police "take responsibility" for its actions and performance, the police receives greater public support. In the State of Israel, this is of particular importance, since such an approach may also better clarify to the public what the role of the police is, and thereby make the public's expectations and patterns of policing more compatible.

There are many possible paths to realize procedural justice. This article uses two main paths: The first is the demonstration of fairness and justice by police: the treatment of all citizens is given according to established procedures, regardless of their identity and the identity of the policemen who take care of them. Citizens are respected and treated appropriately. At this point, it is very important to identify the police's values regarding minority groups with whom they come into contact in order to create fairness. The second path is the demonstration of public responsibility by police. The police is responsible for monitoring its performance and conduct, and it must ensure that its conduct is just and fair. Information on the performance of the police is provided to the public, so that the public can judge for itself the fairness of the police. Making such information accessible, that is, ensuring "transparency" of police procedures and conduct has a crucial importance in order to enable citizens to formulate informed and reality-based conclusions regarding the police. The policemen take responsibility for their actions, admit mistakes and improve. Responsibility and accountability are critical at this point.

In our study of the Israeli Police, we assumed that in order to influence public support for the Israeli Police, the Israel Police must adopt a modern policing model. This involves adopting a strategy of increasing police transparency, increasing the accountability and reducing existing stigmas regarding minorities.

The adoption of such a model, in our opinion, will affect positively the performance of the police.

In other words, the proposed model has examined the degree of taking responsibility, accountability and transparency that exist in the public organization of the Israeli Police, with an emphasis on the treatment of all citizens according to established procedures, regardless of the identity and identity of the policemen who treat with them. As a results citizens are respected and treated appropriately, that will affect the performance level of the Israeli police.

The Research Model is presented in Figure1.

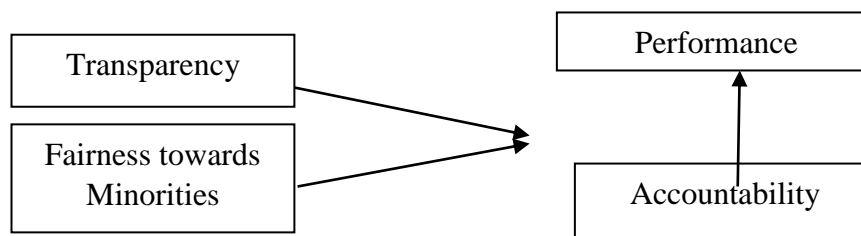


Figure 1. Research model of police performance

Four questions are at the center of the discussion: (1) Does the Israeli Police have a high level of transparency? (2) Does the Israeli police have a high level of accountability and taking responsibility? (3) Does the use of terms of transparency and accountability in the police have an influence on the policemen’s perceptions towards minorities in Israeli society? (4) And whether all these variables have an impact on the level performance of the police staff?

Our research model was examined using survey based on a special questionnaire. 300 questionnaires were distributed through the cluster model sample to policemen and police officers. A total of 184 useful questionnaires were received, that led to a response rate of 60.1% rate of response.

First research variable is sccountability, defined as the degree to which the leader demonstrates openness, takes responsibility and the degree to which the leader has the ability to respond to his/her actions (Wood & Winston, 2005). They define three criteria for assessing the level of accountability among leaders: responsibility, Openness and Answerability – it was examined by five items that were proposed by Wood & Winston (2005), the five items that define each concept, and among them the highest Factor-Load value was obtained.

Referring to accountability / taking responsibility, studies of Popper & Lipshitz, (1998, 2000) have shown that there is a positive relation between organizational learning culture, which includes the taking responsibility variable, for improvement of employee performance and organization performance. The contribution of the individual to the organizational learning culture was examined by “overall index of questionnaire” “based on the questionnaire for characterizing learning culture from experience in organizations”, as presented and validated by Ellis, Caridi, Lipshitz & Popper (1999).

The variable *Fairness toward Minority Groups - The Perception of Arabs / Ultra Orthodox as an Enemy / as Law Abiding / as Citizen* was defined as the extent to which police staff perceive Arabs in Israel as an enemy, as a criminal and as a citizen. It was examined by the perceptions of policemen and police officers about how members of minority groups are perceived, as law-abiding less than the majority group. The prejudice of police staff members toward minorities has been well documented in the literature (Bayley, 1966); and (Skolnick, 1986), and it is also the basis of a police practice that are known as "measuring the attitudes" by means of a scale of 20 items which were based on questionnaires that were prepared for the extreme survey that was conducted at the Institute for National Security Studies at the University of Haifa (2004), plus items from a survey which was conducted by the Israeli Police in order to identify police attitudes toward Arabs, but it was not published. The items were arranged in three scales that represent the perception of the Arabs by the police in terms of their perception of them as citizens and holders of political rights, in terms of their considering as law-abiding, and as enemies. The items were integrated into one common "Attitudes towards Arabs" scale, which included 20 items that yielded Cronbach α value of 0.89. Examples of statements: The Arabs as an enemy - "Israeli Arabs endanger the security of the state." Arabs as law abiding - "Arab society in Israel is more violent than Jewish society." Arabs as citizens - "Israeli Arabs should not be allowed to receive equal rights to those of the Jews".

Transparency represents the willingness of the public sector to be exposed to external critique and examining, to reveal data and to change its patterns of its activity as a result of this (Vigoda-Gadot & Yuval, 2001). The variable is measured by police attitudes towards the public, as proposed by Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval. Items for example: "The police show willingness to expose themselves to the public more than in the past", "the police considers public critique as an important tool for making them more efficient and to improve their action", or "the police educate its members to deliver reliable information to the public close to the event".

Organizational Performance - The organization's performance is examined against the set objectives, the environmental expectations and the purposes which were actually achieved (Shoham & Ross, 2001). The performance test was performed by using a scale that were proposed by Dess & Robinson (1984) and taken from the study of Caruana, Ramseshan & Ewing (1999). The items were adapted in order to describe the public sector and the police. We used items such as: "The overall level of performance here is". (2) "In accordance with the allocated resources allocated to it, the achieved improvement achieved is". (3) "The level of services to citizens is" (4) "The level of achievement of results here is".

The findings of this study indicate that the transparency variable was positively related to fairness towards minorities ($r=0.33$; $p < 0.05$), and similarly to the fairness of the ultra-Orthodox minority ($r=0.30$; $p < 0.05$) and towards the Arab minority ($r=0.29$; $p < 0.05$). The meaning of this is that the level of fairness towards

minorities is positively related to the level of transparency. As more honest a policeman feels towards minorities, so more he/she will tend to behave with greater transparency and vice versa. A transparency variable was found to have a moderately positive correlation to organizational performance of the police ($r=0.26$; $p < 0.05$). This means that as higher the level of transparency in the organization, so higher the police organization's performance is.

The variable of fairness towards minorities was moderately positive related to the police organization's performance variable ($r=0.37$; $p < 0.05$) and similarly to the fairness towards the ultra-Orthodox minority ($r=0.50$; $p < 0.05$) and to the Arab minority ($r=0.49$; $p < 0.05$). This means that perceptions of fairness towards minorities in general, and towards the Arab minority and the ultra-Orthodox minority in particular, affect the police organization's performance, so that the police organization's performance increases when the level of fairness towards minorities increases. These data show that increasing transparency and more fair attitude towards minorities certainly increases the performance of the police according to the perceptions of policemen and police officers.

Consequently, the current model indicates that changing police perceptions of systemic transparency, and tolerance towards minorities, improves the performance of the police organization and improves their perceptions about its performance. Multivariate regression results indicate that all variables explain 59% of the explained variety of the dependent variable - organizational performance. When personal accountability variable, and tolerance towards minorities variable are the only with influence ($\beta = 0.57, 0.34$), respectively.

Summary of the research findings according to the proposed model is prented below in Figure 2:

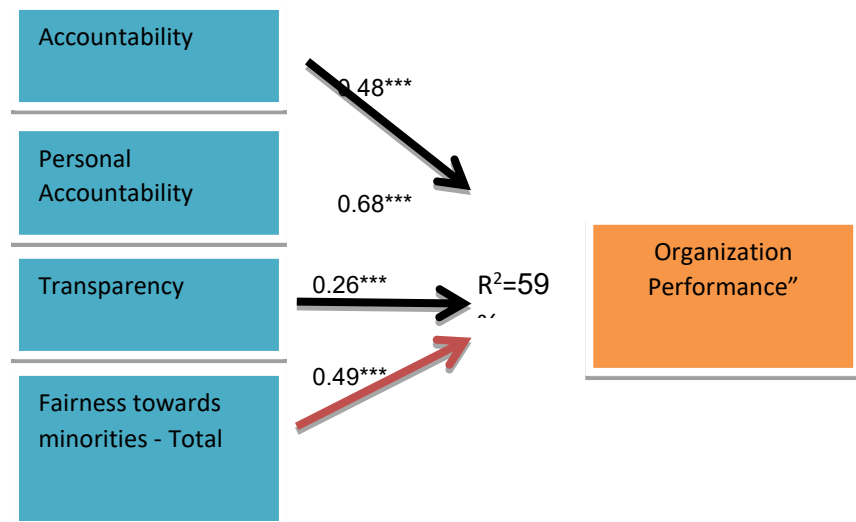


Figure 2. Results about the research model of police performance

In summary it can be said according to the findings of the present study that accountability is necessarily bound by compliance with standards and end parties are key components in the definitions of taking responsibility are: performance reporting, justification, reporting side, reporting audience, transparency, feedback, rewards and sanctions. These definitions also imply the existence of agreed purposes or standards according to which performance and results are measured.

A central theme in the concept of accountability at the individual level is its context to work performance and results. The concept of accountability is embodied in performance evaluation and feedback on performance, which is a mechanism in which the audience conveys its response to the reporting side. The tendency of the employees to be responsible means a stronger desire to meet expectations, stronger feelings of responsibility and usually also a significant influence on the actions of a specific individual in the organization. Employees who feel responsible will be aware to the means which are needed for optimal performance of their work, their work methods and their results will be relatively visible and transparent and will be valued and expected (Rosenblatt, 2006).

2. Conclusions

The analysis in this study shows that regardless of the current conditions, the Israeli Police still does not efficiently demonstrate these two issues - transparency and accountability. Several police organizations approached the issue of procedural justice in various ways. Many police bodies have provided structured and specialized training to their personnel and created working procedures designed to ensure better standards of police contact with citizens. Other police organizations have reexamined the acceptable policies and procedures in order to determine whether they are biased towards minorities and took action to improve them. Some police bodies have also taken steps to ensure that every person in the organization understands the procedures and the processes well. Expanding procedural justice and transparency means that the Israeli Police should do a better job in order to assist citizen to better understand what the police do and how it acts, and thereby to enable Israeli citizen to assess the organization based on established knowledge. The Israeli Police has already taken several steps in order to explain to the public its procedures and decisions, and to establish a system that will ensure public accountability. We consider based on our research that further improvements are possible and that the rewards will be expressed in terms of increasing public satisfaction, better policing results, and more efficient and effective policing work in Israel.

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