



# Minority Group Threat, Crime, and Policing: Social Context and Social Control

*Pamela Irving Jackson*

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Jackson's expertise shines in this innovative analysis of the link between social inequality and law enforcement efforts. The research connects the level of conflict characterizing majority-minority relations to the level of financial investment in police resources. . . . Readers will find scholarly attention to theory, responsible implications for policy, and a careful diagnosis of the limits to law enforcement, along with a bibliography that reflects the cutting edge of research. This book should be available wherever a program in criminology, stratification, or criminal justice studies exists. *Choice*

In a major contribution to the criminology literature, Pamela Irving Jackson examines the societal expectations for police work--from national, regional, and local perspectives--and attempts to identify the conflicts within these expectations. Basing her study upon quantitative analysis of the determinants of police spending in cities throughout the United States during the 1970s, Jackson demonstrates that the history, traditions, socioeconomic traits, and racial and ethnic population mix characteristic of each social context influence the expectations set for police officers and the support they are accorded. An exploration of newspapers' treatment of the police and issues of police/minority relations in selected cities adds depth to the analysis by providing the public perspective on policing and its variations by location and time period.

The author's central thesis is that the mobilization of municipal police resources in the early 1970s was influenced by the size of the minority population in the city, especially in locations of historical tension in minority/majority relations. By the end of the decade, Jackson shows, the impact of minority threat in determining municipal police appropriations had changed in form and focus and there developed a new awareness of the role of police and a corresponding recognition of the stress under which individual officers operate. Her conclusions regarding the effect of unrealistic expectations on the overall performance of police work offer an important counterweight to arguments that the police failed to control escalating crime or resort too often to violence in the performance of their duties. An excellent supplementary text for courses in criminology, criminal justice, and sociology, this book offers a realistic appraisal of the limits of police work that will enable policymakers and the police themselves to make a more accurate determination of the situation in which police work can be most useful.



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