Legitimacy *and* Criminal Justice

International Perspectives

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CHAPTER 7

Police Legitimacy in Chile

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Crime rates in Chile have experienced a sustained increase since the return to a democratic system of government in 1990. In recent years incidents of theft reported to the police increased from 714.1 per one hundred thousand inhabitants in 2001 to 971.4 per one hundred thousand inhabitants in 2004. Robberies with violence or intimidation reported to the police also increased, from 189.4 per one hundred thousand inhabitants in 2001 to 298.1 per one hundred thousand inhabitants in 2004. This rise in crime has been confirmed by two surveys, both undertaken in 2003, which also revealed high levels of feelings of insecurity among the population and significant rates of victimization, especially with regard to crimes against property. According to the "National Urban Survey on Citizen Security" (Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics 2003), 30.3 percent of the respondents in a 2003 victimization survey stated that they had suffered at least one of the following crimes: car theft; theft of objects from a vehicle; burglary; pickpocketing; robbery with violence; theft; assault resulting in injury; economic crimes; or corruption. Nevertheless, this perception of insecurity does not translate into a criticism of the country's two police forces, which continue to receive important levels of support from the population. This is especially the case of the Carabineros de Chile, one of the two police forces that exist in the country.[1] The Carabineros is a national militarized police force responsible mainly for public order and security; it dedicates only a minor proportion of its resources to the investigation of crimes. Public support for the Carabineros and for the much smaller Investigative Police (Policía de Investigaciones de Chile), in charge of criminal

investigations, is notoriously higher than that received by other components of the criminal-justice system, such as the courts.

Surprisingly, this favorable opinion continues to hold fast despite the constant increase in reported crimes, and is a tremendous contrast with the poor image that affects police forces in most other Latin American countries. At a time when a significant portion of the police in the region have undertaken processes of structural reform to increase their efficiency and to respond to negative perceptions on the part of the public at large, Chilean police have had to undertake only gradual changes during the democratization period.

This chapter examines the reasons behind the public support for the police in Chile, based on the concept of police legitimacy. Police legitimacy is understood here as a concept that comprises two aspects: public support for the legal structure and the functions of the police within the state, and significant levels of voluntary public cooperation with the police (Vagg 1996).

Our analysis describes the organizational changes undertaken by various police forces in Latin America as the result of the processes of democratization, which began twenty years ago, and the need to improve their efficiency and control over police abuses and corruption. A second section examines political transformations in Chile during the past few decades, as well as the situation faced by Chile's two police forces during the period that began with the transition to democracy in 1990 and the changes that have been made in the police in order to foster a closer relationship with the public. Finally, we examine the results of the two surveys cited earlier in order to draw some conclusions regarding the challenges that Chilean law enforcement must confront in the future. The survey results indicate considerable support for the police, as the public understands that they are not responsible for the increase in crime and can play an important role in reducing its incidence. Support for the police seems to be in line with information coming from other surveys that reveal considerable support in Chile for law-and-order policies to deal with social disorder. The "Latinobarómetro," an international survey that covers eighteen Latin American countries, reported that in 2004 45 percent of Chileans preferred to live in an orderly society, even though some freedoms had to be restricted. This percentage is considerably lower than that of Honduras, where 69 percent of respondents expressed this opinion, but it is much higher than that of Uruguay, where only 32 percent of those interviewed preferred order to freedom (Latinobarómetro 2004, 14). However, and despite the support for the police they show, the two surveys do reveal a series of challenges: respondents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have a much less favorable image of the police than those in higher income brackets. Poorer respondents also were more critical of the police with regard to their efficiency in dealing with problems that most affect them, such as drug trafficking in their neighborhoods. The survey also shows that problems of concern to considerable segments of the population are precisely those in which they deem the police the least effective. In light of this reality, it seems unlikely that the reforms undertaken to date in Chile will be sufficient to provide security for a society that is moving toward economic modernization, but where social differences persist.

POLICE REFORM IN LATIN AMERICA

During the decade of the 1990s, crime and violence became two of the most pressing social and political problems in Latin America. According to data compiled by the Inter-American Development Bank, around 140,000 homicides were committed in Latin America and the Caribbean during 1996 (Londoño and Guerrero 1999, 3). Partly in response to this sharp increase in crime and partly to reduce public mistrust regarding the honesty of the police, the democratic governments that took office in Central and South America during the 1980s and 1990s implemented a number of initiatives for police reform. At the beginning, many of the reforms aimed to create civil police that were autonomous from the armed forces. Such is the case of the new police forces in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. For example, police reform in El Salvador managed to integrate combatants from both sides of the country's civil war. The institutional design established a General Inspectorate of Police (Inspectoría General de la Policía) responsible for investigating legal infractions committed by the police and independent of the chief of police (director general de la policía). In addition, the Police Academy, which recruits and trains police, was separated from the police forces in order to ensure academic independence (Neild 2002; Costa 1999). In 2001, as crime (particularly gang-related crimes) continued to increase, the law regulating the National Police was changed, and the inspector general was placed under the supervision of the chief of police. More recently, a police officer was named director of the Police Academy, which demonstrates a loss of independence with regard to the police forces (FESPAD and CEPES 2004).

The cases of Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama are even less successful than that of El Salvador. The police in these three Central American countries confront serious problems in the functioning of their police academies, control over police corruption and abuse falls short, and adequate equipment is lacking (MINUGUA 2003; Ungar 2004). On average, these police forces have a scant ten-year history, and they have a long way to go in terms of the institutional development required to confront the recent waves of violent crime.

With the objective of controlling the militarization of the police, the law regulating the National Police of the Dominican Republic was modified to prevent active members of the armed forces from joining law enforcement.[2] In the case of the provincial police of Mendoza, Argentina, the legislation that approved both the provisional system of public security of the province of Mendoza and the law of the police of the province of Mendoza came into force in 1999. The new legislation subordinated the police to the Ministry of Justice and Security, which assumed the

directorship of the institution. This law decentralized the structure of the police, establishing district police and an Inspectorate General of Security (Inspección General de Seguridad) responsible for investigating complaints against the police within the ministry and headed by civilian representatives of various political parties. The University Institute of Public Security also was created to oversee the training of police and was placed under the leadership of civilian instructors, not police officers. In February 2005, a new program was implemented to bring the police closer to the community, with the hope of improving the public image of the police.

Various countries have undertaken community police programs in order to improve law enforcement's relationship with the public and thus contribute to police efficiency. The population has supported these programs, but they have not lasted over time due to the constant political changes that often result in an emphasis of hard-line policies in direct contradiction to the ideals and aims of the community policing programs (Frühling 2003, 2004).

A number of countries have reformed their police force's internal disciplinary systems because of the key role they play in preventing abuse and corruption. These disciplinary systems most commonly face four problems: they tend to focus on breaches of internal discipline rather than incidents of police abuse (Neild 2002, 4); they sometimes delay making any decision on crimes committed by police until the judiciary rules on the issue, which might take a long time; the internal discipline is preserved through punitive rather than preventive measures, which might be counterproductive in terms of ensuring voluntary adherence to the law by police officers (Eijkman 2006); and procedures are secret and offer little access to complainants. Offices of professional responsibility in charge of investigating these cases usually are located only in the capital cities and are not truly accessible to the public at large. All these features usually present serious difficulties for evaluating whether police misconduct incidents are diminishing and whether the efficiency of the system is improving.

These transformations in the police forces have fostered more democratic institutions. Nonetheless, public opinion still demonstrates a widespread mistrust of police throughout the region, with the exception of isolated cases, such as Chile's two police forces and the National Police of Colombia and of El Salvador. Public mistrust of the courts is also extremely high. The Latinobarómetro has revealed that in 2003, 62 percent of the population surveyed expressed trust in the Catholic church, 29 percent in the police, and 20 percent in the judiciary (Latinobarómetro 2004, 34). Latinobarómetro figures for 2004 indicate that 65 percent of those surveyed in Mexico, 58 percent in Paraguay, and 57 percent in Argentina believe that it is possible to bribe the police in their country. The lowest percentage of affirmative responses to this question came from Colombia (30 percent), Chile (22 percent), and El Salvador (20 percent) (Latinobarómetro 2004, 54). Thus, 78 percent of the population in Chile believe their police to be honest. As we will see in more detail later, victimization surveys reveal lower levels of police corruption than in some other countries. According to the victimization survey that we will examine, only 1.2 percent of the respondents said that a civil servant had requested or demanded payment of a bribe from them or some member of their household. In 21.7 percent of these cases, the civil servant in question was a Carabinero. In a study carried out in Buenos Aires during 2003, 5.7 percent of the respondents said that they had been asked for bribes in the past twelve months, in 72.2 percent of these cases by a police officer.

THE POLICE AND THEIR ROLE IN CHILE

The territory occupied by Chile is located in the southern part of the American continent. From Copiapo south to the Bio Bio River, Spanish conquerors took the land from a variety of indigenous peoples in the sixteenth century. That territory was extended as a result of the War of the Pacific, in which the Chilean armed forces defeated those of Peru and Bolivia (1879 to 1883).

The country has 15,600,000 inhabitants. Historically, Chile distinguished itself from some other Latin American countries through its stable political system. Political independence from Spain, in 1818, was followed by more than a decade of political disorder and anarchy. In 1830, however, the military triumph of one coalition of forces inaugurated a new political order in which an authoritarian government controlled the armed forces and asserted civilian authority. Consolidation of authoritarian government after 1830 gave Chile a national political system with administrative capabilities. During the second part of the nineteenth century, the country gradually moved toward legislative checks on the presidency. In fact, as Arturo Valenzuela states, "From 1830 until 1973, all Chilean presidents were followed in office by their duly elected successors. Deviations to this pattern occurred only in 1891, in the aftermath of a brief civil war, and in the turbulent period between 1924 and 1932, when four chief executives felt pressured to resign in an atmosphere of political and social unrest and military involvement in politics" (Valenzuela 1989, 160).

In 1970, Salvador Allende, a Socialist Party member, was elected to the presidency and initiated a series of policies aimed at transforming the economy and society of the country. Three years later, amid growing ideological polarization and increasing civil violence, the armed forces intervened, provoking the breakdown of Chilean democracy. The Allende administration was deposed in a violent coup d'état in September 11, 1973. At first, it seemed as if the rule of government would be jointly shared by the commanders of all the branches of the armed forces and of Carabineros. Very soon, however, General Pinochet took over as president of the Republic. Between 1973 and 1990, he presided over a very repressive regime that received the continuous support of the business community, who perceived democracy as a system that had permitted the electoral triumph of the left. Pinochet promoted free-market policies, which meant the transfer of huge public assets to the private sector.

The military regime established in 1973 was characterized by its stability and by the fact that power was accumulated in the person of the commander-in-chief of the Army. The fact that the regime was very repressive and that it was able to ensure the support of the armed forces and powerful sectors of Chilean society such as the business community helps explain this stability.

On March 11, 1990, a civilian government presided over by Patricio Aylwin took office after wining the first presidential elections since 1990. He was supported by the left-of-center political alliance, the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia, formed by political parties that had opposed the military dictatorship.

During the following sixteen years, three more presidential elections took place, and each one of them has been won by the candidate of the Concertación. Chilean politics has kept many of its historical traits, such as a stable system of government, a vigorous party system, and stable electoral alignments. However, polarization has been greatly reduced, and there is strong consensus across the political spectrum on economic and social policies. The economy of the country has grown and experienced modernization during the democratization period. While some corruption scandals have erupted in recent years, Chileans as well as foreigners tend to view Chilean public administration as more honest than that of many other Latin American countries.

The Chilean Police

The Chilean constitution assigns the task of law enforcement to the Carabineros de Chile and the Investigative Police. The first institution was formed in 1927 with the definitive unification of the state and municipal police and the army's corps of Carabineros (Maldonado 1990; Frühling 1998). The second institution was created in 1933 as a civil institution responsible for criminal investigation.

From this period on, both police forces were to report to the Ministry of the Interior, which was responsible for preserving the public order. Under the military regime of Augusto Pinochet (1973 to 1990), the Carabineros underwent considerable transformation, as the institution's general-in-chief functioned as a member of the military junta. During this time, the Carabineros adopted institutional regulations that guaranteed the institution greater autonomy from the ministries of state and that simultaneously reinforced the military characteristics of this police force. Second, the Carabineros was permeated by the process of ideologization that occurred in the armed forces. The emphasis on the imposition of public order and the hostile attitudes toward the Communist Party and leftist parties in general became increasingly widespread, as was evident from the institution's policies and discourse (Frühling 1998). In 1974, both the Carabineros and the Investigative Police were placed under the Ministry of Defense. Law decree number 444 (published in the *Diario Oficial* (official government newspaper), May 4, 1974) established this change under the rationale that ensuring the chain of command for the Carabineros required that the police force not be required to report to a minister of state

primarily concerned with politics, which would hamper the technical efficiency of the police. Indeed, this institutional change ensured a relatively high degree of operational autonomy, since the Ministry of Defense was not involved in the preservation of public order or citizen security.

Today, the military nature of the Carabineros is evident in the institution's discipline and training. Like the army, the Carabineros has separate schools for commissioned and noncommissioned officers, and the personnel of this institution fall under the jurisdiction of the military courts for violations of the law committed in the course of their service.[3] The role of the Carabineros traditionally has been that of security police, including the preservation of public order and control and regulation of vehicular traffic. In recent years, this role has evolved and now has a tendency to overlap with that of the Investigative Police. Under the new oral and adversarial criminal procedure system, the prosecutor decides whether the Carabineros or the Investigative Police will be responsible for an investigation. Today, the Carabineros de Chile has 36,777 officers.

The Investigative Police is a much smaller, civil institution, with just 6,514 posts, of which 3,444 are detectives. The principal function of the Investigative Police is the investigation of crime. In the period preceding the military regime, the Investigative Police also controlled activities that could pose a threat to the stability of the political regime. With the exception of the current democratic period, the director of this institution always has been an individual close to the president of the republic and has not himself been a member of the Investigative Police.[4] As the result of both of these factors, the Investigative Police are perceived as closer to the government in power than the Carabineros.

Following the transition to democracy, the first democratic governments maintained closer relations with the Investigative Police than with the Carabineros, owing to the perception that the officers of the latter were in ideological lockstep with the military regime. Nonetheless, the prestige the Carabineros enjoyed throughout Latin America—as a result of the professional competence and disciplined structure of this institution—helped mitigate this mistrust.[5] Another factor was the increasing concern of the population with the crime rate, which led them to welcome the presence of the Carabineros in their neighborhoods. By the late 1990s the prestige of the institution within Chile had been restored.

Increase in Crime in Chile

Since the early 1990s there has been a widespread perception in Chile that crime has reached uncontrollable levels. Surveys undertaken by the Center of Public Studies-ADIMARK (1992 and 1993) and by the Center of Public Studies (1995 to 1999) have consistently identified crime as one of the three problems that the government should make a greater effort to resolve (information available at http://www.cepchile.cl). If the definition of crime is taken to include drug-related issues—from the use of

illegal substances to drug trafficking—crime is the second most important social problem, behind only poverty, in the eyes of the general citizenry, according to the 2003 "National Urban Survey on Citizen Security" (Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics 2003). Drug trafficking is seen as a problem that is particularly relevant for the poorest sectors polled in the victimization survey.

In this survey, 80.5 percent of the respondents stated that they believed that crime had increased nationwide, even though only 44.6 percent felt that crime had increased in their own neighborhoods. These findings seem to be evidence of the gap between perceptions of reality and actual experience, which normally is reflected in surveys of this sort. At the same time, past experiences of victimization strongly influence the impression that crime has increased, to the extent that a greater percentage of individuals who were victims of crime in the previous year stated that crime had increased.

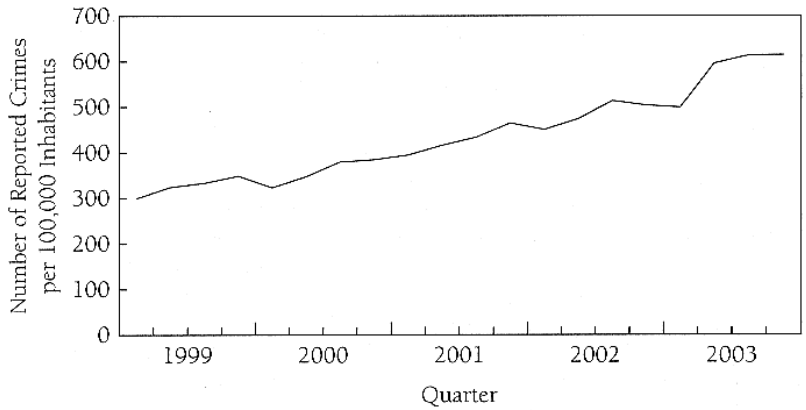
The extent of the increase in crime throughout the country only can be measured on the basis of the crimes reported to both police forces, since there is no published series of national victimization surveys that would allow such a comparison. Figures of reported crimes as registered by Chile's Ministry of the Interior indicate that there has indeed been a significant increase in crime since 1999 (see figure 7.1).

This increase is particularly relevant in the case of robbery involving violence or intimidation. Violent robbery has increased constantly, with a greater proportional increase in cases of robbery with assault (direct violence against the victims) than in cases in which the victims are merely threatened. This increase in robberies with violence or intimidation has been picked up by the mass media and in political debate as proof of the rise in crime. Nonetheless, only a minority—albeit a growing one—of robberies with violence or intimidation actually lead to an assault on the victim that resulted in injury (Goldstein Braunfeld 2003).

Nearly one-third (30.3 percent) of the respondents in the 2003 victimization survey stated that they had suffered at least one of the following crimes: car theft; theft of objects from a vehicle; burglary; pickpocketing; robbery with violence; theft; assault resulting in injury; economic crimes; or corruption (Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics 2003). A higher percentage of victims report crimes in Chile than is the case in many provinces of Argentina, which indicates greater trust in the Chilean police. Thus, in the Chilean case, 47.5 percent of the respondents who had been victims of robbery in their homes reported the crime. A similar survey undertaken by the Ministry of Justice in the city of Buenos Aires in 2003 found that only 38.4 percent reported the crime, and a victimization study carried out in 2003 in Greater Buenos Aires found that only 28.6 percent reported the crime.[6] In the case of theft, 26.5 percent of the victims in Chile reported the crime, while in the Greater Buenos Aires area only 16.9 percent did so.

The increase in crime is not distributed uniformly in terms of geography nor does it affect all social sectors equally. Recent qualitative studies reveal that in the past fifteen years, drug-trafficking rings have consolidated in poor urban sectors

FIGURE 7.1 CHANGES IN THE RATE OF REPORTED CRIMES OF GREATER SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE BY QUARTER, 1999 TO 2003



Source: Ministry of the Interior (2003).

(Lunecke and Eissmann 2005). This phenomenon has been especially noteworthy in certain neighborhoods with higher levels of poverty and greater numbers of drug traffickers. An unpublished study in Santiago examined three different types of neighborhoods: those under the control of traffickers, those classified as "in transition," and those termed "disorganized" (Candina et al. 2003).

The first set of neighborhoods is characterized by major drug-trafficking rings that rely on the constant participation of small-time dealers. They are centers of drug distribution with a strong trafficker presence. The traffickers themselves ensure security in public spaces so that the sale of drugs to those who come in from other sectors of the city to do business is not negatively affected by security. In this sort of neighborhood, police are not trusted, and the courts and police are suspected of being in collusion with the heads of the trafficking rings.

The neighborhoods defined as being "in transition" have a strong presence of mostly local, small-time dealers. Nonetheless, there are no trafficking rings established in these areas and therefore no formal or informal control of violence, which results in a greater incidence of street crime.

Finally, in the "disorganized" neighborhoods there is drug use and small-time drug dealing, but without any organization. In these neighborhoods there are high levels of insecurity and violence in the public spaces, in addition to very low levels of social organization (Candina et al. 2003).

Citizens' concern with levels of crime has resulted in the appearance of new actors that strive to ensure citizen security and in various efforts on the part of police forces to participate in this new social scenario.

Policy on Citizen Security in Chile

Increasing insecurity has led to the emergence of new actors and to several changes within the police force.

New Actors Take the Stage As in other countries, the increased perception of risk combined with certain changes in the administration of public spaces have led to the appearance of other actors that provide services of citizen security either in competition with or as a complement to the central government and the police forces. A leading example is the private security industry, which has enjoyed a boom in recent years.

Currently these companies report over 80,000 employees engaged in security work, 62,000 of whom are "security guards." Eighty-four percent of these security businesses were established after 1990, and from 2002 to 2003, the industry grew at a rate of 16.67 percent (Abelson 2006).

The municipalities are a second group of actors in this new crime prevention scenario. The democratic election of mayors and city council members—which occurred for the first time in 1992—resulted in the emergence of local authorities with a vested interest in the development of programs in citizen security, sometimes in direct competition with those developed by the central government and even the police themselves.

In recent years, some municipalities have organized a range of activities with the intent of promoting crime prevention at the local level. The researcher Luis Sandoval has classified the measures in the following categories: those that seek to prevent by dissuasion, including contributing resources to Carabineros, hiring municipal guards, and establishing municipal law offices who bring charges if serious crimes occur that affect residents of the municipality; measures that seek to diminish the opportunities for criminal activity, including closing cul-de-sacs, installing lighting in these areas, and installing community alarms; and finally, measures such as programs of alcohol and drug abuse prevention whose aim is to control factors that contribute to crime, as well as efforts to eradicate undesirable activities, such as prostitution or street vendors, among others (Sandoval 2001).

In Chile, the emergence of municipal crime prevention programs has not led to the creation of municipal police, even though on various occasions certain mayors have proclaimed the need to establish municipal law enforcement services, which indeed has occurred in many Latin American cities. But the opposition of the Carabineros (with the support of the government) has prevented such initiatives from amounting to anything. This clearly indicates the influence of the Carabineros in the debate on public security in Chile, and it also confirms that the public feels that the Carabineros is capable of responding to increasing public insecurity. Indeed, the general citizenry sees Carabineros and, to a lesser extent, the government as those primarily responsible for citizen security.[7]

Changes in the Police Forces During the past decade, both the Investigative Police and the Carabineros have adopted some reforms in order to adapt to the new conditions of the democratic regime. During the early 1990s, the Investigative Police made an effort to improve ethical standards among its personnel. A significant number of detectives were fired; important changes were made in the training curricula, incorporating human rights courses; and a special department, the Departamento Quinto—Department Five—was established to investigate incidents of corruption or abuse of the rights of individuals (Candina and Lunecke 2004). At this time there is insufficient information to allow the accurate evaluation of the improvements resulting from the police's internal control system.

The Carabineros have made more gradual changes since the beginning of the transition, preserving for several years a fair degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the political authorities. In part this is the direct result of the military nature of the institution. At the same time, the director general was granted broad powers by the law that regulates the institution, which came into force four days before the return to democracy. Article 10 of this law states that, just as in the armed forces, promotion and dismissal of officers would occur via a presidential decree and at the request of the director general. Until 2005 this regulation prevented the president of the Republic from dismissing or promoting an officer of the Carabineros without the blessing of the general-in-chief. In addition, both forces fall under the purview of the Ministry of Defense, which serves to increase the autonomy of the Carabineros in particular, since they do not have to report to the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for maintaining citizen security.

Democratic governments after 1990 considered this structure to be antidemocratic and have attempted to modify the laws in order to increase the powers of the president to include the power to dismiss officers of the armed forces and the Carabineros and to place Carabineros and the Investigative Police under the purview of the Ministry of the Interior.[8] Nonetheless, the primary political parties' criticism of the legal structure of the Carabineros and the relatively high autonomy of the institution's hierarchy does not appear to have had a significant impact on the public's support of the institution.[9]

With regard to the increase in citizen insecurity, in the late 1990s the Carabineros undertook a restructuring process to increase the number of operative personnel—which suggested that the institution had ceased to perform twenty-four of the sixty-seven tasks assigned to it by law.[10] In March 1999, the General Inspectorate of Police announced that the institution would soon begin the periodic evaluation of all personnel, using new performance indicators currently under development.[11] In addition, after the democratic government took power, the

Carabineros began to incorporate the notion of community participation in the institution's discourse, in keeping with that of the government and the municipalities.

One result of this was that in 1999 the Plan Cuadrante, the Quadrant Plan, was put into action. "Quadrant" refers to a portion of the city. One primary objective of this program was to increase the presence of police on the street. The area under supervision by each police station, a police force under the command of a major, was divided up into small sectors called "quadrants." Vehicles and human resources were portioned out according to the specific needs of each quadrant.

According to the official information of the Carabineros, responsibility for the management of each quadrant is assigned to police officers who bear the title of "delegado," delegate, or the lower-ranking "subdelegado," subdelegate. These officers are to attend to and resolve the problems brought to them by the citizens in their quadrant. The Carabineros also has adopted the practice of public accountability by sharing statistical information on police activities with community leaders and public officials from the quadrants (Frühling 2003). Although there is no external public evaluation of the results of the plan, it is clear that the Carabineros has made efforts to strengthen its links with the population.

Despite the changes introduced by the two police forces, reports of police abuse continue. A study by Claudio A. Fuentes on cases heard by the military courts reveals that charges of unnecessary violence brought against Carabineros personnel have increased during the 1990s, even though cases of homicide, attempted homicide, and shootings decreased since 1992. However, deaths of prisoners in the custody of the Carabineros also have increased: between 1990 and 1994, sixteen such deaths were reported, and between 1995 and 2000 this number grew to thirty-six (Fuentes 2001).

Fuentes asks why police violence is not an issue of public debate in Chile, a country in which the defense of human rights played a relevant role under the military regime. Among other explanations, he mentions the lack of effective external control over the Carabineros, the weakness of human rights organizations, and the focus of public concern on crime rather than on the defense of rights (Fuentes 2001).

But one might have to dig deeper to find the reasons for this lack of public debate on police violence. The experience of past polarization and violence has left many Chileans appreciative of stability and social order. A significant portion of the electorate has consistently voted for parties that supported the military regime. Moreover, the Carabineros as well as the armed forces have come to be seen as permanent institutions of the state whose members may have committed serious crimes during the military dictatorship but who since then have rejoined the democratic polity.

Latinobarómetro's 2004 report shows that Chilean society is equally divided between those who favor order over freedom and those who believe that the enjoyment of human rights should never be restrained in order to achieve an orderly society (Latinobarómetro 2004, 14). As cited earlier, 45 percent of Chileans stated that they preferred to live in an orderly society even though some freedoms had to

be restricted. This percentage is considerably lower than that of Honduras, where 69 percent of respondents expressed the same opinion, but it is much higher than that of Uruguay, where only 32 percent of those interviewed preferred order to freedom. On the contrary, 50 percent of Chileans expressed a preference for rights, even if it affected the social order. In the same survey, 75 percent of those interviewed in Chile agreed that some harsh treatment by the government might be justified ("un poco de mano dura del gobierno no viene mal"—"there's nothing wrong with a little rough treatment"). On the other end of the spectrum are the citizens of Uruguay, who consistently showed strong support for human and democratic rights, and authoritarian attitudes received little support. Only 32 percent of Uruguayans felt that some harsh treatment by the government might be justified. The Chileans' inclination toward order might partly explain why they respect their police.

However, this respect also is based on the belief that, for the most part, the legal system works in Chile and that the police play a role in attaining compliance with the law. In the same Latinobarómetro report, Chile ranks second to Colombia in positive responses to the question "On a scale of one to ten, do you believe that in your country the state manages to make people obey the law? A ranking of ten would mean that all laws are obeyed, while one means than no laws are followed." Where Chile obtains a 5.37, Argentina get only 4.05 (Latinobarómetro 2004, 19).

Thus, it can be said that some general attitudes of Chileans are consistent with their appreciation of their police over some other institutions in the country.

A Brief Comparison with Argentina Police-reform efforts have taken place in several Argentinean provinces in recent years. The most radical effort took place in Buenos Aires province and targeted public security. In 1997, two events contributed to the decision to intervene in the operation of the police force in that province. First, there was a marked increase in citizens' concerns about crime. Second, it was proved that members of the Buenos Aires police had participated in the 1994 attack on the Jewish community headquarters, and in the assassination of José Luis Cabezas, a photojournalist working on a story about police corruption (Sain 1998, 70).

In December 1997, Governor Eduardo Duhalde launched an intervention in the Buenos Aires police; he created a Ministry of Justice and Security that would be responsible for dismantling the Buenos Aires force as it then existed. The entire upper command was dismissed, and more than three hundred superintendents and senior officers were removed. The plan, implemented by León Arslanián, who later became minister of justice and security, was put together entirely by civilians.

In the event, the major obstacle to the reform effort was that it failed to have visible effects on citizens' sense of insecurity. It was probably unreasonable to expect immediate success; nevertheless, as the electoral campaign approached, Carlos Ruckauf, the Peronist candidate for governor, criticized the management of Minister Arslanián and expressed his opposition to the police reform initiated in 1997,

claiming it was too protective of human rights. When Ruckauf was elected, he partially reversed the reform effort.

Police-reform efforts such as this one are clearly distinguishable from changes in the police that have taken place in Chile. In many Argentinean provinces, the police are considered to be abusive, corrupt, and inefficient. Argentineans distrust their institutions and political leaders, given the many social and economic problems they have faced in the post-dictatorship period. Reform efforts have been initiated as a consequence of the eruption of scandals or incidents that reveal police inefficiency. The reform plans have been formulated entirely by civilians and opposed in many instances by the police. Thus, levels of support for the police in Argentina tend to be lower than in Chile, the reforms are less gradual and more radical, and they are not promoted by the police itself (Sain 2002).

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CRIME AND THE POLICE

Naturally, the police in Chile have been questioned regarding the increased crime rates in Chile. And the elected governments in the country also have criticized the regulations that until recently allowed the excessive autonomy of the armed forces and the Carabineros from the president. But despite this situation, police legitimacy, in particular that of the Carabineros, is not questioned.

Two surveys carried out by the Chilean government in 2003 cast light on this phenomenon. The first was undertaken by the Ministry of the Interior and the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, or INE). The "National Urban Survey on Citizen Security" was the first nationwide victimization survey in which participants responded in person to the questionnaire and the results were made public. A total of 16,289 respondents age fifteen and older were interviewed during September and November 2003. The sample was representative of the national urban environs, the regional urban areas, and the urban areas of the country's seventy-seven most populace municipalities. The second survey, the "Study on Perceptions and Evaluation of Carabineros," polled the Metropolitan Region and the Fifth and Eighth Regions in October 2003.

As these two surveys polled very different populations, their results are not strictly comparable. Thus, the findings of this combined analysis should be taken as hypotheses.

Especially Significant Results

The two surveys focus on diverse aspects of the public perception of the police.

Perception of the Police Role in Crime Control Crime and drug trafficking are two major issues of concern for the survey respondents. In the victimization survey, respondents were of divided opinion when they were asked to explain the reasons for the levels of crime in Chile. One group strongly believed that crime is due to a lack of employment opportunities and other social circumstances; the other group emphasizes the shortcomings of the police or the criminal-justice system, such as the lack of police presence on the streets or the courts' giving weak sentences. The lack of visible police patrols is identified as one of the leading causes of crime. When questioned about the causes of the levels of crime, this lack of police patrolling ranks fourth, following the lack of job opportunities, the courts' giving weak sentences for criminals, and drug use. When this same question is asked specifically with regard to the neighborhood in which the respondent lives, the lack of police patrolling takes second place, after the lack of job opportunities. These responses reveal that the public views the police as playing a very important role in crime control, so they are extremely supportive of the police in their efforts to fulfill this role, regardless of any criticism they may have of law enforcement. A closer look at the answers focusing in particular on the lack of police patrolling and the courts' application of weak sentences, disaggregated by socioeconomic group, clearly reveals that the residents of the lower-income sectors attribute greater importance to the lack of police patrolling, whereas those from upper- and middle-income brackets place greater weight on weak sentences of the justice system. These findings reveal that the poorer neighborhoods perceive police patrolling as playing a very important role in crime control, but at the same time, these sectors express greater dissatisfaction with the protection they receive from the police than the residents of wealthier neighborhoods, who support more severe sentences.

The importance of the police's role in reducing levels of crime, as perceived by all social sectors in Chile, is corroborated by the fact that only 1.4 percent of the survey respondents feel that the lack of community organization is the reason for the levels of crime in their neighborhoods. In Chile, regardless of socioeconomic status, people seem to believe that only the state and, more specifically, the police, can ensure lower crime rates. The importance of police action to which we refer is confirmed by the victimization survey: 32.5 percent of the respondents stated that the Carabineros bears the primary responsibility for citizen security, followed by the government as the most responsible (26.1 percent) and the courts (20.8 percent). In summary, the general population places great importance on the police in crime control, which explains the strong demand for a visible police presence. The following section examines why the significant increase in crime has not damaged the institution's sterling image.

Confidence in the Police and Police Legitimacy The two surveys reveal different results regarding the public's level of confidence in the two police forces. In the survey of public perception of the Carabineros, 82 percent of the respondents stated that they had confidence in this police force, while only 35 percent stated that they had confidence in judges and 31 percent, in members of parliament. While this percentage is quite high overall, the percentages decrease with the respondents' income levels.

Nonetheless, when the respondents were asked by the victimization survey to identify their level of confidence or trust regarding various authorities, 32.6 percent stated that they had great confidence in the Carabineros, 50.4 percent said that they had little confidence in the institution, and 15.5 percent had none whatsoever. While these figures are none too favorable, they are quite a bit better than the respondents' answers regarding ministers of the Supreme Court, senators, or the minister of the interior. In other words, although the levels of confidence may be different in the two surveys, in both surveys the Carabineros are held in higher esteem than other public officials. In the case of the Investigative Police, 30.4 percent of the respondents stated that they had great confidence in this institution, while 18.3 percent stated that they had no confidence in this police force at all.

As evidenced by other studies, the levels of confidence in the Carabineros are influenced by the age and socioeconomic level of the respondent as well as by whether the respondent has been a victim of crime in the past twelve months. While 25.50 percent of respondents aged nineteen to twenty-four express great confidence in Carabineros, 44.61 percent of the respondents aged sixty or older espoused this view. On the other hand, 41.37 percent of the respondents from higher income brackets stated that they had great confidence in the Carabineros, but only 30.27 percent of the poorest sector shares this view. Among respondents who had been victims of crime in the past twelve months, 29.7 percent had great confidence in the Carabineros but among those who had not experienced crime in this same period of time, 35 percent shared this opinion.

Confidence in the police can be rooted in various factors. Their work in the realm of citizen security may be perceived as efficient. Of all the institutions mentioned in the victimization survey, the Carabineros ranks third among those most highly respected by the respondents for their efforts in the area of citizen security, following the National Children's Service (Servicio Nacional de Menores) and the National Women's Service (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer). The Investigative Police follow the Carabineros in this ranking. Though these figures are only mildly positive, they are much better than the evaluations of other political institutions.

In the survey on the perceptions of the Carabineros, the institution receives an even more positive appraisal. Only the National Women's Service ranks higher in the esteem of the respondents, and 50 percent report a positive or very positive evaluation of this police force. Yet again, a difference can be noted in the opinions expressed by different socioeconomic sectors: while 70 percent of the highest income sector (ABC1) evaluated the Carabineros positively, only 38 percent of the lowest income sector (E) share this view. Nonetheless, sectors C2, C3, and D give the Carabineros a mostly favorable review.

This primarily positive evaluation of the Carabineros seems to indicate that this police force enjoys a high degree of institutional legitimacy. As stated earlier, one manifestation of this institutional legitimacy is citizens' willingness to collaborate voluntarily with the police. The only indicator that we have in this respect comes from the national victimization survey, which makes reference to the percentage of crimes reported by the victims. The overwhelming majority of such reports are made to Carabineros, since this institution has a presence throughout the entire country.

The percentages of reported crimes expressed here are significant. In some cases, such as robbery with violence or intimidation, the percentages are similar to those in industrialized countries, whereas in other cases—car theft or theft of objects from vehicles or residential robbery, for example—the percentages of reported crimes are much lower. A comparison of data from a victimization survey carried out in the city of Buenos Aires in 2003 reveals a higher percentage of crime reports in the case of Chile.[12] In Chile, 47.5 percent of the victims had reported residential robbery, whereas in Buenos Aires, 38.4 percent of the victims reported this crime. Robbery with violence or intimidation was reported by 46.1 percent of the victims in Chile, whereas in Buenos Aires only 33.9 percent of the victims reported this crime. In Chile, 26.5 percent of the victims who suffered theft of personal items reported the crime compared to 18.1 percent of such victims in Buenos Aires. A civil servant's attempt to extort a bribe was reported by 10.8 percent of the victims of this crime in Chile, whereas none the victims of attempted bribery filed a police report in Buenos Aires.

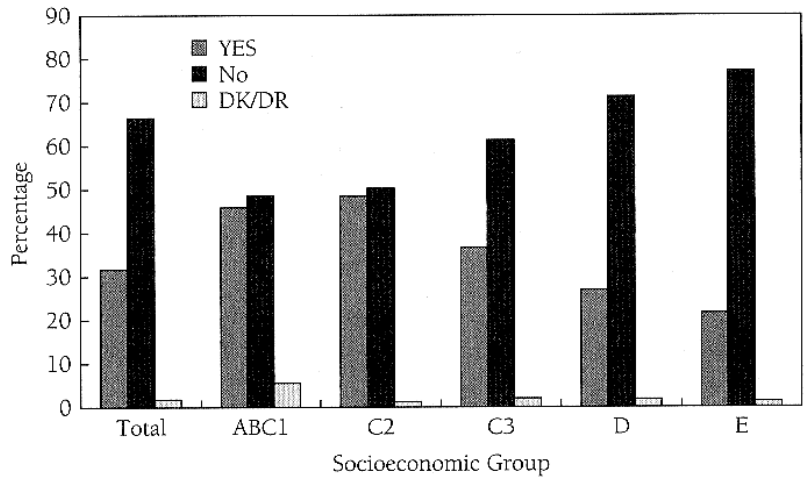
The Carabineros' positive image is also evident when respondents are asked whether they feel that the institution has taken adequate steps to confront the problems of crime. The public perception in this regard is overwhelmingly positive. This finding reveals that most citizens feel that the Carabineros are willing to take appropriate action with regard to crime, even though the results may be less successful than intended, judging by the increase in crime rates.

This significant support for the police does not spring from the community-relations initiatives being developed by the institution in the context of the Quadrant Plan. In fact, most of the population has no knowledge of the Quadrant Plan, as the responses to a question from the victimization survey demonstrate, and the poorer sectors of the population are even less likely to know about this plan.

The survey on perceptions of the Carabineros asks respondents whether they have heard about the sessions of public accountability that the Carabineros started three years ago; 95 percent of the respondents answered no, with only 4 percent acknowledging that they had heard about this initiative. Only 9 percent of those who responded in the affirmative actually had attended one of these public meetings. At least three conclusions can be drawn from these responses: that public opinion grants the police a central role in crime control; second, that it does not place equal importance on the institution's public accountability; and third, that neither the Quadrant Plan nor the public meetings have been adequately publicized or implemented by the Carabineros.

Confidence or trust in the police also depends on the perception that the police act with probity and not for personal gain. The survey on the perception of the Carabineros asks very forthrightly whether in the past twelve months the respondent

FIGURE 7.2 PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT THE QUADRANT PLAN, BY SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP



Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior, and National Institute of Statistics (2003).

has been the victim of or witness to a Carabinero using his or her post for personal gain. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said they had been neither victim of nor witness to such an act. Only 6 percent had witnessed a Carabinero acting for personal gain, and 2 percent had been the victim of such an abuse. This perception of comparatively low levels of police corruption—in relation with those of other Latin American countries—also are reflected in the national victimization survey, in which only 1.2 percent of the respondents maintain that a civil servant requested or demanded payment of a bribe from themselves or some member of their household. In 21.7 percent of these cases, the civil servant in question was a Carabinero. In a study carried out in Buenos Aires during 2003, 5.7 percent of the respondents said that they had been asked for bribes in the past twelve months, in 72.2 percent of these cases by a police officer.

Perceptions of the Quality of Police Service A fundamental dimension with regard to the fulfillment of citizens' expectations of the police is related to the quality of services the latter provide. The victimization survey asked those who had visited a police station in the past twelve months how they would evaluate the treatment they had received from the Carabineros: 69 percent evaluated it as good or very good.

Those who visited a station of the Investigative Police in the past twelve months gave this police force a similarly respectable evaluation.

A positive perception of an institution depends primarily on the positive perception of its individual members. The victimization survey lists a series of statements regarding officers of the Carabineros and asks the respondents whether they agree with the statements.

The statements that received more positive responses were: Carabineros are responsive (78.9 percent); Carabineros are disciplined (73.9 percent); Carabineros are efficient (66.2 percent); Carabineros have good manners (65.1 percent); and Carabineros treat people well (63.2 percent). Affirmations are much less common in response to the statement, "Carabineros are corrupt"—39.3 percent of the respondents agree and 38.8 percent disagree.[13] At the same time, in the responses to the questions as to whether Carabineros are corrupt or whether they treat people well, there are notorious differences in the opinions of respondents from the highest income bracket (ABC1) and the lowest (E).

The statements that receive a higher percentage of positive responses seem to be associated with a military ethos or culture, which emphasizes discipline, responsiveness in serving the public in those matters in which the police play a social role, Carabineros' good manners and their considerate treatment of civilians, and a certain general efficiency probably associated with military organization.

Nonetheless, there are greater levels of disagreement with each statement among the lower-income sectors. Thus, with respect to the statement, "The Carabineros have good manners," only 15.3 percent of the group ABC1 respondents disagree, while 34.3 percent of group E disagree. With regard to the statement, "Carabineros are corrupt," 60.1 percent of the group ABC1 respondents disagree, while only 35.5 percent of the group E respondents share this opinion. The most impressive difference is evident with regard to the statement, "The Carabineros treat people well." Only 10 percent of the respondents in the ABC1 group disagree but 34.9 percent of group E disagree.

Two reasons may account for the poorer sectors' more negative perceptions of the police. First, these socioeconomic groups are more likely to be the targets of police control. Second, the police responsible for taking action in the most troubled areas of the cities are those who receive the worst evaluations.

The lowest income sectors' perception that police action is not completely impartial is echoed in the responses of the general population to the questions from the survey on perceptions of the Carabineros, which evaluate a range of police actions. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents agree that the Carabineros enforces the law, 57 percent feel that these police are committed to their job, and 52 percent give this police force the highest marks for honesty. However, a lower percentage (48 percent) of respondents expressed a positive evaluation of the Carabineros' impartiality, and 13 percent of the respondents felt that these police were not impartial. Even more surprising is the fact that a significant percentage of those

TABLE 7.1 RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS ABOUT CARABINEROS, BY SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP

Statement	Total	ABC1[a]	C2[a]	C3[a]	D[a]	E[a]
Carabineros are corrupt						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agree	39.3	29.2	23.0	35.1	44.3	44.6
Disagree	38.8	60.1	54.3	43.5	32.9	35.5
Don't know or didn't respond	21.9	10.7	22.7	21.4	22.8	19.9
Carabineros treat people well.						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agree	63.2	83.8	73.5	65.3	60.6	57.9
Disagree	29.5	10.0	21.2	27.7	31.5	34.9
Don't know or didn't respond	7.3	6.2	5.3	7.0	7.9	7.2

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics (2003).

[a] ABC1 = Highest socioeconomic level, represents 7.7 percent of the population
C2 = Second level in income and education, represents 15.4 percent of the population.
C3 = Third level in income and education, represents 22.4 percent of the population.
D = Fourth level in income and education, represents 34.8 percent of the population.
E = Poorest and least educated level, represents 20.3 percent of the population.

who feel that Carabineros are biased based this opinion on law enforcement's unchecked recourse to the use of force (forty-one percent of the sample said they had seen Carabineros using unnecessary force).

This survey also reveals a very positive evaluation of the Carabineros' efforts in terms of public service, but a notoriously lower evaluation with regard to crime control. In the national victimization survey, 78.9 percent of the respondents rate the Carabineros' efforts with regard to assistance and rescue operations during natural disasters good or very good. Assistance for household emergencies (being locked out, gas leaks, and similar problems) receives positive evaluations from 57.3 percent of respondents. Traffic control also is evaluated highly by 60.7 percent of respondents. However, the police duties considered most pressing by the general population receive the worst evaluations: fighting drug trafficking and use receives 32.6 percent approval, and crime control, as stated earlier, is evaluated positively by only 33.8 percent of the respondents.

To return to the original question, why is it that despite Chileans' belief that the Carabineros bears the primary responsibility for citizen security, the increase in crime has not affected their legitimacy? The first reason might be that, given Chileans' favorable attitude toward order and legality, they tend to believe the police are doing their best to control crime and that other components of the criminal-justice system, such as the courts, are failing in that respect. Chileans' positive view

of the Carabineros is further strengthened by the perception that the police act with probity and not for personal gain.

Chileans have a positive view of police officers. They are seen as responsive, disciplined, and efficient. Finally, the institution is well evaluated in terms of public service, but it receives a notoriously lower evaluation with regard to crime control.

The survey also asks respondents to evaluate the efforts by the Investigative Police. Since the public has less contact with this police force and because many of the questions demand a level of knowledge that the public probably lacks, we have not analyzed the responses regarding this police force.

The Public's Demands of the Police Several questions were included in the survey on perceptions of the Carabineros to determine the specific demands that the public makes on the force and to evaluate the quality of the actions taken by the police to meet these needs. The goal was to establish the gap between the expectations regarding police action and the perception of the quality of police procedures.

This type of study is useful because it identifies the public's specific demands of the Carabineros, which do not always dovetail with general perceptions regarding the population's most pressing needs

The organization of these demands in the order of their priority should lead to changes in the posting of police as well as in their priorities for action. In addition, this sort of analysis can help to establish the kinds of action that the public identifies as meeting their needs and provides an evaluation of these actions.

The first question from the survey on the perceptions of Carabineros that is useful for this sort of analysis asked the respondents to list, in order of importance, the problems in their neighborhood that most require action by Carabineros (see table 7.2). The sale of illegal drugs was the leading issue of concern followed by consumption of alcohol in public areas and by minors in local establishments; robbery and assault of homes, businesses and other establishments; traffic accidents; gangs; and assault and muggings of passers-by in public areas.

These answers reveal the serious damage that the sale of illegal drugs causes to social networks and daily life, especially in poor urban areas. The second area of concern is a problem that is not strictly criminal in nature but that relates to the lack of effective controls to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors. Robbery and assault of homes, businesses, and other establishments, an issue that receives so much attention in the press, ranks just third in order of importance to the public.

The order of importance of demands also varies considerably by socioeconomic group in the regions surveyed. This strongly suggests a need to decentralize police priority setting and action in order to respond to this range of demands. The increased presence of illegal drugs is a much more serious problem for poorer sectors (groups D and E), and consumption of alcohol by minors is a greater concern

TABLE 7.2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY CARABINEROS, BY SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP (PERCENTAGE)

Problem	Total	ABC1	C2	C3	D	E
Sale of illegal drugs	38	10	27	31	50	51
Consumption of alcohol in public areas and by minors in local establishments	19	17	24	21	16	12
Robbery and assault of homes, businesses and other establishments	13	13	13	19	7	14
Traffic accidents	9	21	10	8	8	8
Gangs	7	5	7	7	7	7
Assault and muggings of passers-by in public areas	6	14	10	5	5	5
Car theft or theft of objects from vehicles	4	19	6	4	2	1
Domestic violence	2	0	1	2	3	1
Fighting in public areas	1	0	1	2	2	1
Prostitution in public areas	1	1	1	1	0	0
Extortion of "tolls" from passers-by in public areas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior—Carabineros (2003).

for the middle class (C2 and C3), whereas the upper income group (ABC1) is most worried about traffic accidents.

The respondents were then asked whether they perceived any concrete action by the Carabineros on the concerns that they had just identified as being priority problems for their neighborhood. Table 7.3 presents the answers to this question. Notably, only two concerns are given a primarily positive evaluation: traffic accidents and robbery and assault of homes, businesses, and other establishments. All the other responses are primarily negative. The greater percentages of negative responses are concentrated in the evaluation of the Carabineros' response to sales of illegal drugs, gangs, and the consumption of alcohol by minors.

Table 7.4 compares the population's demands on Carabineros, in order of importance, with the population's perception of concrete action by this police force on each problem. The hierarchical order of the perception of concrete action by Carabineros was determined by subtracting the negative from the positive responses.

TABLE 7.3 PERCEPTIONS OF CONCRETE ACTIONS TAKEN BY CARABINEROS, BY SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP (PERCENTAGE)[a]

	Total		ABC1		C2		C3		D		E	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Traffic accidents	60.30	29.70	78.90	14.20	57.40	29.90	65.90	24.70	57.30	32.00	46.50	47.20
Robbery and assault of homes, businesses and other establishments	45.50	56.80	30.20	42.00	31.50	52.60	31.70	54.30	29.50	60.60	29.80	67.00
Car theft or theft of objects from vehicles	38.60	52.80	38.60	49.00	40.00	47.00	39.50	51.10	36.60	53.60	27.30	68.40
Assault and muggings of passers-by in public areas	37.40	53.70	39.70	44.50	37.80	46.60	37.10	50.80	29.80	58.30	33.20	62.70
Consumption of alcohol in public areas and by minors in local establishments	37.30	46.30	51.80	27.30	43.10	41.40	42.10	42.90	33.10	51.10	33.70	59.20
Fighting in public areas	35.70	44.20	70.20	22.70	49.50	38.30	49.50	39.50	38.30	51.20	39.00	54.80
Gangs	34.20	51.10	64.80	24.30	39.10	45.70	43.50	46.10	28.70	58.60	33.00	63.10
Domestic violence	31.90	44.50	28.20	38.20	23.30	38.20	34.40	40.70	33.80	47.90	33.40	57.80
Sale of illegal drugs	30.60	46.30	24.90	43.00	31.50	43.10	42.00	40.40	35.00	49.60	33.30	59.20
Prostitution in public areas	22.40	45.30	26.20	31.30	18.20	40.00	22.60	44.30	22.70	47.40	25.60	58.40
Extortion of "tolls" from passers-by in public areas	19.10	45.40	9.20	29.70	18.20	33.00	21.30	45.80	18.30	50.90	23.80	53.80

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior—Carabineros (2003).

[a]Question asked: "Do you perceive concrete action taken by Carabineros on these problems in your neighborhood?"

TABLE 7.4 RANKING OF PROBLEMS AND CARABINEROS' RESPONSE

Problem	Importance	Ranking	Action	Ranking
Sale of illegal drugs	38	1	−15.7	7
Consumption of alcohol in public areas and by minors in local establishments	19	2	−9.0	3
Robbery and assault of homes, businesses and other establishments	13	3	−11.3	4
Traffic accidents	9	4	30.6	1
Gangs	7	5	−16.9	9
Assault and muggings of passers-by in public areas	6	6	−16.3	8
Car theft or theft of objects from vehicles	4	7	−14.2	6
Domestic violence	2	8	−12.6	5
Fighting in public areas	1	9	−8.5	2
Prostitution in public areas	1	10	−22.9	10
Extortion of "tolls" from passers-by in public areas	0	11	−26.3	11

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior—Carabineros (2003).

The control of the sale of illegal drugs is the issue that evidences the greatest discrepancy between the demand's level of priority and the public's perception of Carabineros' action. This concern primarily affects lower-income areas.

The next question in the survey on the perceptions of Carabineros relates to the importance of different actions by the police to meet the previously identified needs. The respondents were asked to evaluate the actions by Carabineros as very important or important, of average importance, of little importance or unimportant.

Table 7.5 lists, in order, the net opinions of the respondents, calculated by subtracting the percentage of those declaring the action of little importance or unimportant from those who found the action to be important or very important in their neighborhood.

The survey on the public's perceptions of Carabineros then asks for reactions to a number of actions by this police force, which include those mentioned previously, as well as several others. A net evaluation—derived from the difference between the percentages of positive and negative responses (those who considered the Carabineros successful in carrying out these actions versus those who saw them as falling short)—reveals findings that coincide in many aspects with the findings

TABLE 7.5 IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO ACTIONS BY CARABINEROS

Action	Percentage Finding Important
Visible patrolling of the streets, especially at night	95.2
Rapid dispatch of vehicles in response to emergency calls	94.7
Apprehension of criminals	94.2
Undertaking operations against drug traffickers	91.9
Apprehension of people who consume alcohol or drugs in public areas	90.9
Protection of crime victims	90.6
Controlling the sale of alcohol to minors in bars and liquor stores	90.5
Respect for individuals' rights	89.2
Provision of useful information to prevent mugging of residents and business owners	88.3
Community relations	83.7
Working with neighborhood groups toward solutions	82.4
Enforcement of traffic laws and direct traffic	82.0
Checking identification of suspicious individuals	81.8
Holding regular public hearings to which neighborhood residents are invited	79.0
Apprehension of those practicing prostitution in public areas	76.1
Taking action against the extortion of "tolls"	72.1

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior—Carabineros (2003).

from the national victimization survey. The more positive evaluations are concentrated in the areas of public assistance and not in actions related to crime control.

Once again, the Carabineros receive better evaluations in the provision of public assistance and rescue operations during natural disasters, in assistance and rescue during traffic accidents, in maintaining public order in large-scale events, and in assistance in the case of household emergencies. They receive lower marks for actions that have been quite highly ranked in terms of significance in other questions from the survey, such as the protection of crime victims or operations against drug traffickers.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the Carabineros and the Investigative Police clearly receive greater public support than the police of other Latin American countries. This esteem for the police

TABLE 7.6 EVALUATION OF CARABINEROS' ACTIONS (PERCENTAGE OF THOSE SURVEYED)

Action	Negative (Bad/ Very Bad)	Positive (Good/ Very Good)	Net Evaluation (Positive-Negative)
Assistance and rescue during traffic accidents	3.8	69.2	65.4
Assistance and rescue during natural disasters	4.3	69.5	65.2
Enforcement of traffic laws and directing traffic	7.6	62.9	55.3
Search for missing persons	5.4	58.2	52.8
Assistance in household emergencies	6.3	58.2	51.9
Preservation of the public order during large-scale events	9.5	58.8	49.3
Border control	4.1	50.2	46.1
Control and provision of security in public marches or protests	10.8	55.3	44.5
Apprehension of criminals	14.0	51.1	37.1
Stopping acts of vandalism	10.6	47.6	37.0
Respect for individuals' rights	15.6	45.3	29.7
Dealing with cases of domestic violence	13.0	42.2	29.2
Patrolling main streets on foot	22.4	46.1	23.7
Protection of crime victims	18.3	39.4	21.1
Visible patrolling of the streets, especially at night	24.1	42.3	18.2
Community relations	20.0	37.0	17.0
Investigation of crimes	16.0	32.3	16.3
Investigation of economic crimes	15.0	30.9	15.9
Checking the identification of suspicious individuals	19.7	32.4	12.7
Undertaking operations against drug traffickers	24.1	35.9	11.8
Apprehension of people who consume alcohol or drugs in public areas	25.9	35.4	9.5

(continued)

TABLE 7.6 EVALUATION OF CARABINEROS' ACTIONS (PERCENTAGE OF THOSE SURVEYED) (CONTINUED)

Action	Negative (Bad/ Very Bad)	Positive (Good/ Very Good)	Net Evaluation (Positive-Negative)
Apprehension of prostitutes soliciting in public	21.0	28.9	7.9
Rapid dispatch of vehicles in response to emergency calls	28.2	35.3	7.1
Work in the area of drug-use prevention	29.6	32.4	2.8
Control of the sale of alcohol to minors in bars and liquor stores	29.4	30.5	1.1
Taking action against the extortion of "tolls"	24.0	22.9	−1.1
Provision of useful information to prevent mugging of residents and business owners	29.6	28.3	−1.3
Working with neighborhood groups to resolve problems	39.3	22.1	−17.2
Holding regular public meetings to which the residents of the area are invited	37.5	20.2	−17.3

Source: Chile, Ministry of the Interior—Carabineros (2003).

forces is partly the result of a general appreciation for order and legality among Chileans. They have a positive attitude toward their gradual transition to democracy and a certain tendency to view both the police and the armed forces as permanent national institutions. The population places great importance on the role of the police in crime control. In times of rising crime, this high level of public appreciation has helped the police gain financial and political support for its policies. Efforts carried out by both police forces to improve relations with local governments and the public have helped them to fully insert themselves into the democratic system and enjoy high levels of legitimacy, despite the fact that their legal structures and organizational autonomy from the elected government has been the subject of debate for years.

This legitimacy can also be ascribed to citizens' positive evaluation of the attention they receive from the police, and the public appreciates certain characteristics of members of the Carabineros related to discipline, education, and public service.

Thus, it can be said that Chileans are moved to support the police given their general attitudes toward the values the police represents, as well as because they appreciate the public social role the police performs as the most visible state institution in emergencies.

Nonetheless, residents of lower income sectors have a more negative opinion of the Carabineros with regard to all of these aspects, including the institution's impartiality. In these sectors, there is a lack of confidence in the police as well as a feeling that the institution provides less protection. This feeling is supported by additional data that reveal a significant increase in private security that benefits the wealthiest sectors.

The findings also lay bare a number of important challenges, particularly for the Carabineros. For instance, there is an overwhelming lack of awareness regarding the institution's plans for outreach to the community, although actions in this sense are not a priority for the respondents. Another concern is the gap between the problems perceived as priorities in the respondents' neighborhoods and the perception of the quality of the Carabineros' actions to resolve them. The surveys also reveal different social sectors make different demands, which indicates the need to decentralize police action. Thus, in order to maintain present levels of support the Carabineros will have to become more responsive toward vulnerable populations, both in terms of showing more impartiality toward the poor and increasing decisionmaking decentralization to deal with different social demands. This will probably affect the centralization of power within the institution, and will call for more innovation and personal initiative in an organization characterized by its militarized structure.

NOTES

1. Our analysis focuses mainly in two surveys undertaken in 2003 in Chile (see Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics 2003, and Chile, Ministry of the Interior, Carabineros 2003).
2. Laws of the Dominican Republic, Institutional Law of the National Police, no. 96-04, article 39, paragraph II.
3. The military jurisdiction of the Carabineros covers not only crimes committed by police, but also crimes committed by civilians against members of the Carabineros.
4. During the military regime (1973 to 1990), the directors of the Investigative Police were retired army generals. Since 1992, the directors have come from the police ranks.
5. Throughout Latin America, the Carabineros is considered to have high professional standards. Between 1996 and 2003, 481 officers from 21 nations received scholarships from the Chilean government to study in academies of the Carabineros.
6. See Ministry of Justice, Safety and Human Rights of Argentina, National Directorate of Criminal Policy Research Department, "Victimization Studies, City of Buenos Aires, 1997 to 2001, Buenos Aires, October 2002," available at http://www.polcrim.jus.gov.ar/Victimizacion/Evolution%20study%20City%20of%20Buenos%20Aires%201997-2001.pdf.

7. The national victimization survey asked what persons or institutions bore the main responsibility for ensuring citizen security: 32.5 percent of the respondents named the Carabineros; 26.1 percent mentioned the government; 20.8 percent, the courts; 9.1 percent named citizens themselves; only 4.9 percent, the municipalities; and just 2.0 percent, the Investigative Police (Chile, Ministry of the Interior, National Institute of Statistics 2003).
8. On May 19, 2004, a unanimous agreement was reached by the Senate Committee of Constitutional Affairs, which stated that both police forces were to report to a future minister or vice minister of security (*El Mercurio,* May 20, 2004, A1). The constitution was finally amended in 2005 to state that until this ministry is created, the Carabineros will continue to report to the Ministry of Defense.
9. In a National Public Opinion Survey carried out by the Center of Public Studies in December 2002, 41 percent of the respondents considered the Carabineros to be the most trustworthy institution in Chile, second only to the universities (57 percent), and the churches (46 percent). Only 19 percent of the respondents voted for the courts.
10. See "Plan antidelictivo: Carabineros Deja de Cumplir Funciones Extra Policiales" ["Anti-crime Plan. Carabineros Will No Longer Carry Out Non-police Tasks"], *El Mercurio,* January 12, 1999, A1, 10.
11. "Por Primera Vez los Carabineros Serán Evaluados a Diario por Su Desempeño." ["For the First Time Carabineros Will Be Evaluated for Their Performance"], *La Segunda,* March 24, 2000, 19.
12. See note 6.
13. The two surveys are not strictly comparable. However, they could be consistently compared in terms of citizens' perceptions of police corruption. Our hypothesis is that the percentage of persons personally affected by acts of corruption is relatively small, but perception that members of the Carabineros are corrupt is higher, especially among the poor.

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