

# **Police Perceptions of Maori**

**A Report to the New Zealand Police and  
the Ministry of Maori Development: Te Puni Kokiri**

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## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

Within New Zealand, there is a lack of empirical research on police attitudes and perceptions of Maori or other minority or ethnic groups. However, overseas research frequently points to negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviour and racist abuse within the police towards ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. This research is designed to examine police views about their behaviour and attitudes toward Maori, to look at factors associated with different attitudes among police officers and to assess likely responses to proposed changes for building responsiveness to Maori planned as part of Policing 2000.

### **Method**

The sample was limited to those ranked as constables, senior constables, sergeants or senior sergeants, detectives, detective sergeants and detective senior sergeants who were most likely to have day to day contact with members of the public. Booster samples of women and those in the more senior ranks were included to allow for comparisons on these variables.

Questionnaires were sent out with an accompanying letter and a reply paid envelope with a return address. The reply envelopes were numbered to enable researchers to identify which respondents returned their questionnaires. As replies came in, the envelopes were separated from the questionnaires so that numbers could not be linked to replies. This procedure was adopted to ensure the confidentiality of the responses while enabling researchers to know who should be rung to follow up non-replies.

### **Responses**

Of the original 1066 police officers sent questionnaires, 81 were on leave without pay, had left the Police or were no longer able to be located. A total of 737 valid replies were received before the final cut off date which was 12 January 1998. This represents 75% of the 979 potentially available. It is the responses of this sample which are described in this report.

A number of respondents commented that they had found the questionnaire interesting and thought provoking. Others were pleased to take part in the survey because they felt that there were problems that needed to be addressed. On the other hand, 8% refused to participate and other people expressed reluctance about returning their questionnaires. Reasons for not responding were being too busy, a fear of being identified or a concern that the questionnaire was biased.

## Findings

The 737 respondents largely comprised those with at least 5 years service who were currently or had recently been engaged in front line duties. The sample, although not representative of the New Zealand population as a whole with respect to sex or ethnicity, appears to be representative of the New Zealand Police ranked at senior sergeant or below in these respects. Only 8% of the sample identified as Maori although another 6% identified as having some Maori ancestry and 18% were women.

In going about their work, police officers reported that, for the most part, Maori and non Maori were treated similarly. A greater tendency to suspect Maori of an offence was reported by about a third and nearly half reported that police officers generally were more likely to query vehicle registration when a Maori was seen driving a 'flash' car. However, many respondents commented that policing behaviour was more related to factors such as context and attitudes than to ethnicity.

At least two thirds reported that they had heard colleagues using racist language about suspects or offenders. Much of this was in private rather than face to face with offenders and suspects. As some respondents commented, there are likely to be adverse effects from any use of racist terms, either privately or publicly. The data also suggest that, on average, almost one in four police officers have negative attitudes to Maori. A similar proportion of police officers were seen as having negative attitudes to Pacific Islanders and Asians. On the whole, there may have been some decrease in negativity toward Maori over recent years but most respondents thought it had stayed the same. When asked about the reactions of supervisors to negative behaviour toward Maori, about half of those officers reporting negative behaviour said that it passed unprimanded.

These results suggest that strategies need to be developed to eliminate negative attitudes, to avoid the over-policing of Maori and to correct bad practices that may have arisen in police station talk. Senior front line supervisors have a crucial role in establishing norms and ensuring that racist language does not become common. Training and best practice guidelines for them could increase their skills in mentoring new recruits as well as in regulating inappropriate behaviour.

Respondents were asked about relationships between Maori and other police officers. Overall, 80% saw these relationships as being very good but this was a view less likely to be held by officers of Maori descent compared to officers identifying as New Zealand European or Pakeha. Maori police officers were seen by about a fifth to a third of respondents as having an advantage in dealing with Maori victims and offenders. About a third said that it was more difficult for Maori to deal with racially abusive comments. Police officers of Maori descent were even more likely to say this than those identifying as New Zealand European or Pakeha. Nearly a half of all officers thought it was more difficult for Maori to deal with deaths because Maori were more distressed by having to handle a dead body, especially when they were not certain that appropriate protocols had been followed. On the other hand, some respondents said that Maori had an advantage in dealing with Maori deaths because of their knowledge of the relevant customs.

A number of items canvassed views on Maori political aspirations. Nearly half these items were endorsed by at least half the sample. Most of the sample agreed with items

emphasising the importance of settling Waitangi Treaty claims, honouring Maori language, respecting and preserving Maori customs and improving the social and economic condition of the Maori people. There was more disagreement with such items as giving Maori guardianship of native plants, restoring Maori fishing rights and creating a separate justice system for Maori.

Collectively, these items gave a spread of opinion and met other statistical criteria that enabled some of them to be used to derive a score for the respondents on a scale of attitudes to Maori political aspirations. Scores on this scale were used to determine factors affecting perceptions and attitudes. Maori officers, senior sergeants, older officers, and those no longer in the front line were more likely to have favourable attitudes than New Zealand European or Pakeha officers, constables, younger officers and those in the front line. Increased contact with Maori in one's private life, either through social activities or family membership, was also associated with more favourable attitudes although work contact with Maori seemed irrelevant. Several officers mentioned their experiences with marae programmes as increasing their understanding of Maori issues. These findings suggest that, given the right type of contact with Maori people, it is possible to increase understanding and promote positive responses.

Finally, a number of questions explored responses to proposed policies and strategies aimed at building responsiveness to Maori. Overall, respondents agreed with most of the proposals or were at least neutral toward them. However, proposals to recruit and promote Maori, to emphasise police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and to provide Maori translation on request were disagreed with by a significant minority. Comments indicated that issues of equity were at the heart of much of the disagreement and suggest that affirmative action policies in recruitment and promotion of Maori police will meet with considerable resistance. Increasing Maori representation will be best achieved by ensuring that well educated Maori are recruited.

The views of police of Maori descent and those who identified as New Zealand European or Pakeha were compared. In general, the two groups did not hold different views on police attitudes, language or behaviour. But on specific aspects of behaviour, officers of Maori descent were more likely to report discriminatory behaviour by police officers in general, especially in responding to members of the public, stopping cars, using abusive language with offenders and treating suspects roughly. Police of Maori descent were also more likely to report that the police had negative attitudes to Maori. One interpretation of this is that Maori officers were more likely than others to see the actions of their colleagues as displaying negative attitudes and behaviour toward Maori. Another interpretation is that Maori officers were more likely to describe real differences in behaviour and this is supported by the fact that, on several of the behavioural items, there were no differences in the perceptions of Maori and other police officers. It is not possible to check either of these interpretations without carrying out an observational study.

This report raises questions about the position of the Maori police officer within the service and the extent to which he or she has a distinctive view. The data show that often the views of Maori police officers are indistinguishable from those of other police. Some of them clearly share the negative views and attitudes toward Maori offenders that characterise some of their colleagues. Perhaps this is not surprising. Other research demonstrates the power of the occupational culture in shaping the

attitudes and behaviour of groups within the police who do not fit the traditional police stereotype.

On the other hand, Maori police officers were much more likely to endorse proposals for policies that would enhance their status and improve attitudes towards them. The differences between Maori and other officers on these items were, for the most part, the largest found in the study. Again there is a parallel with research on women which shows that although women in male occupations may often appear to share their male colleagues attitudes, they are, nevertheless, keen to see changes that will improve the status of women. And, as already noted, favourable attitudes to Maori political aspirations were held more among those of Maori descent than those identifying as New Zealand European or Pakeha and among those who had a high degree of contact with Maori in their private lives than those who had less contact.

So how does one interpret these results? Do they show racism in the police? The answer must be that there is some evidence of racism in the New Zealand Police but these views are held by a minority. There is also evidence of strongly and widely held beliefs among the police in equity in treatment regardless of ethnicity and a commitment to professional policing. Many of the policies currently being proposed as ways of improving police responsiveness to Maori will be welcomed by police and can contribute to constructive changes. Others will require further debate. And the results of the research may contribute to the development of a greater social consensus about how best to create a professional police force in which equity is a reality for all ethnicities.



## Introduction

In New Zealand, surveys of perceptions of the police show that Maori have less favourable views than non Maori (MRL, 1993, 1995a, 1995b). The 1995 MRL survey showed that most people, including most Maori respondents, had generally positive views of the police. On the other hand when the results for Maori and those of European ancestry were compared, it was apparent that Maori were somewhat less likely to have favourable impressions of the police, to have trust and confidence in them, to see them as approachable or to be satisfied with the service they gave. Maori were also less likely than those of European ancestry to report that the police deal impartially with all people regardless of race, class or gender and to investigate complaints against their own staff impartially and fairly.

A number of other studies canvassing the views of Maori have also reported the general belief among Maori that the police behave more negatively towards Maori offenders (Workman et al cited in NZ Police/Te Puni Kokiri, 1997; Jackson, 1989; Te Tika Whaingā, 1986). Jackson, for instance, refers to widespread Maori perceptions that police over-prosecute and harass young Maori males. He cites allegations of assaults in custody and humiliating treatment of Maori and suggests that the consequence of targeted policing strategies in particular areas is to amplify the amount of recorded crime among Maori. He suggests that both differential policing and institutional racism are features of Maori experience of policing (pp 112-127) .

Overseas research frequently points to negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviour and racist abuse within the police towards ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples (Chan, 1997; Gelsthorpe, 1993; Belsen, 1975). At the same time, the overseas studies show that ethnic minorities perceive the police negatively and as discriminatory (Smith & Gray, 1985; Reiner, 1994; Gelsthorpe, 1993).

Within New Zealand, there is a lack of empirical research on police attitudes and perceptions of Maori or other minority or ethnic groups. One exception to this is a study by Dance (1987). He found that police perceptions of Maori were generally negative. However, using set narratives where the offender was implied to be Maori or non Maori, Dance reported no significant differences in police decision-making. This finding, which contrasts with the observational studies from overseas, could be a result of methodological differences.

The research reported here was designed to examine further police views on their own behaviour and attitudes to Maori. It aims to establish the extent to which police attitudes are likely to impact on police practice and aims to assess likely responses to the systemic changes in building responsiveness to Maori planned as part of Policing 2000 (NZ Police, 1997).

The most reliable and appropriate methods of assessing discriminatory behaviour involve observing police actions (as was done in London by Smith & Gray, 1985). However, such methods are costly. The alternative of surveying the police themselves using a postal questionnaire has been chosen here as one that is relatively economic and likely to provide useful information on the research questions. However, caution is necessary in relying on self reported behaviour of police as an accurate guide to what they themselves or others in the police service actually do.

The specific goals of the research are to:

- describe police attitudes towards Maori;
- identify significant variables which influence police understanding and perceptions of attitudes and practices toward Maori;
- analyse the relationship between perceptions and attitudes towards Maori and socio-demographic factors of police officers; for example, the type of contact with Maori, and the age, gender, socio-economic status, length of service, and rank of respondents.

## Method

### Questionnaire design

In addition to questions about their background, respondents were asked questions about the behaviour of the police generally in relation to Maori, their own views of Maori and about possible police policy and strategy. It was also agreed between the researchers and their clients that it was important to state the purpose of the research directly as being to explore police attitudes, behaviour, policies and strategies in relation to Maori. Attempts to conceal the true purposes of the study would be inappropriately deceptive and were also likely to be ineffective and counterproductive.

### *Police behaviour*

A number of situations where police behave differently to those who are ethnically dissimilar to the white majority were identified from previous overseas research (Smith & Gray, 1985; Reiss, 1971). It was decided to ask respondents directly about their views of police behaviour in general and in specific situations. Respondents were asked for each possible police action: "**In general**, are the police more likely to do the following when the person is Maori, Caucasian<sup>1</sup>, or is it the same for both?"

A relatively objective measure of inappropriate behaviour used by Smith and Gray (1985) was the extent to which complaints were lodged against officers for behaviour such as: assault, excessive or unnecessary force, fabrication or adjustment of evidence, accepting bribes or favours, rudeness, treating people unfairly because of race, failure to attend or help when requested. This option was rejected as too sensitive to ask about in the context of a postal questionnaire. However, other options suggested by Smith and Gray's research were adopted. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of officers who had negative attitudes to Maori and whether or not supervisors reprimanded officers who behaved negatively to Maori. For comparison, similar questions were asked about the percentage of officers with negative attitudes towards peoples of Pacific Island and Asian descent.

Finally, questions on behaviour in general were asked about relationships between Maori and non Maori police officers and about differences in their ability to deal with various situations. The situations respondents were asked about were identified as those associated with differences in previous research (Smith & Gray, 1985) or mentioned during piloting the research.

### *Police officers' attitudes*

A number of options for exploring the police officers' own views were considered. The first was to use a standard scale designed to measure authoritarianism or racism.

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<sup>1</sup> Considerable debate occurred about what shorter phrase to use for New Zealanders of European descent. It was expected that there would be objections to being called Pakeha from many police officers. It was eventually decided to use the word 'Caucasian'. This word might seem offensive to many New Zealanders because of its historical use in relation to racial purity by fascist groups but it is the standard option used by the police on the Wanganui computer and hence one the police were accustomed to using. And indeed no one objected to this word although several objected to the use of the word 'Pakeha' in a question on ethnicity worded to match the census format.

This would have provided data comparable with other jurisdictions. On the other hand, these scales provide an indirect rather than a direct measure of racism, they are not a direct measure of anti-Maori attitudes, and the approach could be considered devious or deceptive.

A second option was to use a semantic differential scale which involves asking respondents to rate various groups on personality characteristics such as warm/cold, good/bad or strong/weak. The advantage of this is that it is a standard strategy for measuring racial prejudice. However, the strategy is again indirect (and therefore potentially seen as devious) and has the disadvantage that it asks respondents to reproduce stereotypes about Maori which may not necessarily have a strong relationship with their behaviour. Similar problems arise with adjective checklists such as those used by Dance (1987). Although Dance did elicit some differences in the most common descriptions of Maori compared to Pakeha, it was difficult to interpret what the consequences of these would be for behaviour.

Consideration was also given to using standard vignettes about Maori, Pakeha and Asian offenders with a counterbalanced experimental design presenting each vignette randomly matched with different racial groups to each officer (as in Dance, 1987). This technique would allow comparison with Dance's results and has the advantage of providing a realistic simulation of situations that occur for police but Dance did not find significant differences using this strategy. Furthermore, it is relatively time consuming and does not allow a score to be calculated for each officer which would enable comparisons to be made between officers of different ranks and experience.

After pre-testing some of the above options and further discussion with the clients of the research, it was finally decided not to use any of the above techniques. Instead, a number of items were devised which explored current Maori political aspirations and police officers were asked to respond to these on a five point scale of agreement/disagreement. In addition, in line with a 'Modern Racism Scale' developed in the United States (McConahay, 1986), a number of items were developed which stated common negative views about Maori issues and respondents were asked about their agreement/disagreement with these.

## ***General questions on policy and strategy***

With respect to police policy and strategy, a number of items based on the draft policy (Policing 2000 Strategy Group, 1997) were developed and respondents were asked to rate each of these on a five point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

## ***Background characteristics***

Finally, items were devised to determine the respondents current duties in the police, present rank, length of service, age, sex, ethnicity, highest educational qualification, degree and type of contact with Maori in the police, in their family and socially.

## **Piloting**

Early drafts of the questions were developed and tested in interviews with ten police officers, some of whom were Maori liaison officers. These interviews also explored issues in a relatively open-ended way; for example, they encouraged participants to talk about issues they saw as important for them and to identify the type of questions they felt most comfortable answering. Two more formal drafts of the questions were pre-tested with 21 police officers in the Wellington area who had not been selected for inclusion for the sample. In addition, various forms of the questions were extensively discussed with representatives of the New Zealand Police and Te Puni Kokiri and the police team tried some of the versions on their colleagues. Final changes to the questionnaire were checked with four of the police officers involved in the pre-testing and four new participants. The final version of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

## **Sample selection**

The aim of the sampling procedure was to send questionnaires to 1000 members of the New Zealand Police who were on the police human resources database (PHRIS) as of October 1997 and were likely to be involved in day to day contact with members of the public. For this reason the sample was limited to those ranked constables, senior constables, sergeants or senior sergeants, detectives, detective sergeants and detective senior sergeants. It was anticipated that about 0.6% of those selected from the database would not be able to be located as the PHRIS database contained names of people who were on leave, had been transferred to another location or who had recently left the service. Thus, we aimed to select at least 1060 names.

Two other factors on which information was available on the PHRIS database were also considered in the sampling; the need to ensure a sufficient sample of women and a sufficient number of those in the more senior ranks for comparisons to be made between groups with respect to sex and rank<sup>2</sup>. It was decided that, where possible, at least 150 names should be selected from men and women at the rank of constable and at the ranks of sergeant or senior sergeant. The sampling strategy designed to meet these criteria was to draw a sample of one in five constables (including senior constables and detectives) and one in two sergeants and senior sergeants (including detective sergeants and detective senior sergeants). In addition, all 39 women at the

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately there were no data which enabled quota sampling with respect to ethnicity.

level of sergeant or senior sergeant were included in the sample. This strategy resulted in a final sample comprising 1066 names.

### **Distribution of questionnaires**

Questionnaires were sent out with an accompanying letter and a reply paid envelope with a return address. The reply envelopes were numbered to enable researchers to identify which respondents returned their questionnaires. As replies came in, the envelopes were separated from the questionnaires so that numbers could not be linked to replies. This procedure was adopted to ensure the confidentiality of the responses while enabling researchers to know who should be rung to follow up non-replies.

### **Responses**

Of the original 1066 selected from PHRIS and sent questionnaires, 81 were on leave without pay, had left the Police or were no longer able to be located at the PHRIS address. This gave a possible sample of 979 valid replies. A total of 737 valid replies were received before the final cut off date which was 12 January 1998<sup>3</sup>. This represents 75% of the 979 potentially available. It is this sample which is reported on in this report.

This relatively healthy response rate has been achieved despite the fact that police have, in recent times, been reluctant to take part in surveys conducted by their own organisation. The use of two follow up phone calls was an important factor. Replies from some of the participants indicated that the shortness of the questionnaire and its interest to the respondents proved a positive factor for many of those who responded. A number of respondents commented that they had found the questionnaire interesting and thought provoking. Often people were pleased to take part in the survey because they felt that there were problems that needed to be addressed:

*I hope your survey is successful. I am of British descent. I worry about cultural bias in interpreting what I have written. However, I am so keen to see progress in this field, I will risk baring my soul. I am deeply concerned about the rapid increase in antagonistic attitudes among racial groups in [my city]. Things are looking grim.*

*Being a Maori, I appreciate this opportunity to answer a survey on views of police toward Maori.*

*Due to a predominantly white male work force, the police is a breeding ground for racism, sexism and chauvinistic attitudes. I wish you luck with your study and hope it will achieve change in police culture.*

One person involved in the pilot, who encouraged us to ask challenging questions, warned us that:

*A number of police officers will be threatened by this questionnaire.*

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<sup>3</sup> Another seven were returned too late for inclusion and two more replies were excluded; one from a person who gave his rank as Inspector, one filled out by an ex-police officer's wife.

And, indeed, a number of people did refuse to participate. Twelve returned their questionnaires and another seventy one refused when contacted by telephone. This makes for a total refusal rate of 8%. Other people expressed reluctance about returning their questionnaires. There were a number of reasons for this.

Several said they were being asked to do too many questionnaires or were too busy. Some of these comments also indicated low morale and a belief that front-line police have too many demands placed upon them while receiving too little support from National Headquarters.

A commonly expressed concern was a fear of being identified. These officers were suspicious of the number on the envelope which enabled the researchers to identify who had replied (to avoid unnecessary reminder phone calls) and did not accept the assurances of the research team that the data would be treated confidentially. Indeed, several expressed the belief that their superiors would see their responses and that this would have an adverse affect on their career.

A second, and sometimes related, concern was that the questionnaire was biased. Some expressed the view that the questions did not enable them to describe the relevant factors in policing in a proper way; for instance, questions on whether people would behave differently to a Maori overlooked more important variables such as the attitude or behaviour of a suspect and the context of the interaction. Others questioned the appropriateness of generalisations about views on different ethnic groups or believed that the questions were designed to categorise them as racist. The same views were also expressed by some of those who did respond. Some of the comments are as follows:

*Whoever drafted the survey [appears] to believe that it is possible that the police are prone to inappropriate behaviour, especially against Maori, and that it is considered a norm.*

*Any answer would reflect badly on the police and I don't think we police should have to be asked to take part in such a survey.*

*I am not prepared to answer this survey because of the racial innuendoes within this survey and it will **not** be totally confidential..... I feel you are inviting racial discrimination!!*

*There are more races in New Zealand than just Maori and the fact that this study focuses mainly on them and not other races highlights this project's flaw.*

*It is time to give up with this crap about how Maoris should be any different from anyone else in this country. And stop picking on the majority. It is not our fault that we were born white.*

*I see this survey as more manure to be thrown at the police force that is currently understaffed, unsupported, under resourced and unorganised.*

*A number of sections attempt to pigeon hole responses in a manner which does not reflect my own feelings.*

*A clinical survey which does not allow for grey areas.*

Some suggested that the research may have harmful consequences:

*I find this research insulting, a waste of money and time. Of all the years I have worked in the police, you will always get some people who are racist etc but this is right across the community both work wise and private life. I was brought up with 'there is good and bad in every race' and that can be applied to jobs etc as well. When you put out papers such as this one you people create and encourage problems.*

These issues of possible research bias and potential harm from the findings are important concerns to raise and they are considered in the final section which discusses the interpretation of the results of the research.

### **Data presentation and analysis**

The data are presented as percentages of the total who replied to each question. Unless otherwise stated, they add to a 100 in each column in each table. When more than 10 people did not respond or have answered 'don't know' to a particular question the percentage is given in the text, the relevant table or in a footnote. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number so that sometimes they may add to 99 or 101.

Statistical tests have been used at a number of points. Those readers without a technical background may find these difficult to follow. For this reason, the technical detail has been largely kept to footnotes and to one section of the text which those without a technical background can skip over.

Tests of statistical significance of differences have been used for comparing the responses of different groups. For readers with statistical knowledge, Chi-squared has been used for data divided into categories and t-tests have been used to compare the significance of differences between means. The important point for the reader without technical knowledge is that these tests make it possible to determine whether the differences between groups are likely to be due to chance or whether they are likely to be real. The key feature to look for is the probability or p value. If  $p < .05$  or  $p < .01$  or  $p < .001$ , then the convention is to regard the differences as real.



## Results

### Description of sample

Women made up 18% of those replying and men made up 82%. This corresponds to the proportion of men and women selected to take part in the research. Half the sample were ranked as constables. Fuller detail of the rank and gender of those responding is given in Table 1. It shows that numbers are adequate to enable comparisons of men and women and the more senior and more junior police officers. It also shows that, despite the attempts to increase the sample of women at senior levels, more of the women than the men in the sample are constables reflecting the relatively small proportion of women in the more senior positions.

**Table 1 Rank and gender of those responding; percentages<sup>4</sup>**

	Men % N=599	Women % N=127	Total % N=726
Constable	52	69	55
Senior constable	4	1	3
Detective	9	6	8
Sergeant or detective sergeant	17	22	18
Senior sergeant or detective senior sergeant	19	3	16

Over 77% of the sample had spent at least 5 years in the service. Twenty four percent were under the age of thirty and 6% were fifty years or over. All but 6% had School Certificate in one or more subjects and 71% had at least Sixth Form Certificate. In addition, 50% reported having post school qualifications that included all or part of a technical qualification, a diploma or a degree.

Eighty percent of the sample were currently engaged in front line duties that brought them into daily contact with offenders and 96% of the sample had been engaged in front line duties during the past five years.

Respondents were asked about their own ethnic background using the same question asked in the New Zealand census in 1996. Their replies and comparable data from the census and data from the 1995 New Zealand Police census are reported in Table 2.

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<sup>4</sup> 11 people did not report their rank or gender.

**Table 2 Ethnicity of police officers in the sample; percentages; N=726<sup>5</sup>**

	Police sample		1996 population census %	1995 NZ Police census %
	N	%		
NZ European or Pakeha (NZE)	550	76		
Other European	48	6		
NZ Maori (NZM)	55	8		
NZ Maori & NZ European	36	5		
New Zealander	16	2		
Pacific Island peoples	11	2		
Other	9	1		
<hr/>				
All with some NZ European ethnicity*	586	81	72	81
All with some Maori ethnicity*	94	13	14.5	9.8
All with some Pacific Island ethnicity*	15	2	8	3

\* Note: In the last section of the table, people may be recorded in more than one group so that the total percentage adds to more than one hundred percent.

In terms of ethnicity, 82% reported being European or 'New Zealand European or Pakeha'<sup>6</sup>. Only 13% reported themselves as having some Maori ancestry. Two percent reported themselves as having Pacific Island ancestry. These figures for Maori and Pacific Island ancestry are less than the figures of 14.5% having Maori ethnicity and 8% for Pacific Island ethnicity among the New Zealand population as a whole as recorded in the 1996 census<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, the percentage for those with some Maori ethnicity is higher than the 10% reported in the police census taken in August 1995 (New Zealand Police, 1996). This suggests that the percentage of those of Maori descent in the New Zealand Police may have increased over the last two years although the two sets of data are not strictly comparable: the police census covered all ranks and non sworn personnel while our sample was confined to sworn personnel from constable to senior sergeant and there may have been differences in who responded to the survey (which had a 75% response rate) compared to the census which had an 80% response rate).

Despite the fact that only 13% reported some Maori ancestry, 47% of the sample reported that a member of their immediate or extended family was Maori. Thirty seven percent reported that, on a five point scale to assess contact in their private life going from '1 = Almost none' to '5 = A great deal', that they were a '4' or '5' (from now on we refer to this score as 'relatively high contact'). In terms of their working life, 56% of those answering this question<sup>8</sup> reported relatively high contact with Maori offenders, victims and informants in their current duties.

<sup>5</sup> 11 people did not state their ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> Some (2%) objected to these terms and reported themselves as 'New Zealanders'.

<sup>7</sup> Because there are age differences in the distribution of Maori and New Zealand European, we also calculated census percentages for those in the 20 and under 50 years age groups. The results showed almost identical figures to those in the total population: 14.2% of those 20-49 identified Maori compared to 14.5% in the total population and 71% of those 20-49 identifying as New Zealand European compared to 72% of the total population.

<sup>8</sup> 5% of respondents either stated that they did not know or they did not answer this question.

## **Police attitudes and behaviour in general**

### ***Police responses to differences in ethnicity***

When asked 'Do police officers generally respond the same way to offenders who belong to different ethnic groups?', 72% said that they did. A minority of 19% said that responses were sometimes different. Some comments indicated that officers were responsive to cultural difference in a constructive way:

*Each ethnic group requires a different way of speaking to or with a person. Language and cultural considerations are important. You wouldn't treat a Maori the same way as an Asian, as a European as a Pacific Islander.*

At other times, the differences were seen as stereotyping or discriminating against Maori and also sometimes other Polynesians:

*Many long serving Caucasian police officers have little time for juvenile Maoris, or Polynesians, they talk down to them.*

*Police are racist and have no tolerance for lower class ethnic groups. They don't think they deserve to be treated like upper class offenders.*

*The darker races are all treated as second class citizens. The assumption of guilt is worse for Maori.*

*Some police officers speak to them differently - slower, pidgin English, arrogantly and use abusive language.*

*There seems to be a stereotyped attitude. If one Maori offends then all are considered to be judged that way - 'typical Maori' or 'what are **they** claiming now?'*

*Ethnic groups are considered 'acting suspicious' if seen in same situation as 'non ethnic persons'.*

Some of this stereotyping comes from the fact that a lot of the offenders dealt with by police are Maori and this experience is generalised to all Maori:

*Because Maori are seen as the bulk of offenders and perhaps the hardest to handle police officers tend to treat them firmer.*

*Because police deal with large numbers of Maori offenders, they tend to stereotype all Maori as gang members and drunks prone to domestic violence.*

Other commentators gave explanations for different attitudes and behaviour that emphasise the interconnection of race, class and power:

*All are treated badly if they are seen as 'white trash' or 'Maori scum' or 'dumb islander' but they are treated differently if the police officer knows they are connected to a 'respectable' person in the community or are likely to complain about their treatment.*

*The best treatment of 'customers' is afforded to professional people (ie those with economic power); the worst treatment to those with lack of education and economic power.*

Others emphasise the variety of responses within the police:

*Most police officers have a middle road approach for all; however some are clearly 'red necked' while others 'lean over backwards' to be fair and adopt a lighter approach than to majority groups.*

While others point to the reactive nature of police responses:

*Police respond in the way offenders respond to police; ie police take their cue from reactions by offenders.*

*The offender often calls the shots by behaviour, responses and attitudes.*

### ***Racist language***

The next questions asked more specifically about differences in behaviour and provide statistical detail on the prevalence of the variety of views expressed above. Table 3 sets out replies to the question: 'Have you ever heard police officers using racist language or labels to or about suspects or offenders?'

**Table 3 Have heard racist language used about or to suspects or offenders; percentages; N=717<sup>9</sup>**

	%
Yes often	18
Yes sometimes	51
No, not often	19
No hardly ever	13

The data in Table 3 show that fewer than one in five reported that they 'often' heard racist terms. However, half the sample reported hearing racist terms used 'sometimes' and only 13% reported that they heard this 'hardly ever'. The views of police officers of Maori descent were not significantly different on this issue from those police officers identifying as New Zealand European.

Several respondents emphasised that they had heard these terms used 'about' rather than 'to' suspects and offenders.

*Although most personnel may make racist comments, it is always in private. It is not in front of offenders or those who might be offenders. Also the same example of comments are made about white skinheads, petrol heads, the Irish, usually in jest, but none the less offensive if overheard.*

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<sup>9</sup> 2% of respondents either stated that they did not know or they did not answer this question.

The above respondent appears to be claiming that racist language is not damaging unless it is used in front of offenders. On the other hand, private use of racist language can be seen as an expression of attitudes that may well be conveyed more subtly in face to face situations and which may reinforce negative reactions to those Maori with whom the police have contact.

***Specific police responses to Maori and Caucasian***

Respondents were asked about a number of possible police actions which could indicate differentiation between Maori and Caucasians. The responses to these items are list in Table 4.

**Table 4 In general, are the police more likely to do the following when the person is Maori, Caucasian or is it the same for both; percentages\*; N=737**

	% More likely Maori	% More likely Caucasian	Same	% Don't know/no response
Investigate a crime reported by a member of the public	0	4	94	1
Get help for a person with a mental health problem	1	3	92	5
Arrest an offender in cases of family violence	4	2	91	2
Check on accused keeping to bail conditions	4	1	90	4
Check on safety of property of a member of the public	0	7	89	4
Refer a victim of family violence for help	2	7	88	4
Carry out a routine vehicle stop of a known offender	10	1	87	2
Let parties to a dispute sort it out for themselves	5	6	80	9
Ask what a person is doing if seen out in the small hours of the morning	18	0	79	2
Use abusive language towards a suspect or an offender	8	1	78	12
Return a juvenile to their home after 10 pm	8	6	79	7
Treat a suspect roughly	6	0	72	21
Suspect a person of an offence	31	1	65	3
Carry out a QVR if someone is seen driving a flash car	46	1	47	6

\* Note: Percentages add up in rows. Because of the relatively large numbers of 'don't know' and 'no responses' to some items, these have been included in the table.

When asked about how police generally responded to Maori compared to Caucasian, at least 90% said that the police would treat Maori and Caucasian the same when they reported a crime, when they needed help with a mental health problem, when arresting an offender for family violence and when they checked whether or not bail conditions were being kept. Eighty nine percent said that the treatment was the same in checking on someone's property and 88% reported it was the same for getting help for a victim of family violence and only 7% for each of these items reported the actions were more likely when the person was Caucasian.

At least three quarters of the respondents said that the treatment was the same for carrying out routine vehicle stops of known offenders, letting parties to a dispute sort things out themselves, asking what someone was doing out in the small hours of the morning, using abusive language to a suspect or offender, returning a juvenile home after 10 pm or treating a suspect roughly. However, except for sorting out disputes, a minority of respondents thought that these actions were more likely to happen when the person involved was Maori. Indeed, 18% thought a Maori was more likely to be asked what he/she was doing out in the small hours of the morning. 'Don't know' or

'no responses' were also made by 12% to the item on using abusive language and by 21% to the item on treating a suspect roughly. Respondents who commented said that this behaviour did not occur or only occurred in response to the behaviour of the offender. Examples of the comments are:

*I am a professional, this question is not within that parameter.*

*This is not a matter of race. The police will treat **offenders**, not suspects, roughly if the offender treats them poorly.*

Finally there were two items where a sizeable number thought Maori were more likely to be responded to: nearly a third said that Maori were more likely to be suspected of an offence and nearly a half said that Maori were more likely to be stopped if seen driving a 'flash' car. On the other hand, a greater number thought that, even on these items, Maori and Caucasian were likely to be treated the same. A lot of officers were at pains to explain to us that factors other than the ethnicity of the offender were more important in determining whether or not they responded in these situations. As one officer put it:

*You look for something out of place, like a beat up car in Remuera or a flash car in a poor area,*

The comments accompanying answers to this group of questions emphasised diverse perceptions of police behaviour in general. Some emphasised different responses depending on race:

*Police have preconceived ideas of different races.*

*Police tend to be more aggressive towards other ethnic groups and they slag off at them.*

*Police respond in a negative way to ethnic groups as they have a mono-cultural view. They are predominantly white, middle class males.*

*There are some fine members of police who are non Maori and who do not exhibit any signs of racism towards Maori. However, there are a significant number who range from having some racist attitudes to some who have extreme attitudes. The latter can cause immeasurable damage to the police as an organisation when dealing with Maori offenders and complainants.*

Other comments emphasised equality of responses or that other factors were more important than ethnicity:

*People are mostly treated as individuals regardless of their race.*

*Responses are made depending on the attitude of the person, not their ethnicity.*

*Generally it depends on the individual concerned: their language, previous dealings with them, their reliability, their intelligence.*

There was also a group of responses that pointed to potentially constructive responses to differences in ethnicity:

*Different cultures have different needs and the manner of dealing with them differs dramatically.*

*Different ethnic groups require different approaches, language (including body language) and resolutions. Different types of criminals require different types of policing.*

*The only difference is respect or compensation given for religious or ethnic beliefs or customs - particularly deaths.*

*They are treated the same but in some cases, ie where language is a problem, interpreters are called in.*

### ***Negative attitudes to different ethnic groups***

Other questions explored respondents' views about negative attitudes of the police in general towards Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians. The responses to these questions are recorded in Table 5.

**Table 5 Respondents' views of the percentage of the police that have negative attitudes towards Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians; N=737**

	% Maori	% Pacific Islanders	% Asian
None	3	4	
Less than 10%	24	22	25
About 10-20%	18	15	13
About 20-30%	8	9	8
About 30-40%	5	8	6
About 40-50%	4	6	6
About 50-60%	5	3	5
About 60-70%	6	5	4
About 70-80%	4	3	3
About 80-90%	3	2	1
More than 90%	2	2	1
<b>Mean %</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>
Don't know or no response	17	22	23

The first comment that needs to be made is that approximately a fifth of respondents either said that they did not know or they did not respond to these questions. Thus a substantial number of police officers are not prepared to express a view about their colleagues racial attitudes. This may suggest that discussions about such issues are not common among the police or it may be related to the concern of many respondents about ascribing racist views to their colleagues.

Table 5 shows that, when an opinion is expressed, negative attitudes to Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians are most commonly estimated as less than 10% and at least half those responding think that it is less than 20%. Average figures give an estimate of less than a quarter of police having negative attitudes. There were no significant



differences between the responses for the questions about Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians.

Some of the comments distance the respondent from negative attitudes:

*I have noticed a lot of racism toward Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asian cultures and women.*

Other comments indicate the respondent's own negative attitudes:

*Responses are tailored to the comprehension/intelligence/age etc of offender **NOT** race as such. But empirically certain races seem to possess similar levels of comprehension etcetera.*

*Asians will try to say they don't understand English. Maori, more often than not, will just lie to you.*

And other comments referred to contextual factors that affect police attitudes and behaviour:

*In many cases within the police, with regard to offenders, complainants, victims and other customers, the issue is not what race they are but the individual met on each occasion. Offenders are offenders, no matter what colour they are.*

*The reality is that racism exists in the police but sadly this is a reflection of society itself.*

*Most police persons would hold the view that in general terms crime is a major problem for Maori which is the basis of why some would hold negative attitudes to Maori.*

*We may have to change our policing but 80% of people we deal with are Maori/Polynesians that have bad attitudes towards us.*

### *Changing attitudes over time*

Respondents were also asked about changes in attitudes to Maori in the police over time. Table 6 sets out these replies.

**Table 6 Respondents' views on changes in negative attitudes of police officers toward Maori, since they entered the police; percentages, N=737**

	%
Increased	13
Stayed the same	43
Decreased	17
Don't know or no response	27

As with the previous question, Table 6 shows that over a quarter of respondents either did not reply to this question or said they did not know. The largest group saw little evidence of change in attitudes to Maori since they had entered the police. However, slightly more respondents said that they thought there had been a decrease in negative attitudes compared to those who said there had been an increase.

When respondents were asked 'Do officers at your station behave negatively toward Maori', 20% said yes. Of the 146 officers saying yes, 10% said that supervisors usually reprimanded those responsible and another 29% said that supervisors sometimes did. However, 51% of those noting negative behaviour said that it passed unreprimanded<sup>10</sup>.

### *Maori and other police officers*

The final questions in the section on police attitudes and behaviour in general asked about Maori police officers. Table 7 reports these data.

**Table 7 Relationship between Maori police and other police generally; percentages; N=723<sup>11</sup>**

	%
Very good	79
Fairly good	20
Not very good	1
Not good at all	0

Few respondents reported poor relationships between Maori and other police officers and three quarters said that relationships were generally very good.

Respondents did report differences for Maori and non Maori police officers in some of the tasks that were involved in policing and these data are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8 Tasks more difficult for Maori and non Maori police officers; percentages\*; N=737**

	More difficult	More difficult	Don't
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<sup>10</sup> 10% of respondents either stated that they did not know or they did not answer this question.

<sup>11</sup> 2% of respondents either stated that they did not know or they did not answer this question.

	for Maori %	for non Maori %	Same %	Know %
Dealing with the general population	7	2	84	7
Dealing with Maori offenders	11	24	56	9
Dealing with Maori victims	2	36	50	11
Dealing with abusive comments about race or colour	34	4	50	13
Dealing with deaths	41	9	39	11

\* Note: Percentages sum across rows. 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses' have been combined.

Table 8 shows that there was overall agreement that dealing with the general population was equally easy or difficult for both Maori and non Maori. In dealing with Maori offenders and victims, about half the respondents thought there was no difference but one in four said it was more difficult for non Maori to deal with Maori offenders and over a third thought it was more difficult for non Maori to deal with Maori victims. When dealing with abusive comments about race or colour, a half saw no difference but a third thought this was more difficult for Maori officers.

And, Maori officers were seen as having greater difficulty in dealing with deaths by approximately 40% of respondents. Several respondents commented that it was hard for Maori to handle situations involving a dead body. Some suggested that this was partly related to concerns about the need to respect Maori protocol when the death involved a Maori person. In contrast, the following quotes indicate some of the views about the advantages of being Maori:

*Knowledge of cultural issues, especially knowing Maori protocol about death, is important. This is especially so in working with Maori victims and witnesses. It also makes for good communication in getting information that leads to solving offences.*

*Knowing whakapapa and tikanga can help you relate to people - it gives you an edge.*

### **Police officers' attitudes**

Two questions were designed to explore police officers' own views about Maori. The first group of 9 items asked about the extent respondents agreed with aspects of current Maori aspirations. For technical reasons, responses to the second set of items have had to be discarded from the analysis.<sup>12</sup>

The responses to items reflecting possible Maori aspirations are listed in Table 9.

<sup>12</sup> The second set of 7 items were an attempt to parallel items from a scale developed in the US (the Modern Racism Scale; McConahay, 1986) which listed a number of items that might reflect the views of those opposed to Maori aspirations and which were, except for the first item, likely to be answered in the opposite direction from the first group. Although the spread of responses to the five point scale of agreement to these items was satisfactory, correlations between the two sets were mildly positive. This means that many of those who agreed to pro-Maori items also agreed to anti-Maori items. The only reasonable explanation for this is that many respondents continued to use the scale as if all the items were in the same direction of positivity. Thus, the second set of seven items have been excluded from further analysis as the responses have to be regarded as unreliable.

**Table 9 Agreement with items referring possible actions by the NZ Government on Maori issues; percentages\*; N=737**

	Agree*	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree*	Don't Know*	Mean
	%	%	%	%	
Respect and preserve Maori customs	76	16	5	2	2.10
Settle Waitangi Treaty claims	58	16	21	5	2.56
Honour the Maori language	53	29	13	4	2.55
Improve the social and economic condition of Maori people	50	26	19	5	2.66
Give Maori back ancestral lands taken by the Crown	40	21	33	6	3.03
Be more responsive to cultural difference in the justice system	20	20	57	4	3.68
Restore Maori fishing rights	14	28	53	5	3.71
Give Maori guardianship of native plants	6	23	65	7	4.04
Develop a separate justice system for Maori	1	5	90	4	4.68

\* Note: 'Agree' and 'strongly agree' responses have been combined and so have 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' responses and 'don't know' and no responses. Percentages sum across rows.

Table 9 shows that over three quarters of the respondents agreed with respecting and preserving Maori customs and at least half believed that Treaty claims should be settled, that the Maori language should be honoured and that the social and economic condition of Maori people should be improved. Only 40% agreed with returning ancestral lands taken by the Crown and a third disagreed with this. Over half disagreed with being responsive to cultural difference in the justice system and restoring Maori fishing rights. Sixty five percent disagreed with giving the guardianship of native plants to Maori and 90% disagreed with a separate Maori justice system. Thus, the items showed a wide range of views about Maori issues with many respondents drawing careful distinctions between what they did and did not agree with as legitimate aspirations. An example of this is quoted below:

*I strongly disagree with a separate justice system. The difficulty I have with a separate justice system for Maori is: why can't the present system make use of Maori customs and cultural ideas?*

Given the reasonable spread of opinion on the items, they can be used to form a scale for measuring negative and positive attitudes toward Maori political issues. The next page and a half discusses the justification for this and is somewhat technical. Some readers might, therefore like to pick up the text again with Table 12.

Correlations showed that the items were generally inter-correlated with correlations ranging between 0.20 and 0.64. A factor analysis<sup>13</sup>, which sorts out common patterns

<sup>13</sup> A principal component factor analysis was used as a method of separating out the main patterns (factors) underlying the data. A factor loading (see Table 12) indicates the extent to which each item is associated with a particular pattern or factor. Those items with high loadings best describe the factor.

(factors) in a set of data, was carried out. It showed that either a two factor or a one factor solution could be considered as best representing the data. The two factor solution<sup>14</sup> produced the two clusters of items shown in Table 10 below.

**Table 10 Two clusters of items from a factor analysis of 9 items relating to Maori political aspirations showing the amount of variance<sup>15</sup> associated with each item with each cluster; N=628**

Items	R squared with:	Own cluster =	Other cluster =
		Cluster 1	Cluster 2
<b>Cluster 1:</b>			
Give Maori back ancestral lands taken by the Crown		.50	.30
Give Maori guardianship of native plants		.58	.50
Develop a separate justice system for Maori		.42	.07
Be more responsive to cultural difference in the justice system		.54	.22
Restore Maori fishing rights		.67	.27
<b>Cluster 2:</b>			
		Own cluster =	Other cluster =
		Cluster 2	Cluster 1
Settle Waitangi Treaty claims		.45	.32
Honour the Maori language		.65	.20
Respect and preserve Maori customs		.69	.16
Improve the social and economic condition of the Maori people		.50	.20

The two clusters in Table 10 could be interpreted as pointing to a difference in their acceptability to different people. It is possible that the first cluster represents items on which there were a variety of different opinions whereas the second cluster represents items which were regarded as part of what has been accepted by most New Zealanders. This interpretation is certainly supported by the finding that, on average, 65% of the sample disagreed with the cluster 1 items while only 12% disagreed on average with the cluster 2 items. On the other hand, it is important to recognise that the two clusters were not totally independent of one another; both clusters were moderately correlated with one another ( $r=0.60$ ). Furthermore all the items can be seen as having a relationship with the single main factor<sup>16</sup> as shown in Table 11 below and this factor accounted for 95% of the variance in the correlation matrix.

**Table 11 Relationship among 9 items relating to Maori political aspirations as shown by the loadings on the first factor<sup>17</sup>; N=628**

Item	Factor loading
Restore Maori fishing rights	.72
Give Maori back ancestral lands	

<sup>14</sup> This was derived from a principal component cluster analysis which is similar to the principal component factor analysis but is used for separating out distinct clusters of items.

<sup>15</sup> The variance is a measure of the proportion of variability in the data that can be attributed, in this instance, to the cluster where the total amount of variance is 1.00. Thus R-squared = .50 indicates that about half the variability in the item on ancestral lands goes with the other items in the first cluster.

<sup>16</sup> The first unrotated principal component for the principal components analysis.

<sup>17</sup> The factor loading can vary from 0 to 1.00. The larger it is, the greater the extent to which each item is being responded to in a common way.

taken by the Crown	.69
Settle Waitangi Treaty claims	.67
Honour the Maori language	.63
Be more responsive to cultural difference in the justice system	.62
Give Maori guardianship of native plants	.61
Respect and preserve Maori customs	.60
Improve the social and economic condition of the Maori people	.57
Develop a separate justice system for Maori	.45

Table 11 shows that all but one of the items loads at least .50 on the first principal component. Given the correlation between the two clusters in the two factor solution, the high amount of variance accounted for by the first factor and the high loadings of 8 of the items on the first factor, it was decided to adopt the one factor solution to derive a score which measures 'Attitudes to Maori Political Aspirations Scale' (AMPAS) using the eight high loading items. The distribution of scores is shown in Table 12 below.

**Table 12 The distribution of scores on AMPAS, a scale of positive (low) to negative (high) attitudes towards Maori political aspirations; percentages; N=674**

		%
Strongly agree	(1.0 - 1.4)	3
Agree	(1.5 - 2.4)	20
Neither agree or disagree	(2.5 - 3.4)	52
Disagree	(3.5 - 4.4)	21
Strongly disagree	(4.5 - 5.0)	4

The data in Table 12 show the spread of scores on the scale. Over half the sample were relatively neutral with respect to the items on Maori political aspirations, about a quarter generally agreed or strongly agreed with them and another quarter disagree or strongly disagreed. The complexity of the opinions of many is expressed in the following comments:

*I believe the Maori way of life/customs should be respected. I do not believe that Maori should receive any preferential treatment over anyone else. We are all New Zealanders. All New Zealand citizens should have equal rights.*

*The Maori culture should be fostered, respected and taught, but if it goes any further than this New Zealand will, and is already becoming racist: eg, should there be a separate justice system, the treaty claims escalate.*

*I do not consider Maori should have any additional influence on government policy than Joe average. Their views should be given equal consideration - not more.*

However, a minority disagreed with most of the items. Examples of these views are cited below:

*It is my opinion we have reverse racism in this country.*

*I believe Maori are already getting a lot of benefits from government but many are abusing these benefits and spoiling it for others. I deal with a lot of Maori offenders who don't respect either culture unless it suits them at the time.*

*I think too much emphasis is placed on Maoridom and the treaty. It is becoming an excuse amongst Maoris when dealing with them, all you hear is 'this is my land etc etc.!'*

*Maori are not the only disadvantaged humans in this small country.*

*I resent Maori making claims to 'traditional rights' such as fishing - no one should own these. No one owned them before the Maori and they should be managed now by the state.*

*I feel Maori get too much given to them without working for it. I have no problems with tribal land being recognised but no money should be given to Maori. Maori should not be given preferential treatment. In my opinion Maori are more racist to New Zealanders than the other way around. Even though Maori claim they occupied New Zealand first, they only make up less than 15% of the population of New Zealand. Everyone should be treated as equal. Maori are no more important than other ethnic groups.*

### **Factors affecting attitudes**

Being Maori has already been seen to be an important factor that affects the attitudes of police officers. By using the AMPAS score it was possible to test for differences in attitudes toward Maori political aspirations as a function of a number of other variables including sex, age, length of service, rank, nature of duties, and the amount of contact officers had with Maori in both working and private life. The results of these analyses are set out in Table 13.

**Table 13 Average AMPAS scores comparing police officers on a number of demographic, service and contact variables**

	Mean	N	p <sup>18</sup>
Ethnicity			
NZ E	3.05	504	
NZM only	2.25	50	<.001
NZM some	2.38	85	<.001 <sup>19</sup>
Sex			
Male <sup>2.97</sup>	2.97		
Female	2.91	113	n.s.
Age			
under 30 years	3.04	157	
40 years or over	2.83	188	.01
Education			
Less than 6th form	2.98	134	
7th form qual. or more	2.94	286	n.s.

<sup>18</sup> The value in the p column is the probability, derived from a t test, that the likelihood that the difference between the means of the two previous groups in the table is insignificant. In other words, a low p value means the difference between the means is significant. When the difference is not significant, the letters n.s. have been entered.

<sup>19</sup> This p value comes from comparing NZE and NZM some.

Length of service				
less than 5 years	2.94	147		
25 or more years	2.94	72	n.s.	
Rank				
Constable	3.01	356		
Senior sergeant (inc DSS)	2.78	114	<.01	
Front line duties				
Yes	3.00	534		
No	2.82	137	.01	
CIB - current				
Yes	3.06	120		
No	2.94	554	n.s.	
Youth Aid - current				
Yes	2.97	36		
No	2.96	638	n.s.	
Contact at work				
Not much	2.92	113		
Relatively high	2.95	357	n.s.	
Contact socially				
Not much	3.02	217		
Relatively high	2.82	239	.01	
Member of extended family				
Yes	2.84	318		
No	3.07	352	<.001	

Data in Table 13 show that a number of factors were associated with attitudes to Maori political aspirations. Maori, those with some Maori ancestry and older officers were more likely to be in agreement with the items compared to New Zealand Europeans and younger officers. However, length of service and education were unrelated to opinions. Senior sergeants and those not in the front line were more likely to agree with the items compared to constables and those in the front line. However, whether or not the officer is in the CIB or in Youth Aid was unrelated to opinions.

Work contact was unrelated to the AMPAS score but the private life contact variables were related to opinions. Those who had a relatively high amount of social contact and those who had Maori in their extended family agreed more often with the AMPAS items than those who did not have a lot of contact with Maori either socially or through their family.

### Police policy and strategy

Section 4 of the questionnaire asks a series of questions about police policy and strategy. The items in this section were based on the proposed strategy for Policing 2000 for 'Building Responsiveness to Maori' (NZ Police, 1997). The data are set out in Table 14 below.

**Table 14 Agreement with items about police policy and strategy; percentages\*  
N=737**

	Agree*	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree*	Don't Know*	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%
Develop contact with Maori groups and agencies	80	13	6	2	2.09
Foster positive Maori perceptions of police	72	22	3	4	2.15



Understand Maori culture and protocol	75	18	6	2	2.20
Foster positive police perceptions of Maori	65	26	5	4	2.26
Make NZ Police a good environment in which Maori can work	59	28	7	5	2.41
Provide training in Maori culture & protocol to all police	59	21	19	2	2.53
Increase recruitment of Maori	41	40	14	4	2.69
Recognise Maori as a partner with the Crown	34	37	23	6	2.94
Increase number of Maori above rank of constable	27	46	21	5	2.98
Ensure that Maori have an input in policy decisions	31	40	25	4	2.99
Provide translation into the Maori language when requested	27	30	40	3	3.23
Emphasise police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi	26	36	33	5	3.17

\* Note: 'Agree' and 'strongly agree' responses have been combined and so have 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' responses and 'don't know' and 'no' responses. Percentages sum across rows.

Table 14 shows that, on average, the respondents either agreed with the proposed police policy items or were neutral about them. Between 60% and 80% agreed that the police should: develop contact with Maori groups and agencies, foster positive Maori perceptions of police, understand Maori culture and protocol, foster positive police perceptions of Maori and make the New Zealand Police a good environment in which Maori can work. Few disagreed with these items.

However, although nearly 60% believed that the police should be provided with training in Maori culture and protocol, nearly one in five disagreed with this. One in seven disagreed with increasing the recruitment of Maori and over one in five disagreed with increasing the number of Maori above the rank of constable. The comments make it clear that, although some officers want to see more Maori police officers, there was considerable concern about the possibility of affirmative action policies. Comments favouring increased recruitment of Maori emphasised the importance of achieving a more representative service, providing positive Maori role models and improving the knowledge and attitudes of non Maori police officers about Maori.

*It is important that we have broad ethnic representation in police.*

*I believe that ingrained [negative] police attitudes to minority ethnic groups will remain until members of these groups occupy supervisory and management positions within the Department.*

*There is a need to recruit more Maori into the police. I think they can be seen as positive role models for young Maori. There is a need to understand protocol and family life by non Maori officers.*

For many others, issues of equity and merit regardless of ethnicity were seen as more important than equal representation in relation to the recruitment and promotion of Maori:

*Any recruitment or promotion should be on the merit and qualifications alone of that person, not some token sign just because they are Maori, Samoan, Asian, or any other race or colour.*

*The police as an occupation and as an agency of state I believe must be a level playing field for all. To emphasise, and try to resolve political social evils through the organisation is wrong. This is supposed to be a merit based structure. Let the politicians address the real problems.*

*I do not believe that we should lower our recruitment standards merely to encourage more Maori into the police. If we do, all this does is lower the standard of the police.*

*Maori culture and protocol should always be nurtured and promoted but I do not feel any special consideration or treatment should be given to a Maori police officer because s/he is Maori. It is the same for everyone, and if an officer puts the effort into improving themselves by sitting exams etc, then whichever race they should be gives the same chance and attention as a Maori officer. It should be the best person for the job.*

*Police must be careful to avoid reverse racism in dealing with Maori. You cannot promote a person to a higher rank on the grounds that they are of a different race.*

Other comments questioned the capacity of Maori officers to perform police duties adequately, to have attitudes consistent with becoming a member the police, and the need for a Maori presence in the service:

*Maori seem to have greater difficulty with police entrance exams.*

*Maori police staff do not as a general rule perform at the same level as other European staff. Their values are different and reflect a need for supervisors and managers having to give Maoris and other Polynesian staff a disproportionate amount of their time. Also, will they cope with the technology? Is it fair on European staff to have university promotion papers which others will not aspire to but still be promoted to maintain a 'partnership' with Maori?*

*Maori perception of the police must change before more Maori recruits can be found.*

*The function of the police is to deal with offenders and victims; not to have a station full of different coloured policemen to make a social worker smile.*

About a quarter of respondents disagreed with recognising Maori as a partner of the Crown and with ensuring that Maori had an input into policy decisions. And about a

third disagreed with emphasising police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi. One comment explaining this latter response is quoted below:

*I have indicated that the Treaty claims should be settled however I don't see a need for police to be committed to the Treaty. The Treaty is irrelevant to everyday policing.*

The proposal that police should provide translation into the Maori language when requested drew the most disagreement; 40% of respondents disagreed with this. The following quote exemplifies this view:

*I have yet to encounter a Maori person who doesn't speak English. However, the majority of Asians and Samoans have a very limited understanding of the English language.*

A number of responses expressed positive attitudes towards changing policy within the police and some suggested ways of achieving of this:

*I recently attended a 3 day 'cultural awareness course' presented by Maori. It was of a very high standard and very informative. It was somewhat of a 'jolt' in opening my eyes - not that I have ever felt 'racist' but have not really considered the Maori point of view as presented on the course. **All** police should attend such a course.*

*There are stereotypical attitudes within police 'younger staff' but this flows from anglo upbringing. The attitudes are built on ignorance not hatred. Lack of contact is the biggest factor. Personal experience could change opinions.*

The diversity of responses is clear. There was general agreement about some aspects of the proposed policy and strategy, in particular, greater contact with Maori groups and agencies, more positive perceptions and improved understanding of Maori culture and protocol. On the other hand, there is likely to be considerable resistance to attempts to increase recruitment and promotion of Maori and to increase the profile of Maori and Treaty issues at the policy level. This points to the need for developing a framework for increasing these aspects of Maori involvement in policing in ways that are seen as fair and equitable to all officers. There is, however, a minority of officers who will oppose the policy proposals as a whole.

### **Differences in the views of Maori and NZ European police officers**

Comparisons were made on all the questions between those officers who identified as New Zealand Maori or New Zealand European and New Zealand Maori (Maori descent, N= 91) and officers who identified as New Zealand European (N= 550)<sup>20</sup>. In making these comparisons, those who recorded themselves as belonging to any other

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<sup>20</sup> The reason for amalgamating those identifying as New Zealand Maori with those identifying as New Zealand Maori and New Zealand European was that, on the basis of the AMPAS score and other responses it was apparent that they were not significantly different from one another although they were significantly different from those identifying themselves as solely of New Zealand European descent.

ethnic groups were not included although some of these also identified partly as European or Maori<sup>21</sup>.

Responses to the question about whether or not police officers generally respond the same way to offenders who belong to different ethnic groups were similar for police officers of Maori descent and those who identified as New Zealand European. But, sometimes Maori or other Polynesian officers were seen as behaving differently, both positively and negatively:

*Some Maori-Samoan officers treat offenders with some respect.*

*I have found that ethnic police officers are more abusive to their own kind and harder on them and other minorities than white officers.*

The response of police officers of Maori descent were compared with those who identified as New Zealand European on the questions about whether people were treated the same or differently depending on their Maori ethnicity. No differences emerged for the questions about checking on bail conditions, returning a juvenile to their home, in getting help for a person with a mental health problem, arresting an offender for family violence, referring a victim of family violence for help or in letting parties to a dispute sort it out themselves. However, significant differences emerged on all the remaining items<sup>22</sup> and the differences in means for these are summarised in Table 15.

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<sup>21</sup> The reason for excluding those who fell into other groups is that there were not sufficient numbers to use the AMPAS scores to determine where best these respondents should be categorised.

<sup>22</sup> Significance was tested using chi-square with 2 d.f. The values for all the items in Table 5 are associated with probabilities of <.05.

**Table 15 In general, are the police more likely to do the following when the person is of Maori descent, Caucasian or is it the same for both; percentages depending on ethnicity of the respondent**

		% More likely if Maori	% More likely if Caucasian	Same	N
Investigate a crime reported by a member of the public	NZE <sup>23</sup>	0	3	97	542
	NZM desc. <sup>24</sup>	1	12	87	89
Check on safety of property of a member of the public	NZE	0	5	94	534
	NZM desc.	1	20	79	86
Carry out a routine vehicle stop of a known offender	NZE	9	1	89	538
	NZM desc.	19	1	80	91
Ask what a person is doing if seen out in small hours of morning	NZE	16	0	84	539
	NZM desc.	36	1	63	89
Use abusive language towards a suspect or an offender	NZE	7	1	92	472
	NZM desc.	24	2	73	83
Treat a suspect roughly	NZE	4	0	96	428
	NZM desc.	28	1	71	80
Suspect person of an offence	NZE	31	1	69	531
	NZM desc.	45	1	54	89
Carry out a QVR if someone is seen driving a flash car	NZE	46	1	54	514
	NZM desc.	70	0	30	87

\* Note: Percentages add up in rows. The 'don't know' and 'no' responses have not been included in this table and, instead, the number of actual respondents is shown for each item.

The majority of the officers of Maori descent were more likely, on all but one of the items, to agree with their New Zealand European colleagues that people were treated the same regardless of Maori ethnicity. But significantly more of them compared to officers identifying as New Zealand European thought that crime reports were more likely to be investigated and property checked on when the member of the public involved was Caucasian. And significantly more officers of Maori descent compared to those who identified as New Zealand European believed that Maori were more likely to be stopped in a car, asked what they were doing in the small hours, be the recipient of abusive language, be treated roughly, be suspected of an offence and, especially, be checked on when seen driving a 'flash car'<sup>25</sup>.

Officers reporting themselves as of Maori descent were significantly more likely than officers identifying as New Zealand European to see the police as having negative attitudes towards both Maori and Pacific Islanders. On average, the scores were 4.2 and 3.9 out of a possible 11 for officers identifying as New Zealand European on these

<sup>23</sup> New Zealand European.

<sup>24</sup> Maori descent.

<sup>25</sup> Differences reported on as significant here are based on the results of chi-squared tests using Yates correction for small cells and a significance level of at least .05.

two question and 5.1 and 5.2 on these questions for officers of Maori descent<sup>26</sup>. There was a similar but smaller significant difference in the ethnicity of the officer and views about negative attitudes in the police towards Asians<sup>27</sup>.

In reply to the question about changes in attitudes to Maori in the police over time, the views of police officers of Maori descent were not significantly different from those who identified as New Zealand European. However, there were differences between officers of Maori descent and those who identified as New Zealand European on the question about negative behaviour toward Maori at their own station. Forty percent of officers of Maori descent reported this compared to only 20% of those who described themselves as of New Zealand European<sup>28</sup>.

In response to the question asking about the relationship between Maori police officers and other police officers generally, there was also a large discrepancy depending on the ethnic identification of the officer responding. Table 16 shows this data.

**Table 16 Relationship between Maori police and other police generally showing the views of officers identifying as NZ European and officers of Maori descent; percentages<sup>29</sup>**

	NZE N=543	NZM desc. N=91	Total% N=723
Very good	81	59	79
Fairly good	18	40	20
Not very good	1	1	1
Not good at all	0	0	0

Table 16 shows that only 59% of officers of Maori descent reported very good relationships between Maori and other police compared to 81% of officers who identified as New Zealand European<sup>30</sup>. This finding indicates that officers identifying as New Zealand European were not as likely as those of Maori descent either to notice or to report less than perfect relationships. For whichever reason, it suggests that relationships within the police between Maori and New Zealand European could be improved.

In response to the questions about differences for Maori and non Maori police officers in some of the tasks that were involved in policing, officers of Maori descent did not have a significantly different view from those who identified as New Zealand European with one exception: they were more likely to report that it was more difficult for Maori to deal with 'abusive comments about race or colour' (36% of those identifying as New Zealand European compared to 53% of those of Maori descent)<sup>31</sup>.

Comments from Maori police officers gave some indication of the mixed feelings they have about being a Maori in the New Zealand Police:

<sup>26</sup> A t-test of significant differences between means gives probabilities of  $p < .01$ .

<sup>27</sup> A t-test of significant differences between means gives probabilities of  $p < .05$ .

<sup>28</sup> Chi-square gives a value of 19.4 (df=1) for this comparison with a  $p < .01$ .

<sup>29</sup> 2% of respondents either stated that they did not know or they did not answer this question.

<sup>30</sup> Chi-square gives a value of 21.6 (df=3) for this comparison with a  $p < .01$ .

<sup>31</sup> Chi-square gives a value of 9.72 (df=2) for this comparison with a  $p < .01$ .

*Dealing with one's own ethnic group encourages racism. However knowledge of protocol and acceptance by other Maori are advantages.*

*Maori police officers can become a dumping ground - we get called in for Maori worries and deaths.*

*There have been numerous times when I have been extremely angered by racist comments about Maori from my colleagues which have been made in my presence. I can tell you that I and any policeman of Maori blood can accept racist comments from members of the public and believe me I have encountered many such comments. However, it is difficult to tolerate such comments from one's own colleagues. The police organisation needs to acknowledge this. Failure to do so will result in difficulty in attracting and retaining Maori staff and the already delicate relationship we share with the Maori community will be further eroded.*

*The police are predominantly Caucasian in my area and people have negative opinions about Maori as most offenders are Maori. It is a concern. If dealing with Maori offenders we are scum. As a part Maori you are classed a traitor by some Maori offenders. Police in general are racist. But you can understand why.*

### ***Policy proposals***

Maori police officers did not always agree with their work mates about these issues. Table 17 sets out the means for those who identified as New Zealand European compared to those with Maori descent on each of the items and indicates the significant differences.

**Table 17 Mean score on a five point scale from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5) with items about police policy and strategy for NZ European and Maori respondents<sup>32</sup>;**

	Mean NZE	Mean NZM descent	p
Develop contact with Maori groups and agencies	2.12	1.73	<.001
Foster positive Maori perceptions of police	2.19	1.67	<.001
Understand Maori culture and protocol	2.25	1.78	<.001
Foster positive police perceptions of Maori	2.32	1.72	<.001
Make NZ Police a good environment in which Maori can work	2.36	1.98	<.001
Provide training in Maori culture & protocol to all police	2.60	2.02	<.001
Increase recruitment of Maori	2.74	2.00	<.001
Recognise Maori as a partner with the Crown	2.99	2.28	<.001
Increase number of Maori above rank of constable	3.01	2.21	<.001
Ensure that Maori have an input in policy decisions	3.03	2.43	<.001
Emphasise police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi	3.21	2.48	<.001
Provide translation into the Maori language when requested	3.31	2.60	<.001

Table 17 clearly shows that police officers of Maori descent are much more likely than officers who identified as New Zealand European to agree with the proposals for policy change. Differences between the means were highly significant for all items. However, police officers of Maori descent did, as a group make some distinctions among the items. They were much more likely to agree with developing contact, fostering positive perceptions, understanding culture and making the police a good environment for Maori to work in. They, like their New Zealand European compatriots, were less likely to agree with ensuring that Maori have an input into policy, that police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi is emphasised and that translation is provided into the Maori language when requested.

<sup>32</sup> Ns vary between 518-540 for NZE and between 86-91 for those of Maori descent.



## Summary and discussion

The seventy five percent response rate for this survey is satisfactory, especially when compared with market research surveys and other recent surveys within the police which, in the last few years, have rarely obtained response rates above 60%. The 737 respondents largely comprised those with at least 5 years service who were currently or recently engaged in front line duties. The sample, although not representative of the New Zealand population as a whole with respect to sex or ethnicity, appears to be representative of the New Zealand Police ranked at senior sergeant or below in these respects allowing for the booster sample of women. Only 8% of the sample identified as Maori although another 6% identified as having some Maori ancestry and 18% were women. The inclusion of an additional sample of women among the participants is unlikely to have affected the balance of responses. The booster sample of those at the level of sergeant and senior sergeant may have resulted in slightly more favourable responses on Maori issues.

In going about their work, police officers reported that, for the most part, Maori and non Maori were treated similarly. A greater tendency to suspect Maori of an offence was reported by about a third and nearly half reported that police officers generally were more likely to query vehicle registration when a Maori was seen driving a 'flash' car. However, many respondents commented that policing behaviour was more related to other factors such as context and attitudes than to ethnicity.

At least two thirds reported that they had heard colleagues using racist language about suspects or offenders. Much of this was in private rather than face to face with offenders and suspects. However, as some respondents commented, adverse effects are likely to arise from the use of racist terms, either privately or publicly. The data also suggest that, on average, almost one in four police officers have negative attitudes to Maori. A similar proportion of police officers were seen as having negative attitudes to Pacific Island and Asian peoples. On the whole, there may have been some decrease in negativity toward Maori over recent years but most respondents thought it had stayed the same.

The survey shows that discriminatory language and behaviour are part of the police occupational culture. But this is not surprising given overseas research on police cultures and the evidence of racist attitudes in the wider New Zealand society. In terms of the amount and extent of discrimination, however, it is not possible to compare the findings here directly with other studies of police overseas, with the views of other occupational groups in New Zealand or with the rest of New Zealand as a whole.

Questions can and should be asked about the accuracy of police self report as a method of establishing what is actually occurring. It can be suggested that these results underestimate discriminatory behaviour because many police officers will have responded in ways that are consistent with presenting a good image of themselves and their colleagues. Others with negative attitudes may have failed to respond. It would indeed be surprising if, to some extent, these figures are not an underestimate of negative behaviour and attitudes within the police. And there is undoubtedly a gap between the overall presentation by the police of their own behaviour and that reported in the studies of Maori views of the police reviewed earlier. There is no easy way of

reconciling the discrepancies between different self report studies of different populations using different methodologies. Observation of police behaviour by detached and independent observers could provide more certain answers. But whatever the reality, this study serves to define police officers' own reported views about themselves and their colleagues. Furthermore, there is considerable internal consistency in the comments made by police supporting their views which suggests that the police are accurately reporting negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviour that do exist. It is only the degree and amount that remains in doubt.

The findings on police behaviour and attitudes towards Maori reported here suggest that strategies certainly need to be developed to eliminate negative attitudes, to avoid the over-policing of Maori and to correct bad practices that may have arisen in police station talk. Senior front line supervisors have a crucial role in establishing norms and ensuring that racist language does not become customary. Training and best practice guidelines for them could increase their skills in mentoring new recruits as well as in regulating inappropriate behaviour.

The above results, in particular the view that policing behaviour differentially targets those displaying certain attitudes and behaviour or congregating in particular areas, supports Jackson's (1989) hypothesis of target amplification. In other words, Maori may be more likely than Caucasians to be identified by the police and treated as suspects because of policing strategies. A second hypothesis advanced by Jackson to explain differential outcomes for Maori was that of institutional racism: the consistent display by the police of different attitudes and behaviour toward Maori because of their ethnicity. Most police officers do not accept that this is the predominant ethos within the police but most also report that a minority of their colleagues do display different attitudes and behaviour toward Maori compared to Caucasians.

Respondents were asked about relationships between Maori and other police officers. Overall, 80% saw these relationships as being very good but this was a view less likely to be held by officers of Maori descent compared to officers identifying as New Zealand European. Maori police officers were seen by about a fifth to a third of respondents as having an advantage in dealing with Maori victims and offenders. About a third said that it was more difficult for Maori to deal with racially abusive comments and the Maori police officers were even more likely to say this. Nearly a half of all officers thought it was more difficult for Maori to deal with deaths because Maori were more distressed by having to handle a dead body, especially when they were not certain that appropriate protocols had been followed. On the other hand, other respondents said that Maori had an advantage in dealing with Maori deaths because of their knowledge of the relevant customs.

A number of items canvassed views on Maori political aspirations. Nearly half these items were endorsed by at least half the sample. Most of the sample agreed with items affirming the importance of settling Waitangi Treaty claims, honouring Maori language, respecting and preserving Maori customs and improving the social and economic condition of the Maori people. There was more disagreement with such items as giving Maori guardianship of native plants, restoring Maori fishing rights and creating a separate justice system for Maori.

Collectively, these items gave a spread of opinion and met other statistical criteria that enabled some of them to be used to derive a score for the respondents on a scale of

attitudes to Maori political aspirations. Scores on this scale were used to determine factors affecting perceptions and attitudes. Maori officers, older officers, senior sergeants and those no longer in the front line were more likely to have favourable attitudes than New Zealand European officers, younger officers, constables and those in the front line. Increased contact with Maori in one's private life, either through social activities or family membership, was also associated with more favourable attitudes although work contact with Maori seemed irrelevant. Several officers mentioned their experiences with marae programmes as increasing their understanding of Maori issues. These findings suggest that, given the right type of contact with Maori people, it is possible to increase understanding and promote positive responses.

Finally, a number of questions explored responses to proposed policies and strategies aimed at building responsiveness to Maori. Overall, respondents agreed with most of the proposals or were at least neutral toward them. However, proposals to recruit and promote Maori, to emphasise police commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and to provide Maori translation on request were disagreed with by a significant minority. Comments indicated that issues of equity were at the heart of much of the disagreement and suggest that affirmative action policies in recruitment and promotion of Maori police will meet with considerable resistance. Increasing Maori representation will be best achieved by ensuring that well educated Maori are recruited.

The views of police of Maori descent and those who identified themselves as New Zealand European or Pakeha were compared. In general, the two groups did not hold different views on police attitudes, language or behaviour. But on specific aspects of behaviour, officers of Maori descent were more likely to report discrimination, especially in responding to members of the public, stopping cars, using abusive language with offenders and treating suspects roughly. Police of Maori descent were also more likely to report that the police had negative attitudes to Maori. One interpretation of this is that Maori officers were more likely than others to see the actions of their colleagues as displaying negative attitudes and behaviour toward Maori. Another interpretation is that Maori officers were more likely to describe real differences in behaviour and this is supported by the fact that, on several of the behavioural items, there were no differences in the perceptions of Maori and other police officers. It is not possible to check either of these interpretations without carrying out an observational study.

The findings raise questions about the position of the Maori police officer within the service and the extent to which he or she has a distinctive view. The data show that often the views of Maori police officers are indistinguishable from those of other police. Some of them clearly share the negative views and attitudes toward Maori offenders that characterise some of their colleagues. Perhaps this is not surprising. Other research demonstrates the power of the occupational culture in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of groups within the police who do not fit the traditional police stereotype. Heidensohn (1992) discusses the conformity of women to the male police culture in England. One study cited by Heidensohn actually showed that policewomen were more similar to their male colleagues on a number of personality measures including femininity than they were to nurses (p 93). She cites a description of the phenomena *as a mark of the conquest of biography by occupation* (p 89). A parallel can be drawn with the results here where the attitudes of some of the officers of Maori descent may well be more similar to those of other police than to those of Maori outside the service.

On the other hand, Maori police officers were much more likely to endorse proposals for policies that would enhance their status and improve attitudes towards them. The differences between Maori and other officers on these items were, for the most part, the largest found in the study. Again there is a parallel with research on women which shows that although women in male occupations may often appear to share their male colleagues attitudes, they are, nevertheless, keen to see changes that will improve the status of women. And, as already noted, favourable attitudes to Maori political aspirations were held more among those of Maori descent than among those who identified as New Zealand European or Pakeha and among those who have contact with Maori in their private lives than those who had less contact.

A number of comments made by respondents raise issues about the nature and consequences of this research. It has been suggested that the questions encourage the simplification of views, that they encourage racism or the opposite, and are likely to damage the public image of the police by exposing the opinions of some about inappropriate practice. Each of these issues deserves debate. First, the issue of simplification of views is certainly a real one when fixed option questions are used. We hope that here a balance has been provided by presenting examples of the variety of comments that individual police officers expressed.

Second, with respect to encouraging the expression of biased views, it was certainly not the intention of the questionnaire to encourage police either to express racist views or to endorse what some have seen to be a 'politically correct' position that accepts the preferment of Maori political goals over the aspirations of others. Rather it was the intention to describe the variety of views held by police officers about these aspirations in order to facilitate debate about the police role with respect to Maori with whom they have contact and about the position of the Maori officers within their own ranks. We hope that this is what will occur.

The third issue to be considered is whether the results reported here will have negative consequences for the police or, indeed, for race relations in New Zealand. People will undoubtedly have differing views on this too. It is our view that accurate description of people's views and behaviour is important and necessary at the present time. If positive aspects of race relations are to be maintained and negative aspects are to be reduced, there needs to be a debate that is based on knowledge of reality rather than ill-founded accusations from one group or another. By describing the range of views, this research will allow for that debate to occur within the New Zealand Police and this may lead to constructive changes for both the police and those with whom they interact. The research debate may also provoke increased openness about broader issues of attitudes and perception across ethnic groups in New Zealand that underlie these findings. Police views and actions do not exist in isolation from the attitudes and behaviour of the wider community.

So how does one interpret these results? Do they show racism in the police? The answer must be that there is some evidence of racism in the New Zealand Police but these views are held by a minority. There is also evidence of strongly and widely held beliefs among the police in equity in treatment regardless of ethnicity and a commitment to professional policing. Many of the policies currently being proposed as ways of improving police responsiveness to Maori will be welcomed by police and can contribute to constructive changes. Others will require further debate. And the results

of the research may contribute to the development of a greater social consensus about how best to create a professional police force in which equity is a reality for all ethnicities.

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## Appendix