PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY POLICEMEN

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PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY POLICEMEN

An Abstract

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Pamela Williams Boyd

August 1973

ABSTRACT

Presently there seems to be a growing trend of public mistrust and possible hatred of policemen. Policemen are often referred to by the degrading names of "pig", "fuzz", and "copper". Such occurrences might cause one to wonder if a majority of policemen do, in fact, possess personality characteristics that would make them so disliked by segments of the general population. The present study was undertaken to investigate the reality of these stereotyped characteristics.

The subjects consisted of civilian officers from Clarksville, Tennessee and Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and military policemen from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. Each group was administered the following battery of tests:

Form C of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), the Philosophies of Human Nature Scale (PHN), and the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire.

Profiles obtained from the 16 PF scores indicated that the active city policemen had a greater tendency to deviate from average personality characteristics than did academy trainees and military policemen. Average characteristics were found for each group on the PHN scales. All three groups scored in a positive direction on the scales of the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire, indicating a positive attitude toward the value of the law enforcement job and people in law enforcement work.

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Pamela Williams Boyd entitled "Personality Characteristics of Civilian and Military Policemen." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in general psychology.

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Second Committee Member

Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:

Dean of the Graduate School

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing concern throughout the world of the public's mistrust and possible hatred of policemen.

D.E. Regan (1971) indicated that in Britain the number of official complaints against policemen has steadily risen since 1964. Regan found that on an average, every policeman can presently expect to be complained of twice in his career; while the number of officers convicted of criminal offences remains rather low.

In the United States policemen are often referred to by the degrading names of "pig", "fuzz", and "copper".

Obviously, such occurrences might cause one to wonder if a majority of policemen do, in fact, possess personality characteristics that would make them so disliked by segments of the general population. Merrill (1927) studied 113 applicants for positions on the Palo Alto, California police force. Of those selected for the police force, 12 were later discharged, four voluntarily left, and 14 continued on the force. Those who stayed averaged slightly higher in schooling and Army Alpha scores. Those who were discharged averaged slightly lower in schooling and about the same as those who stayed in Army Alpha scores. The

men who left voluntarily averaged the highest in schooling and Army Alpha scores. Merrill (1927) concluded that policemen in the community were above average in intelligence, but there also appeared to be an upper limit of intelligence for stability as a policeman.

Spaulding (1948) compared the personalities of nurse and police applicants with objective methods, the Kuder Preference Record, and the Kuder M-F score. In general, both groups were found to have high average native intelligence and normal personalities. Most police applicants aspired to work with people in some way and were also distinctly masculine in outlook and interest.

Another study (Kates, 1950) used the Rorschach, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, and a job satisfaction blank to study 25 New York City patrolmen. The patrolmen were found to show no significant difference from Strong's criterion group in measured police interest ratings. They also showed a relatively high job satisfaction level and were found to be no more maladjusted than routine office clerks and biologists.

Jessee Rubin (1972, pp. 17-21) cites several studies involving policemen in his book, The Police and the Community. Rubin cites studies by Niederhoffer (1967), Matarazzo (1964), Mills (1969), and Rhead (1968). One of these studies, including an extensive review of the literature done by Arthur Niederhoffer (1967), concluded

that there was no evidence to show that highly authoritarian persons enter police work. He found that the authoritarian trends that do exist in policemen are more a result of their job than of a preexisting personality. Rubin (1972) also indicates that Joseph Matarazzo (1964) found that successful police applicants in Portland, Oregon were characterized by high intelligence, superior personality adjustment, and an orientation toward social service. Rubin (1972) also quotes Robert Mills! (1969) findings that police recruits possess a type of community service motivation. Mills feels that police competitiveness and aggressiveness is blocked by a desire for security and public approval. Clifton Rhead (1968) gave projective tests and interviews to at least 1,000 Chicago police applicants. Rhead found these applicants to be more suspicious than the average person, more ready to bake risks, and also more tempted to act on impulse. There also appeared to be a greater degree of paranoid ideation, greater emphasis on virility, and a greater tendency to act out outside the police community. Rubin himself also interviewed policemen in Miami and observed that the policemen tended to be slightly suspicious and cynical, but not to a paranoid degree. The Miami policemen were assertive and restless with a high level of physical energy. Rubin labled this energy as "stimulus hunger" and added that policemen looked to the environment for stimulation. Many of the men admitted that they joined the force because of the constantly new and unpredictable stiumli. They were very adverse to confinement indoors with repetitive work. Rubin found no consistent abnormal psychological patterns among the policemen. On the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory scales indicating a need for activity and discharge of impulses, the men showed some elevation but not enough to be considered abnormal. Rubin (1972) concluded that the type of personality previously described seeks police work because his "stimulus hunger" can be channeled into scanning the environment to prevent trouble. Also, it would offer an outlet for healthy suspiciousness and cynicism.

In answer to the public's present negative attitude toward policemen, several suggestions have been offered. James Levine (1971) strongly suggested the use of operant conditioning on policemen. Levine feels that a reward system should be used to reinforce an interest in treating people like human beings. Levine suggests that punishment of policemen by society only causes more bitterness on the part of the police. A. Guy Larkins (1971) proposes that the problem could be solved by giving elementary age children a more realistic image of policemen. Larkins feels that the present unrealistic, optimistic view of the friendly neighborhood policeman that is usually presented to children produces a sense of distrust

and insecurity in the child when the view is contradicted by the child's own experiences or those of his friends or family. As a deterrent to the "pig" attitude toward policemen, Larkins suggests a program of study in the early grades of "the official view of police work" and how the policemen actually behave on duty.

A study by Prytula, Champagne, Grigsby, and Soltys (1972) sought empirical evidence to either support or deny the negative characteristics often attributed to police officers. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionmaire, the Philosophy of Human Nature Scale, and the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire were administered to 30 trainees at the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy at Donelson, Tennessee. Some of the major findings are listed below:

1. This group of police officers was average in terms of personality characteristics.

2. They were slightly above the average range in intelligence.

3. Their lowest scores were on sociableness and on experimentation, but even these were in the average range.

4. Their attitude toward their fellow men was neither positive nor negative, but they did see others as varying considerably from person to person and as being slightly selfish.

5. These police officers perceived people more positively than college males and ministers.

The scores on attitude toward law enforcement. 6. value of law enforcement, and people in law enforcement were quite high and in a positive direction.

The more emotionally mature the officers were, 7. the more they saw people as complicated and trusting.

- 8. The more intelligent the officers, the more variability they saw in people, but this factor did not influence their trust or lack of trust in others.
- 9. A positive attitude toward job seemed to go with a positive attitude toward people.
- 10. There was a positive relationship between intelligence and valuation of law enforcement function and valuation of people in law enforcement.

The study by Prytula, et al. (1972) used as subjects only officers who had recently been hired and were required to attend a sixweek study program at the Academy. Of this group, only volunteers were included in the study. The subjects used in Prytula's study, therefore, consisted basically of only highly motivated academy students. would seem to be of considerable interest to collect similar data from an active city police force in order to assess any differences in personality characteristics that may exists between the trainees and the active city policemen that the general public typically comes into contact The present study was designed to determine these with. differences by administering the same testing instruments as used by Prytula, et. al. (1972) to policemen currently serving in an active capacity on a city police force. On the assumption that the results may prove to be similar to those of Prytula, et. al. (1972), such a study might possibly help to dispel existing stereotypes of policemen and disprove present myths about our law enforcers.

All of the research cited above has dealt with

civilian law enforcement officers. Apparently, little, if any, similar research has been done using military police as subjects. Therefore, the present study was designed to also include a group of military police subjects in order to determine what differences may exist between them and their civilian counterparts.

Chapter II

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects consisted of volunteers from active, city and military police forces. The first group consisted of nine male subjects from the Clarksville, Tennessee, City Police Force; ranging in age from 23 to 63 years and having from zero to two years of completed college education. Group two consisted of 12 policemen from the Hopkinsville, Kentucky, City Police Force. These men ranged in age from 23 to 32 years and from zero to three years of college education. Group three included ten volunteers from the military police force of Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. The military subjects ranged in age from 18 to 37 years and from zero to four years of college education. Thus, a total of 31 volunteer subjects, including 21 civilian policemen and ten military policemen, was used in the study.

Apparatus

The testing materials used to assess the policemen's personality characteristics included Form C of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), the Philosophies of Human Nature Scale (PHN) by Lawerence S. Wrightsman, and the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire by Frank Lee.

The 16 PF consists of sixteen essentially independent scales that supposedly represent different aspects of personality. Thomas J. Bouchard and Leonard G. Rorer, as reported in Buros's (1972, pp. 322-339) The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, feel that the test could be extremely beneficial, but presently lacks sufficient data to prove that it is measuring the claimed factors. reviewers disapprove of using the 16 PF to make decisions about a specific individual. Bouchard (1972) disapproves of the lack of correlations between the 16 PF and widely used similar instruments. Rorer (1972) complains that the essential data needed to evaluate the test is not available in either the manual or handbook. Available are test-retest and split-half reliabilities, intercorrelations, and norms for high school, college, and the general population. From this available data it is possible only to find if one has responded deviantly, but the correlates of his response are not known. Despite the above mentioned possible drawbacks associated with the 16 PF, its sensitivity to deviant scores was deemed highly desirable for the purpose of the present investigation.

The PHN Scale consists of 84 statements concerning

a person's beliefs about human nature to which the subject is to choose one of the following degrees of agreement: strongly agree, disagree somewhat, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree somewhat, or strongly agree. The total test yields six subscales, a general measure of one's beliefs about the good or evil in human nature, and a measure of multiplexity, one's beliefs about the individual differences in human nature. The six subscales include: trustworthiness, strength of will and rationality, altruism, independence from group pressures, complexity, and variability.

The Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire by
Frank Lee (1970) was conceived to measure initial and
post-training attitudes concerning various aspects of law
enforcement. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions
including three areas of attitudes: attitudes toward the
law enforcement job, attitudes toward the value of law enforcement jobs, and attitudes toward people in law enforcement jobs.

Procedure

Each subject was administered the battery of tests described above. A self-explanatory instruction sheet was included with each set of testing materials.

Chapter III

RESULTS

Figure I shows a profile of the mean scores for the three police groups on the 16 PF. The exact numerical values for these mean scores are presented in Table I. According to the normative tables, any scores lying between 4.8 and 6.2 are considered average and include 38% of the general population. As can be seen from Table I, at least one score in each of the following factor groups deviated from this average range: factors A, B, F, G, H, M, N, O, Q1, Q3, Q1, and MD. Analysis of variance was performed on the data for each of these factors to determine if there were any significant differences between the respective groups. These analyses are summarized in Table II. The three groups of subjects were found to have statistically significant deviations on factors B, 0, Q3, and MD at the .01 level of significance; and on factor Q4 at the .05 level of significance. The Newman-Keuls procedure was used to probe these significant results to determine specific effects. The results of these analyses indicated that on factor B, the intelligence factor, the Clarksville city police force scored significantly (p<.01) lower than the Ft. Campbell and

Hopkinsville policemen. The Clarksville policemen scored lower than average, the military policemen in the average range, and the Hopkinsville force slightly above average on factor B. Factor O includes a continum ranging from self-assuredness to apprehensiveness on which the Hopkinsville force scored toward the self-assured end, while the Clarksville and Ft. Campbell forces scored in the average range. The Hopkinsville force accred significantly lower than both the Ft. Campbell (p<.05) and Clarksville (p<.01) police forces. On factor Q3 the Clarksville and Ft. Campbell policemen scored in the average and slightly above average ranges on the undisciplined self-conflict to controlled continum. The Hopkinsville policemen scored significantly (p<.01) higher on factor Q3 than the Clarksville and Ft. Campbell forces; indicating strong control of emotions and general behavior, a tendency to be socially aware and careful, and a tendency to show self-respect. Both effective leaders and some paranoids have been found to score high on Q3. The Hopkinsville and Ft. Campbell forces had average means on factor Qu showing a more relaxed personality, while the Clarksville policemen were significantly (p<.05) more tense than the Hopkinsville force. The Ft. Campbell policemen showed a significantly (p<.01) lower score on the motivational distortion (MD) scale than the Clarksville force. Both civilian forces made MD scores in the average

range, while the military policemen scored slightly below average.

On the PHN Scale, which attempts to measure a person's beliefs about human nature, no extremely deviant scores were found. A profile of the mean scores for the three respective groups is shown in Figure II. Table III presents the exact numerical values for this profile. The subscales of trustworthiness, strength of will and rationality, altruism, independence from group pressures, complexity, and variability each have a possible range of scores from -42 to +42. The positive-negative score, general favorableness of human nature, ranges from -168 to +168. The multiplexity subscales, measuring one's beliefs about the individual differences in human nature, have a possible range in scores from -84 to +84. Since all group scores were within the average ranges, no significance tests were conducted on the PHN Scale mean scores.

All three groups scored in a high, positive direction on the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire.

These results indicated favorable attitudes toward law enforcement, the value of law enforcement, and people in law enforcement.

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION

As can be seen from the results section, the military policemen were found to possess personality characteristics most similar to the trainees tested at the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy by Prytula, et. at. (1972). Like these subjects, the military policemen reported in the present study were average in terms of personality characteristics as measured by the 16 PF. Questionnaire. Unlike the academy trainees, however, the military force's lowest score on the 16 PF Questionnaire was in self-reliance, indicating a more tough-minded, realistic and no-nonsense type of personality. Again, similar to the trainees, scores on the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire showed that the military policemen scored quite high and in a positive direction on attitude toward people in law enforcement. However, the military scores, although positive, were lower on attitudes toward the value of the law enforcement jobs.

The Clarksville and Hopkinsville civilian police forces differed from the trainees reported by Prytula, et. al. (1972) in that they possessed several personality characteristics outside the average range. For example,

the Clarksville policemen were found to be below average in intelligence; while the Hopkinsville force was found to be above average in this characteristic. Unlike the academy trainees, the Clarksville policemen's lowest scores were found on the intelligence factor; while the Hopkinsville force's lowest scores were found to be in the direction of self-assuredness and relaxed, unfrustrated personality types. Similar to the trainees, scores on the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire indicated that both civilian groups had high positive scores on attitude toward the value of law enforcement, and toward people in law enforcement. Like the academy trainees, the more intelligent the civilian officers, the more variability they saw in people. In the academy trainees, civilian, and military groups, a positive attitude toward job seemed to go along with a positive attitude toward people.

naire, attitudes toward the value of the law enforcement job, attempts to assess the attitude of the respondent toward the importance of law enforcement services and functions. According to the test manual, the items pertain to standards for law enforcement jobs, respect accorded officers, the essentiality of law enforcement service, and the contribution to society by law enforcement services.

Each of the tested groups of policemen second in a positive direction on scale II; with the Clarksville city policemen

having a slightly lower mean score than the Hopkinsville and Ft. Campbell forces.

Scale III of the Law Enforcement Perception Questionnaire, attitudes toward people in law enforcement work, attempts to measure attitudes toward certain characteristics of persons in law enforcement work. According to the test manual, the items pertain to the intelligence, honesty, loyalty, maturity, prejudice, and dedication of persons in law enforcement work as perceived by the respondent. Each of the tested groups of policemen scored in a high positive direction on scale III. The mean score of each police group tested was higher than those of Lee's (1970) criterion groups of police trainees and experienced policemen.

The PHN Scale yielded no extremely deviant scores for the police groups tested. From this one may conclude that the Clarksville, Hopkinsville, and Ft. Campbell police forces are in the average ranges or average in terms of the following personality characteristics: trustworthiness, strength of will and rationality, altruism, independence from group pressures, complexity, and variability.

The preceding data seems to indicate that while active city policemen have many personality characteristics similar to those of the academy trainees, the city police forces have a greater tendency to deviate from average

characteristics. The civilian policemen also have a greater tendency to deviate from the average than the military policemen and also from each other.

These results, then, would not validate the stereotypes that are held by certain segments of our society. Whether he be a military or civilian officer, today's policemen does not appear to be the brutal, vicious beast that many would lead us to believe he is.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Figures

Figure I Group Profiles on Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire

Factor	LOW SCORE DESCRIPTION	1	ST 2			TE Aver 5	N SCOR	E (ste	N)	HIGH SCORE DESCRIPTION
A	RESERVED, Detached, Critical, Aloof	•	•	•	•		:-	•	•	•	OUTGOING, Warmhearted, Easy-going
В	LESS INTELLIGENT, Concrete thinking	•	•	• •	\`\</td <td>•</td> <td>\·./ •</td> <td>•</td> <td>•</td> <td>•</td> <td>MORE INTELLIGENT, Ab- stract thinking</td>	•	\·./ •	•	•	•	MORE INTELLIGENT, Ab- stract thinking
C	AFFECTED BY FEELINGS, Emotion-		•	•	•	3	} : .	•	•	•	EMOTIONALLY STABLE,
E	ally less stable HUMBLE, Mild, Accommodating,		•	•		- }	į	•	•		faces reality, calm ASSERTIVE, Aggressive
F	Conforming SOBER, Prudent, Serious,		•	•	•	: 1	$\langle \cdot \rangle$.	•			Stubborn HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, Impul-
G	Taciturn EXPEDIENT, Disregards rules,		•	•			(· · ·	•	•		sively lively, Gay CONSCIENTIOUS, Perse-
H			•	•		.,	· .	•	•	.	vering, Staid VENTURESOME, Socially bold, Uninhibited
Ī	Threat-sensitive TOUCH-MINDED, Self-reliant,		•		• •	N. T.		•	•		TENDER-MINDED, Dependent, Over-protected
I	Realistic, No-nonsense TRUSTING, Adaptable, Free of jealousy			•	•	2.	8.9	•	•	.	SUSPICIOUS, Self-opin- ionated, Hard to fool
1	or Jeanousy	1		199	195	- d	98 48	13	-	_	6 000

Clarksville City Police	
Hopkinsville City Police	•••••
Ft. Campbell Military Police	

actor	1	SCORE RIPTION	1	STA	NDA			rage				N)	HIGH SCORE DESCRIPTION
	ventional			•	•	• .	<u>-2</u>	1.		•	•	•	IMAGINATIVE, Careless of Practical matters
N O	less, Unp	Natural, Art- retentious D, Confident,			•	•	•	Z,			•	•	SHREWD, Calculating, Worldly, Penetrating APPRESENSIVE, Self- reproaching, worrying
	CON SERVATIVI establish GROUP-DEPEN	DENT, A join er		•	•	•<			•	•	•	•	EXPERIMENTING, Liberal Analytical SELF-SUFFICIENT, Prefers
Q3	UNDISCIPLIN FLICT. Ro	follower ED SELF-CON- llows urges	•	•	•	• ,	. •	\		`` > •	•	•	own decisions CONTROLLED, Socially pre- cise TENSE, Frustrated, Driven,
41	RELAXED, Tr Unfrustra		L.	•	•	•	··	·/·	<u>``</u>				Overwrough
		A sten of	1 2%		3 9 %1	•						10 2%	is obtained of adults

Figure II Group Profiles on the Philosophies of Human Nature Scale

Trustworthiness		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠.	.*.	7.	•	•	•		•	•	•			
Strength of Will and Rationality	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	,
Altruism	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠.	• •			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Independence from Group Pressures	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•		Ϊ.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Complexity	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	. į	. 5/	1	٠٠:	. •	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Variability	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	-		• • :	• •	•	•	•	•	•	•
Positive-Negative Score	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠. ,٠	·'£'.	•	•	<		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Multiplexity	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	4	····	٠.	•••	•	•	•	•	•

-42-38-34-30-26-22-18-14-10 -6 -2 +2 +6+10+14+18+22+26+30+34+38+42

Clarksvil	le City Police	
Hopkinsvi	lle City Police	•••••
Ft. Campb	ell Military Pol:	ice ———

APPENDIX B: Tables

Table I

Group Mean Scores on Sixteen
Personality Factor Questionnaire

Factor	Ft. Campbell	Clarksville	<u>Hopkinsville</u>
A	5.6	7.11	6.92
В	5.6	3.33	6.50
C	5.9	5.22	5.75
E	5.9	5.67	5.50
	6.2	5.33	5.00
F	5.7	7.11	6.42
G 	6.5	5.77	6.33
H	4.6	4.89	4.50
I	6.0	5.44	5.50
L		5.89	4.75
M	4.3	5.78	5.50
N	6.4	6.44	3.92
0	5.7	4.11	5.08
٩	5.2	6.00	4.58
Q_2	5.6		8.17
Q ₃	6.3	5.44	5.08
61 [†]	5.7	6.89	4.67
MD MD	3•5	5.22	

Table II

Summary of Analyses of Variance on Deviant
Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire Scores

Factor	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	W Flo
A	among groups within groups	13.5 74.2	2 28	6.75 2.65	2.55
В	among groups within groups	53.0 49.4	2 28	25.50 9 1.76	15.1**
F	among groups within groups	8.1 91.6	2 28	4.18 3.30	1.24
G	among groups within groups	9•7 65•9	2 28	4.85 2.35	2.10
Н	among groups within groups	2.7 66.8	2 28	1.35 2.40-13	75.56
М	among groups within groups	12.6 742.5	2 28	6.30 26.50	50.24
N	among groups within groups	4.5 91.0	2 28	2.25 3.25	•70
0	among groups	36.2 77.2	2 28	18.20 2.80	6.4**
થ	among groups within groups	13.8 118.4	2 28	6.90 4.20	1.64
Q ₃	among groups within groups	41.4 56 . 0	2 28	20.70 2.00	10.35**
e ₁₄	among groups within groups	16.9 55.9	2 28	8.45 2.00	4.23*
MD	among groups within groups	114.9 38.8	2 28	57.45 1.38	41.6**

significant at .01 level

significant at .05 level *

Table III

Group Mean Scores on the Philosophies
of Human Nature Scale

	rt. Campbell	Clarksville	Hopkinsville
Subscale Trustworthiness	-1.9	• मेर्ग	- 6.67
Strength of will and rationality	8.1	2.33	5.83
and Fautism	-5.1	89	- 9.67
Independence from group pressures	•5	78	- 3.25
group pro-	3.7	-1.11	8.17
Complexity	9.5	13.10	16.33
Variability	1.6	1.10	-13.75
Positive- Negative score		12.00	24.50
Multiplexity	13.2		