

1967

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Recommended Citation

Alexander B. Smith, Bernard Locke, William F. Walker, Authoritarianism in College and Non-College Oriented Police, 58 J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci. 128 (1967)

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AUTHORITARIANISM IN COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE ORIENTED POLICE

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In these days of minority group unrest, mass demonstrations, riots, and rising crime rates, the selection of policemen and their training has become a matter of crucial concern to the localities, the states, and the nation. Not only is recruiting highly important, but the training of police by way of academies for recruits, and in-service instruction and college training for those already in uniform, has taken on added dimensions of importance. In our present day society education is regarded as an almost magic-like mechanism for improving the individual and uplifting the community. We support all education because it is "good." We accept higher education for the police for a variety of reasons: it gives policemen greater dignity; it improves their efficiency; it enhances their image; it is important for advancement in the field of law enforcement; it enables policemen to recognize and deal with social problems better and more expeditiously; it professionalizes the field of law enforcement, etc.

Very little was written about the impact of education on attitude change until Stember (1961) explored the effect of formal education of prejudicial attitudes towards Jewish and Negro minorities. Stember was aware that the "educated" (those who had gone beyond high school) might be more apt to mask their true feelings, and he attempted to overcome this difficulty in gathering data. He found that for the most part the effect of higher education was salutary, but the educated were more resistant in accepting relationships on more intimate levels. Further, in the college groups which Stember investigated, it appeared that im-

provement in intergroup understanding as between the freshman and senior years are generally at a very modest level.

It would appear that almost everyone can benefit from higher education to some extent, and that police, like all other people, are better off with college training. Nevertheless, not everyone who has the ability desires to attend college and the factors behind college attendance should be considered. While we realize that the cultural and socialization processes are significant in impelling people to attend college and universities, the matter of personality as a factor in undertaking higher education has not been sufficiently investigated insofar as the police are concerned. We must keep in mind that a field-theoretical position requires a consideration of both personal and situational determinants of social behavior. A review of the literature fails to disclose research explaining the enrollment of police in collegiate programs. The question as to whether personality factors explain college attendance by policemen has not been examined.

The New York City Police Department is made up predominantly of descendants of Irish and German Catholic immigrants with descendants of Italians making up a third large segment. Jewish and Negro police form small minorities. From an inspection of its enrollment, it appears that the College of Police Science is made up of students who reflect the same proportions of ethnic, religious, and racial composition as is represented in the entire Police Department. From these facts we may conclude that the social and cultural influences bearing on the college and non-college New York

City police are quite similar and that the variable that should be researched is a personality factor.

The New York City Police Department and the College of Police Science of the City University of New York offer an excellent setting in which to test the hypothesis that some personality factor is present in the non-college oriented police to a different degree than in the college oriented police. In speculating about this factor we look to an aspect of personality that makes it possible in these critical times for policemen on all levels to use authority and force constructively. We submit that the degree of authoritarianism which determines the ability of the policemen to function properly in these times is the same facet of personality which makes for the policemen's attending college.

The present study was an investigation in which the authoritarianism of the newly appointed police who had not chosen to attend college and those who had enrolled in college were compared. It was hypothesized that the police who had not entered college would demonstrate higher authoritarian characteristics than the police who were attending college.

For the past fifteen years it has been possible for New York City Policemen to attend college no matter what their assignment may be. First at Brooklyn College and later at the Baruch School of City College class schedules for police were so arranged that the students could attend regardless of changes in their tours of duty. In September 1965, the College of Police Science was organized to provide a separate four year college for police. The Baruch program was taken over and the Brooklyn College program was phased out when the College of Police Science opened its doors ready to grant four year (senior college) bachelor's degrees and two year (junior college) associate degrees. Of course, it meant that those members of the force who chose to attend college used their evenings and spare time for college, inconvenienced their families, paid tuition (depending on their matriculation status) and, in short, deferred gratification of a wide variety of rewards.

The rewards for college attendance for the New York City police are neither tangible nor immediate. While higher education may make it easier for the police to pass promotion examinations, there is no requirement that promotion to higher ranks requires successful completion of any or all parts of a college education. Promotion to sergeant, lieutenant, and captain is possible only through

civil service promotion examinations, and it is not necessary to go beyond the entrance requirement of a high school education to qualify for any of these advanced positions.

It should be emphasized that every applicant to the New York City police force must be between 21 and 30, and must either have a high school diploma or must have passed a New York State high school equivalency examination. Being high school graduates or having high school equivalencies, all policemen are eligible for entrance into the College of Police Science at various levels of matriculation.

PROCEDURE

The subjects were all members of the New York City Police Department who had been appointed relatively recently. The noncollege police group were made up of recruits who had been appointed three months previously, and on being polled, indicated that they had not enrolled in college. The number of this group came to 122 and were made up of 58 men between the ages of 21 through 24, and 64 between 25 through 29. The college group of policemen were selected from the freshman class of the College of Police Science and had been on the force up to a year and a half. There were 104 men in this group of whom 51 were between 21 through 24, and 53 between ages 25 through 29. Newly entered students who had reached their thirtieth birthday or who had been on the force longer than a year and a half, were rejected.

In order to test for authoritarianism two scales were combined: a modification of the Dogmatism scale following Rokeach (1960), and a scale devised by Piven (1961). Both scales were similar in that they were aimed at eliciting various aspects of authority; Rokeach with personal attitude toward socialized authority; Piven who had investigated attitudes of social workers had been concerned with practitioner authoritative responses to clients. The Rokeach scale was used rather than the one developed in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) which has been criticized because its main measuring instruments focused on Fascist authoritarianism. Rokeach (1960, p. 14) kept this criticism in mind in planning his instrument, explaining:

In other words, if our interest is in the scientific study of authoritarianism, we should proceed from right authoritarianism not to a re-focus on left authoritarianism but to the

TABLE 1
RESPONSES OF COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE POLICE TO TOTAL SCALE

	<i>M</i>	σ	σ_m	<i>D</i>	σ <i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>
Total College.....	-.11	1.81	.02	.42	.028	15.0*
Total Non-College.....	.31	1.81	.02			
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	.28	1.81	.03	.06	.044	1.36
25 thru 29 Non-College.....	.34	1.83	.03			
21 thru 24 College.....	-.23	1.75	.03	.25	.045	5.6*
25 thru 29 College.....	.02	1.86	.03			
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	.28	1.81	.03	.51	.044	11.59*
21 thru 24 College.....	-.23	1.75	.03			
25 thru 29 Non-College.....	.34	1.83	.03	.32	.04	8.0*
25 thru 29 College.....	.02	1.86	.03			

* Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

general properties held in common by all forms of authoritarianism.... What is needed is therefore a deliberate turning away from a concern with the one or two kinds of authoritarianism that may happen to be predominant at a given time. Instead, we should pursue a more theoretical ahistorical analysis of the properties held in common by all forms of authoritarianism regardless of specific ideological, theological, philosophic, or scientific content.

Of the 57 items chosen or adapted for the questionnaire, 40 came from Rokeach and 17 from Piven.

The questionnaire was self-administered with instructions which indicated that the responses were confidential. For the 57 items, each subject was asked to react to a Likert-type scale based upon the response to each item in terms of several degrees of agreement or disagreement. The following rating scale was used:

1. I agree a little.
2. I agree on the whole.
3. I agree very much.
- 1. I disagree a little.
- 2. I disagree on the whole.
- 3. I disagree very much.

Each item was set up in such a way that the most favorable response earned a value of +3 while the least favorable response was given a -3. For scoring, the responses were converted to values of 1 through 6, with 1 being least favorable and 6 most favorable.

RESULTS

From the data presented in Table 1 it becomes immediately evident that some highly significant differences exist between the College ($N = 104$) and Non-College ($N = 128$) groups. The total Non-College S's score significantly higher on the combined scales than do the College S's (σ diff

TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF ROKEACH AND PIVEN RESPONSES

	<i>M</i>	σ	σ_m	<i>D</i>	σ <i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>
Total Rokeach.....	.21	1.70	.02	.32	.036	8.89*
Total Piven.....	-.11	1.93	.03			

* Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

TABLE 3
RESPONSES OF COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE POLICE TO ROKEACH ITEMS

	<i>M</i>	σ	<i>sm</i>	<i>D</i>	σ <i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	.40	1.78	.04	.61	.051	11.96*
21 thru 24 College.....	-.21	1.66	.04			
25 thru 29 Non-College.....	.43	1.80	.04	.27	.053	5.09*
25 thru 29 College.....	.16	1.80	.04			
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	.40	1.78	.04	.03	.050	.6
21 thru 29 Non-College.....	.43	1.80	.04			
21 thru 24 College.....	-.21	1.66	.04	.37	.051	7.25*
25 thru 29 College.....	.16	1.80	.04			

* Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

= 15.0). Thus, if the scales do, in fact, measure authoritarianism those police officers who are not college-oriented must be considered as being more "authoritarian" than their college-directed colleagues.

An interesting age variable is found between the two groups when the total scale is considered. In the Non-College group no difference is found when those S's below age 25 ($N = 58$) are compared with those who are older than 25 ($N = 64$) while in the college-directed group the older age group (25 thru 29) ($N = 53$) is significantly more "authoritarian" than the younger group ($N = 51$). The differences between the college and non-college oriented groups at each of the two age groupings is highly significant, with each of the college groups

being less authoritarian than their non-college age-peers.

In order to determine whether the Rokeach and Piven items measured the same aspects of "authoritarianism" the performance of the entire sample was compared for the two scales and the results are presented in Table 2. It is obvious, from the obtained difference, that the Rokeach and Piven scales measure different variables. For this reason an analysis of the performance of each of the groups on the Rokeach and Piven scales was done and the results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Examination of Table 3 shows that at each of the two age levels the non-college group scored significantly higher (more "authoritarian") than the college group. As with the over-all scale there

TABLE 4
RESPONSES OF COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE POLICE TO PIVEN ITEMS

	<i>M</i>	σ	<i>sm</i>	<i>D</i>	σ <i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	-.20	1.82	.06	.08	.09	.89
Below 24 College.....	-.28	1.98	.07			
25 thru 29 Non-College.....	.12	1.87	.06	.44	.09	4.9*
25 thru 29 College.....	-.32	1.98	.07			
21 thru 24 Non-College.....	-.20	1.82	.06	.32	.08	4.0*
25 thru 29 Non-College.....	.12	1.87	.06			
21 thru 24 College.....	-.28	1.98	.07	.04	.03	1.3
25 thru 29 College.....	-.32	1.98	.07			

* Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

was no meaningful difference between the younger and older non-college samples while there was a highly significant difference between the younger and older college groups. This obtained difference is at the basis of the age difference found when the combined scales were considered since, as will be noted below, this same relationship does not exist with the Piven scale.

The Piven items provide results, Table 4, which vary from those obtained with the Rokeach scale items. At the younger age level (below 24) the difference between the college and non-college groups is not significant, while the difference for the 25 to 29 year group is significant at the .01 level of confidence. Contrary to the Rokeach findings there is a highly significant (.01) difference between the younger and older non-college samples while the obtained difference between the younger and older college groups is not significant.

DISCUSSION

There is a common assumption in social psychology that certain personality types are attracted to particular occupations. Highly neurotic individuals are attracted to social work and psychiatry, homosexual males are attracted to nursing, and authoritarian personalities are attracted to correctional institutional work and police. In these times of social unrest we need police whose personalities are such that they are able to function effectively in critical and explosive situations, particularly if placed in leadership positions. One of the important functions of higher education is to develop leadership among the police.

This study demonstrates that police who are attracted to college are significantly less authoritarian than police who are not impelled to attend college. This implies that there are certain person-

ality characteristics of police who attend college that make it likely that they will be able to function more effectively with respect to the problem stemming from civil rights demonstrations and more effectively in accordance with the guide lines set down by the Supreme Court with respect to arrests and search and seizure.

One of the findings indicates that among college police the older group is more authoritarian than the younger group. This is an area that bears further investigation. It is contemplated therefore that a graduating class which usually has a mean age of about 40 be compared with the younger groups of college police to determine whether prolonged college education exposure has any effect on the personality of policemen.

SUMMARY

The authoritarianism of college and non-college student police was investigated. It was found that while there are different facets of personality as measured by the Rokeach and Piven scales, overall the college policemen tended to be less authoritarian than the non-college police and that among college police the older group is more authoritarian than the younger group.

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