

## POLICE DISCRETION

### Measuring Police Attitudes Towards Discretion

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### Abstract

This paper describes the construction of two scales to measure police attitudes towards the selective enforcement of the law. The Service-Legalistic (S-L) scale measures police discretion along a flexible-inflexible continuum. Service-oriented police advocate the use of discretion to help solve social problems; legalistic police oppose discretion because it interferes with their duty to enforce the law equitably. The Watchman (WM) scale examines the use of discretion to maintain control. Watchman-oriented police simultaneously ignore minor offenses while calling for greater powers to deal with serious crime. Service-related discretion was found to negatively correlate with authoritarianism and the belief that crime is caused by the individual dispositions of offenders; watchman-related discretion positively correlated with authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and a belief in individual crime causation.

### Measuring Police Attitudes Towards Discretion

Of all the personnel in the criminal justice system, arguably police have the greatest opportunity to exercise discretionary judgement. Unlike judges, magistrates or parole boards, police have the ability to act as more-or-less autonomous agents. Every day, the average street-level police officer observes many offenses for which no arrest is made. Away from public scrutiny, unencumbered by due process and subject to no review an individual police officer can totally exonerate an offender by simply deciding to take some unofficial action such as issuing a caution or ignoring an offense entirely. By the selective enforcement of the penal code police have the power to pre-empt the entire course of a criminal prosecution.

There are two views on the desirability of police discretion. On the one hand, discretion has been hailed as a flexible and enlightened way to deal with many social problems (De Lint, 1998; Gallagher, 1979; Kinsey & Young, 1982). It is argued that when assessing the culpability of an offender it is necessary to consider not only the illegality of the offense but also contextual and mitigating factors. Strict adherence to the letter of the law in many cases would be too harsh and justice may be better served by not introducing an offender into the criminal justice process. On the other hand, serious concern has been expressed about the dangers involved in leaving to police unchecked responsibility for deciding who is and who is not worthy of prosecution (Egger & Findlay, 1988; Goldsmith, 1990; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Pike, 1985; Walker, 1983). Selective enforcement of the law allows police to redefine justice in terms of their own priorities, which might not correspond to the priorities of the wider community. When arrest decisions become based upon personal judgements, there is a real potential for arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement of the law.

What all commentators agree upon is that discretion is an inevitable part of policing. Yet, despite the scope and importance of police discretion, there has been very little direct psychological examination of police decision making. This is not to say that psychologists have been uninterested in police behavior. On the contrary, a great deal of research has been devoted to examining the psychological attributes of police thought to relate to police performance. In particular, police officers have been studied in terms of a range of right-wing personality dimensions such as authoritarianism (Brown & Willis, 1985; Colman & Gorman, 1982; Perrott & Taylor, 1995; Wortley & Homel, 1995), dogmatism (Colman & Gorman, 1982; Henkel, Sheehan & Reichel, 1997; Regoli & Schrink, 1977), ethnocentrism (Teahan, 1975; Wortley & Homel, 1995), conservatism (Colman & Gorman, 1982; Cook, 1977; Dalley, 1975) and so forth. The direction this research has taken is based on the conviction that either the policing occupation attracts those who crave exercising authority over others, or that working as a police officer necessarily engenders this tendency. What ever its cause, the view that there is a definable police personality that is characterized by prejudice and intolerance of outsiders, rigid adherence to middle-class values, punitiveness towards those who violate conventional norms, and a preoccupation with power and toughness, is widespread in both popular and academic literature.

The validity of the police personality has not gone unchallenged, however. For one thing, not all studies have found differences between the personalities of police and non-police (Fenster, Wiedemann & Locke, 1977; Rokeach, Miller & Snyder, 1971). In addition, in recent years many police forces have actively promoted the concepts of community policing and police professionalism, backed by higher entry standards and better training, in an attempt to change the police culture (Fielding,

1988; Poole, 1988). To the extent that these measures have been successful, it would be expected that the classic police personality is becoming less predominant.

Moreover, even where it can be shown that police do exhibit elements of a right-wing personality, the practical implications of these attributes for day-to-day police work are rarely demonstrated. It is simply assumed that the various personality scales say something meaningful about the way police exercise their authority. It is the supposed occupational relevance of the police personality that, after all, ultimately justifies the research. If the typical police officer is ethnocentric, authoritarian, dogmatic and so forth, then surely, it is reasoned, he/she also displays a discriminatory, draconian, intolerant, and otherwise undesirable approach to law enforcement.

The implicit assumption in much of the writing about the police personality is that the exercise of discretion is an expression of liberalism, while the strict application of the law is a sign of authoritarianism. However, research on other areas of criminal justice decision making -- notably jury deliberations and judicial sentencing -- has revealed a complex relationship between the personality of the decision maker and decision preference. Certainly there is a tendency for authoritarian decision-makers to make more punitive judgements about offenders (Bray & Noble, 1978; Carroll et al., 1987; Ellison & Buckhout, 1981). But there are exceptions. Some studies have found no relationship between authoritarianism and punitiveness (Sue, Smith & Pedroza, 1975) or that the relationship holds only for some types of offenses (Wortley, 1990). Sometimes high-authoritarians have been found to be less punitive than low-authoritarians, such as when the defendant is exercising authority (Garcia & Griffitt, 1978; Mitchell in Kassin & Wrightsman, 1983), also displays an authoritarian personality (Mitchell & Byrne, 1973), or has committed a crime in the process of obeying an order (Hamilton, 1976).

There are two implications of the inconsistent relationship between standard personality scales and decision making about offenders. First, the research challenges the utility of conceptualizing punitiveness towards offenders simply as a component of a global right-wing construct. While decisions made about offenders are related to broader personality structures they are also influenced by more fine-grained individual differences. Better results might be obtained with scales that more explicitly measure specific predispositions to criminal justice decision-making (Kaplan & Miller, 1978; Kassin & Wrightsman, 1983). Second, any such scale is itself likely to be multidimensional. Decision-making in one situation does not necessarily predict decision making in another. That is, punitiveness towards offenders does not seem to be a generalized attribute that allows decision-makers to be placed along a single continuum from strict to lenient.

One strategy for investigating police decision making, then, is to examine directly police attitudes towards the utilization of discretion. A moment's thought will reveal that the exercise of individual police discretion need not indicate a liberal concern by the police officer for the circumstances and needs of the suspected offender. As noted earlier when discussing the desirability of police discretion, the decision not to arrest a suspected offender might equally reflect an arbitrary and discriminatory approach to law enforcement by the individual officer. For example, a police officer may choose not to arrest a suspect because the officer cannot be bothered, does not want to cause trouble or is biased in favor of the perpetrator.

A similar point about the multidimensionality of discretion is made in Wilson's (1968) classic description of policing styles. According to Wilson, police departments adopt one of three basic positions on law enforcement. In the service style, the principles of community policing are practiced. Offenses are typically not ignored, but there is a

high reliance on informal, non-arrest alternatives to resolve minor matters. In exercising discretion, police consider both the nature of the offense and mitigating personal characteristics of the offender. In the watchman style of policing, the purpose of policing is defined as maintaining order rather than enforcing law. Non-enforcement of the law is common. Many minor offenses are simply ignored, as are offenses defined as private disputes. However, here the motivation for non-enforcement is 'not rocking the boat' rather than any coherent philosophical rationale. At the same time, where necessary police will get tough with offenders to keep control. Finally, in the legalistic style, arrest is the preferred mode of dealing with crime, even that which is of a minor nature. The seriousness of crime is defined in terms of what was done; little consideration is given to who the offender is. While Wilson was interested in discretion from an organizational perspective, his policing style models nevertheless provide some clues to the range of possible motives for the arrest decisions of individual officers.

The aim of the current research is to construct scales for measuring police attitudes towards discretion. Three studies are described. The first study explores the dimensionality of police discretion, that is, it seeks to identify the various personal rationales that underpin the selective enforcement of the law. On the basis of these results, the second study undertakes the construction of relevant scales to measure attitudes to discretion. In the third study, correlations between these scales and existing personality scales are examined.

### Study 1

The purpose of the first study is develop an initial set of scale items relating to police attitudes towards discretion and to explore the relationships among these items. It is expected that a single strict-lenient continuum with respect to law enforcement will not emerge, but rather that multiple rationales for exercising discretion will be found.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 260 New South Wales (Australia) police officers, all with one year of operational experience, participated in the study (210 males, 50 females; age  $M = 21.2$  years,  $SD = 3.9$ ).

The nature of the sample was determined to a large extent by logistic considerations. Three relatively large and separate samples of police were required for the series of studies described in this paper. It would have been very difficult and time consuming to obtain those samples through conventional mail-out methods of data collection. However, all New South Wales police officers are required to return to the police academy after one year of service for two weeks of refresher courses. It was decided, therefore, to use these police officers as a convenient pool of participants.

### Materials

An initial pool of 28 items relating to the exercise of police discretion was specifically written for the study. Half of the items were written in the forward direction (supporting discretion) and half in reverse direction (supporting no discretion). Items covered a range of perspectives on discretion. In this regard, item writing was in part guided by Wilson's (1968) three styles of policing, with statements included that expressed service (e.g., 'Often a caution by a police officer can do more good than an arrest'), watchman (e.g., 'When it comes to making an arrest smart police know when to mind their own business and not rock the boat') and legalistic (e.g., 'The law is the law: police can make no exceptions') orientations. A questionnaire was constructed using these 28 items. Items were randomly ordered so that forward and reverse items were dispersed. The first page of the questionnaire provided instructions of how to record responses. Each item required a response on a



5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) on a separate answer sheet.

### Procedure

The study was conducted with the approval and cooperation of the New South Wales Police Service. Data collection took place at the New South Wales Police Academy. Special classes were timetabled at the end of the two-week refresher course to allow the author to present the questionnaire to participants. A small number of police were not able to attend the classes because of other commitments (e.g., medical appointments) but these absences are not considered a significant source of bias. The author explained the purpose of the study to the class and read out the instructions. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary. They were also assured that the results were confidential and for research purposes only, and that raw data would not be made available to the Police Service. Completed answer sheets were returned directly to the author in sealed envelopes. Participants were not paid for completing the questionnaire.

### Results

Principal components extraction with varimax rotation was performed on the 28 items using SPSS9 for Windows. There were 9 factors with eigenvalues in excess of 1, accounting for 58.5% of the variance. However, many of these factors contained only a few items and so a more parsimonious solution was sought. An inspection of the scree plot indicated a change in slope after the second eigenvalue. Examination of all solutions involving 1 to 9 factors confirmed that a two-factor solution provided the best conceptual clustering of items (Table 1). Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 4.24 (14.1% of the variance) and factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 2.66 (10.6% of the variance).

Table 1 about here

While the study was not designed to directly test Wilson's models of policing style (and hence exploratory rather than confirmatory factor analysis was performed) in fact the two factors may be interpreted using Wilson's concepts of service, watchman and legalistic styles of discretion. Using a criterion of  $\pm 0.3$  for factor loadings, factor 1 can be seen as a combination of legalistic and service styles. These two styles were treated by respondents as polar opposites. Items loading positively onto the factor involve anti-discretion (legalistic) sentiments. Police are viewed to have a responsibility to perform their duties 'by the book' and to treat all offenders equally. Items loading negatively onto the factor, on the other hand, involve a pro-discretion (service) orientation. According to these items, police should use judgement in their dealing with offenders and may decide not to arrest if there is a better solution to a problem.

Factor 2 resembles the watchman style of policing. The interesting aspect of this factor is that pro- and anti-discretion items both loaded in the same direction. Examination of the items in question reveals that this apparently contradictory combination is in fact quite congruous. The pro-discretion items involved in this factor are concerned largely with avoiding contact with offenders rather than actively working with them to solve problems, which was the concern of discretion items in the first factor. The anti-discretion items tend to involve calls for greater power and the need to get tough with offenders, again in contrast to the duty orientation of the first factor. Taken together these two sentiments suggest a view of policing that emphasizes the need to manage resources and keep things running smoothly by

simultaneously ignoring minor offenses while coming down hard on more serious crime.

## Study 2

Because the two factors identified in Study 1 each involve uneven numbers of pro-discretion and anti-discretion items, they are not suitable in their current form to be used as psychometric tools. It is necessary, therefore, to reduce the number of items in each factor in order to produce balanced scales. As a check that the factors obtained with these data are stable, it was decided that further item analysis using a new sample should be performed.

### Method

#### Participants

A further sample of 237 police officers with one year experience were surveyed (192 males, 45 females, age  $M = 21.4$ ,  $SD = 3.1$ ).

#### Materials

The questionnaire comprised the 26 items from Study 1 that had factor loadings in excess of  $\pm.3$ .

#### Procedure

As for Study 1.

### Results

Items were grouped into two pools on the basis of the factor loadings in Study 1. The service-legalistic pool had 18 items (6 pro-discretion and 12 anti-discretion), and the watchman pool had 13 items (7 pro-discretion and 6 anti-discretion). (Five items loaded onto both factors.) The scoring for the anti-discretion items was reversed for the service-legalistic pool (so that 1 = strongly agree etc) (since pro-discretion and anti-discretion items loaded in opposite direction) but not for the watchman pool

(since both pro-discretion and anti-discretion item loaded in the same direction). Reliability analysis (Chronbach alpha) was run in SPSS9 on both sets of data. Items were progressively dropped from each set until the maximum reliability coefficient was obtained while retaining scale balance. (In psychometric terms, the watchman pool is not balanced since all items are scored in the same direction. However, it was nevertheless considered important to have an equal number of items expressing pro-discretion and anti-discretion sentiments.) This procedure left 10 items in the service-legalistic (S-L) scale ( $\alpha = .65$ ) and 12 items in the watchman (WM) scale ( $\alpha = .75$ ) (Table 2). Further increases in alpha were only possible at the expense of scale balance. However, the alpha levels are considered adequate, particularly given the relative shortness of both scales. In the final versions of the scales there were no shared items.

Table 2 about here.

### Study 3

This study examines the relationship between the S-L and WM scales and other demographic and personality variables. On the basis of previous decision making research (Bray & Noble, 1978; Carroll et al., 1987; Ellison & Buckhout, 1981), it is expected that legalistic and watchman attitudes towards discretion will be associated with traditional dimensions of the right-wing personality (authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, punitiveness etc) and correspondingly, service attitudes will negatively correlate with these attributes.

#### Method

##### Participants

The study employed a new sample of 257 first year police constables (209 males, 48 females, age  $M = 20.9$ ,  $SD = 3.6$ ).

### Materials

In addition to the S-L and WM scales, participants were given a selection of scales thought to be conceptually related to the exercise of discretion. Ray's (1972) Balanced F (BF) scale was used as a measure of authoritarianism. Beswick and Hills (1972) Australian E (AE) scale was used as a measure of ethnocentrism. It is expected that both scales will negatively correlate with the service style of policing and positively correlate with the legalistic and watchman styles.

Three scales measuring attributions of crime causation were also included (Carroll et al., 1987). The Individual Causation (IC) scale measures the extent to which the causes of crime are attributed to the antisocial characteristics of offenders; the Social Causation (SC) scale measures the extent to which crime is seen to be caused by factors such as poor upbringing, peer pressure, availability of drugs and so forth; and the Economic Causation (EC) scale measures attributions that crime is caused by factors such as poverty, necessity and inequitable distribution of wealth. Carroll et al. found that a belief in offender punishment was associated with attributions of individual causation and a belief in offender rehabilitation was associated with attributions of social and economic causation. On this basis, the IC scale is expected to correlate positively with the WM scale and negatively with the S-L scale, while the EC and SC scales should correlate positively with the S-L scale.

Additional scales were a pencil-and-paper IQ test (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1983), and a shortened version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability (SocD) scale (Ray, 1976). High IQ is generally found to be negatively correlated with authoritarian attributes and so is most likely to correlate with high

scores on the S-L scale. The SocD scale was included to help gauge the extent of motivational distortion with respect scale responses.

The S-L, WM, BF, AE, IC, SC, EC and SocD scales were incorporated into a single questionnaire booklet. All scales required responses on a five-point Likert scale and a separate answer sheet was provided for this purpose. The IQ test was administered in the form supplied by the publisher and according to the standardized instructions.

#### Procedure

As for Study 1.

#### Results

The S-L scale was scored by adding pro-discretion items to reversed anti-discretion items. Thus, high scores indicate a service orientation and low scores indicate a legalistic orientation. For the WM scale all items were added so that the higher the score the greater the watchman orientation. All other scales were scored in positive directions (i.e., the higher the score the greater that attribute). For the purposes of statistical analysis participant gender was coded male = 1 and female = 2.

Scale statistics for the S-L scale were  $\alpha = .71$ ,  $\underline{M} = 37.75$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 4.31$  and for the WM scale  $\alpha = .62$ ,  $\underline{M} = 30.63$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 4.55$ . Alpha for the S-L scale is better than that obtained for Study 2 while the alpha for the WM scale is somewhat weaker though still acceptable for research purposes.

Correlations among the scales and demographic variables are shown in Table 3. Correlations are generally in the predicted directions. There was a negative correlation between the S-L and WM scales, that is, the watchman orientation is seen as oppositional to the service orientation but related to the legalistic orientation. The

strength of the correlation is moderate indicating that the two scales are nevertheless measuring substantially separate phenomena.

The BF scale was correlated with the WM scale and negatively correlated with the S-L scale -- authoritarians are less likely than non-authoritarians to adopt a service style of policing and more likely to adopt legalistic and watchman styles. The AE scale was related to the WM scale but not to the S-L scale. This pattern is understandable given that the AE scale measures us-them attitudes and the WM scale reflects a isolationist, siege model of policing.

There were negative correlations between the S-L scale and the IC and EC scales, and between the WM scale and the IC, EC and SC scales. As predicted, a legalistic orientation and, even more so, a watchman orientation were related to a belief in individual causes of crime. The direction of the other correlation involving the crime causation scales is perhaps less expected although the strength of correlations are low. Presumably, those advocating legalistic and watchman styles of policing are not just concerned about the failings of individual offenders but have generalized concerns about the failings of society and our economic system that produce crime.

There was a low negative correlation between the S-L scale and the SocD scale reflecting the tendency for participants responding in socially desirable directions to endorse legalistic styles of policing. This may mean that participants distorted their responses somewhat in the belief that legalistic policing is the most socially acceptable style. Alternatively, the finding is consistent with arguments that social desirability responses are associated with conformity which is in turn is a component of authoritarianism (Milham & Jacobson, 1978; Strickland, 1978). There was no significant relationship between the SocD and WM scales. Men were slightly

more likely than women to score highly on the WM scale. Age and IQ were not significantly correlated with either scale.

### Discussion

A series of three studies was conducted to (a) explore the dimensional structure of police attitudes towards discretion, (b) develop psychometric scales with which to measure those dimensions, and (c) examine the relationship between the dimensions of police discretion and other relevant psychological and demographic variables. It was found that attitudes towards discretion involved two major factors and accordingly two scales were developed to measure these dimensions. The S-L scale differentiates police along a continuum from flexible (service-oriented) to inflexible (legalistic) with respect to the enforcement of the law. Police at the service end of the scale endorse the use of discretion as an appropriate response to social problems while those at the legalistic end oppose discretion because it compromises the principle of equality before the law. The WM scale examines the use of discretion to maintain control. High scorers on the WM scale (watchman-oriented) at the same time advocate ignoring crime in some circumstances, and getting tough with offenders in others. Service-related discretion was found to negatively correlate with authoritarianism and the belief that crime is caused by the individual dispositions of offenders while the reverse is true for legalistic discretion. Watchman-related discretion positively correlated with authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and a belief in individual crime causation.

The present research was prompted by previous findings of inconsistent relationships between standard personality scales and decision making in criminal justice contexts. Thus, while there is a considerable amount of research examining the police personality, the implications of this research for operational policing are a



matter of conjecture. The present findings suggest that one reason that general scales do not always predict criminal justice decision making is that decisions are not necessarily based on a single rationale. In the case of police, the results indicate that discretion might be exercised because of a philosophical conviction that non-arrest is the best solution to the problem at hand, or discretion might simply be based on a pragmatic consideration that non-arrest offers the line of least resistance. Thus, the same arrest decision might be made for very different reasons by two officers with very different attitudes and personalities.

The S-L scale essentially involves a debate about the proper duty of a police officer. The scale recalls the fundamental tension in criminal justice between the concepts of equality before the law and individualized punishment. In many ways both poles of the S-L scale express some admirable sentiments. Police at either end of the scale are striving to carry out their police role even though they have quite different views on what that role is. Authoritarians not surprisingly fall towards the inflexible (legalistic) end of the continuum. However, the correlation is moderate and less than that found for the WM scale. Similarly, those police at the legalistic end of the scale are more likely to believe in individual causation of crime, but again the correlation is weaker than that found for the WM scale.

The WM scale measures attitudes to discretion that are perhaps less noble. The non-enforcement of particular offenses is simply part of a wider strategy to keep things running smoothly and to maintain police power. Authoritarians are actually more likely to exercise discretion in this way than are non-authoritarians. There was also a moderate to strong correlation between the watchman style and the belief that individuals are to blame for their own criminality. Perhaps even more telling, ethnocentrics tend to be high scorers on the WM scale. The link between the

watchman style and ethnocentrism reinforces concerns that some forms of discretion involve the discriminatory exercise of police power. The finding suggests, for example, that high WM scorers are likely to base arrest decisions on suspected offenders' race (as the item 'Police should leave Aboriginal and ethnic groups to sort out their own crime problems within their communities' illustrates) or social position (as implied in the item 'When it comes to making an arrest, smart police know when to mind their own business and not rock the boat'). Interestingly, the WM scale did not seem to be affected by pressures to respond in a socially desirable way. It seems that the participants did not recognize watchman style sentiments as undesirable or if they did, they did not care.

One surprising finding was the non-significant correlation between the S-L scale and participants' gender. Previous research has generally shown that females are more service oriented than are males (e.g. Wortley, Williams & Walker, 1996) and a positive correlation with the S-L scale might have been expected. One possible explanation for this finding is that, since both poles of the S-L scale express socially worthy sentiments (and in fact the SocD scale correlated with the legalistic direction of the scale), gender differences are reduced. That is, the non-discretion (legalistic) pole of the scale does not involve a particularly macho approach to law enforcement that female participants would find objectionable. It is noted that there was a significant negative correlation (albeit weak) between gender and the WM scale, which is decidedly more aggressive in its sentiments. The main gender difference, it seems, is not that females are more likely to adopt service-style discretion than are males, but that they are more likely to reject discriminatory and draconian methods of law enforcement.

The reliabilities of the two scales were modest but sufficient to justify their use in future research. Two alphas were reported for each scale from two different samples, and for both scales one alpha was in excess of .7 while the other was in excess of .6. The alpha levels were to some extent affected by the requirement to achieve scale balance. In reducing items from the original two factors, it was necessary to drop some highly correlating items because of an excess of items phrased in that direction. Similarly, reliabilities could have been improved by dropping more items, but again only if scale balance was sacrificed. In the end it was judged more important to have equal numbers of positively and negatively worded items.

In terms of further development and validation of the two scales, there are two immediate areas requiring attention. First, it is important to test the scales on samples encompassing a wider range of police experience. Due to logistical constraints, the present study involved only police who had one year of experience, and this is an obvious limitation that needs to be addressed. It is likely that attitudes to discretion change as a function of length of police service. Whether this is so, of course, is an interesting question in itself that future research might usefully examine. But moreover, it is necessary to see how the psychometric properties of the scales are affected by more diverse samples of police.

Second, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the scales and other measures of discretion. The ultimate test of the scales' utility is their ability to predict police arrest behavior. One widely used method to examine criminal justice decision-making is through the use of written or videotaped crime scenarios. The ecological validity of such methods, however, is often questioned. More direct measures of discretion might be obtained utilizing observation techniques and through peer and supervisor ratings.

Further research can help build more sophisticated models of police behavior and contribute to the ongoing theoretical debate about the nature of police socialization. Moreover, a better understanding of individual police decision-making has important practical implications for police selection, training and management. Discretion is an inherent part of the policing role. The question, then, is not whether police should have the power to exercise discretionary judgements, but on what basis discretionary judgements should be made. Police organizations have a duty to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to help guide their members in the appropriate use of their power.

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Table 1

Factor Loadings for the 28 Items

Item	Factors	
	1	2
Police who choose not to arrest some offenders are shirking their responsibility.	.57	.22
Police need to exercise judgement about whether arrest is the best solution even when they are certain that technically a crime has been committed.	-.55	.04
Often a caution to an offender by a police officer can do more good than an arrest.	-.53	-.09
The law is the law: police can make no exceptions.	.52	.04
If police don't arrest people for minor offenses, it will only encourage more serious crime.	.51	.18
It is the duty of police to arrest all offenders without fear or favor.	.50	-.16
Sometimes the best way for police to keep things running smoothly is to turn a blind eye to some offenses.	-.49	.43
An offender should expect no leniency from the police no matter what the circumstances of the crime.	.48	.18
A police officer cannot let compassion get in the way of enforcing the law.	.47	-.03
It is better for police to deal with some offenses informally rather than make an arrest.	-.45	.06
The good police officer is always on the lookout for an arrest.	.44	.21
It is the police officer's job to enforce the law 'by the book'.	.42	.01
Most offenders will regard a caution as a sign of weakness on the part of a police officer.	.42	.31
The first thing a police officer learns is that the law cannot be regarded as black and white.	-.36	.08

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Often police can intervene to solve a dispute without having to make an arrest.	-.33	-.13
Many complaints from the public are too unimportant for police to worry about.	.02	.65
Sometimes for a police officer to make an arrest will cause him more trouble than it is worth.	-.14	.56
The only way for police to get respect is to get tough with offenders.	.20	.52
Police should just ignore minor offenses so that they can devote their time to really important crime.	-.01	.47
Police should just enforce the law: dealing with people's problems is a job for social workers.	.31	.47
Unless police come down hard on offenders things will quickly get out of hand.	.38	.45
When it comes to making an arrest, smart police know when to mind their own business and not rock the boat.	-.22	.44
What police need are tougher laws and more powers to deal with young trouble makers	.10	.38
The best police officers are those who get out and make the most arrests.	.34	.35
It is better for police not to get involved in disputes among families and friends.	.12	.34
Police should leave Aboriginal and ethnic groups to sort out their own crime problems within their communities.	.10	.32
If more juveniles were simply cautioned by police they would be less likely to become hardened criminals.	-.22	.27
It is important for police to consider the spirit of the law before deciding to make an arrest.	-.21	.26

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Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Item-total Correlations for Final Scales

Items	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>r</u>
<u>Service-legalistic scale</u>			
Police need to exercise judgement about whether arrest is the best solution even when they are certain that technically a crime has been committed.	4.00	.77	.30
Police who choose not to arrest some offenders are shirking their responsibility. (R)	3.74	.87	.41
Often a caution to an offender by a police officer can do more good than an arrest.	4.10	.74	.18
The law is the law: police can make no exceptions. (R)	3.86	.93	.43
It is better for police to deal with some offenses informally rather than make an arrest.	4.17	.60	.28
If police don't arrest people for minor offenses, it will only encourage more serious crime. (R)	3.36	.95	.29
The first thing a police officer learns is that the law cannot be regarded as black and white.	4.23	.67	.39
It is the duty of police to arrest all offenders without fear or favor. (R)	3.35	1.08	.27
Often police can intervene to solve a dispute without having to make an arrest.	4.20	.64	.28
It is the police officer's job to enforce the law 'by the book'. (R)	3.74	1.04	.36
Total	38.71	4.14	
<u>Watchman scale</u>			
Most offenders will regard a caution as a sign of weakness on the	2.36	.82	.38

part of a police officer.			
Sometimes the best way for police to keep things running smoothly	2.96	1.02	.31
is to turn a blind eye to some offenses.			
The only way for police to get respect is to get tough with offenders.	2.75	.98	.51
Many complaints from the public are too unimportant for police to	2.62	.99	.39
worry about.			
Police should just enforce the law: dealing with people's problems is	2.19	.85	.46
a job for social workers.			
Police should just ignore minor offenses so that they can devote their	1.92	.71	.34
time to really important crime.			
Unless police come down hard on offenders things will quickly get	2.96	1.03	.48
out of hand.			
When it comes to making an arrest, smart police know when to mind	2.86	.97	.26
their own business and not rock the boat.			
What police need are tougher laws and more powers to deal with	3.63	.91	.36
young trouble makers			
It is better for police not to get involved in disputes among families	2.43	.94	.41
and friends.			
The best police officers are those who get out and make the most	1.95	.73	.45
arrests.			
Police should leave Aboriginal and ethnic groups to sort out their	1.91	.91	.28
own crime problems within their communities.			
	Total	30.52	5.64

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Note. R indicates reversed items.

Table 3

Inter-correlations Among Demographics and Scales

	S-L	WM	Sex	Age	IQ	SocD	BF	AE	IC	EC
WM	-.36*									
Sex	.09	-.14*								
Age	-.05	-.09	-.08							
IQ	.08	-.01	-.11	.05						
SocD	-.23*	-.08	.11	.14*	-.04					
BF	-.36*	.44*	-.17*	.04	.14*	.12				
AE	-.11	.45*	-.17*	-.11	.09	-.13*	.64*			
IC	-.27*	.52*	-.08	-.05	-.05	.08	.57	.44*		
EC	-.14*	.17*	-.17*	.05	-.04	.03	.09	.05	.14*	
SC	-.05	.17*	-.09	-.01	.11	.03	.16*	.06	.41*	.28*

\*p&lt;.05