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POLICE
PERSONALITY

and the relationship
between personality
and preferences
for conflict
resolution tactics

POLITIHØGSKOLEN

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Preface

This report is based on my master's thesis in psychology. I got my master of philosophy in psychology degree at the Institute of Psychology, University of Oslo, in May 2006. The research that formed the basis of the thesis was conducted as a part of a larger project concerning conflict handling and problem solving among Norwegian police officers, lead by Jon Strype from the Norwegian Police University College in Oslo.

A number of people have been important throughout the research and the write-up.

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Abstract

Do police officers possess certain personality characteristics that make them unique compared to the non-police population? This question has been the subject of an extensive line of research. Several researchers have found evidence of a so-called police personality, while other researchers have failed to detect personality differences between the police and the public. Also, some researchers have found that officers differ from each other in terms of job performance, and that personality differences predict such variations in performance. This indicates personality differences *between officers*. The fact that officers have been found to be both similar to each other and different from each other can easily be a subject of confusion. The same confusion applies for the relationship between personality and police officer job performance. The current research attempted to examine further personality differences between the police and the public, using the Big-Five taxonomy of personality. There is a general consensus that the Big-Five represents the best way of measuring personality. Using this taxonomy, researchers may be able to gain systematic knowledge concerning the personality characteristics of police officers. Personality was measured using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) in Norwegian. Differences in officers' job performance were also examined, using preferences for ways of resolving conflict situations as job performance criterion. The subjects were 179 patrol officers from the police district of Hordaland. The officers differed significantly from the public on several personality dimensions, and the officers constituted a quite homogeneous group compared with the public. In addition, the officers differed from each other in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics. An exploratory factor analysis suggested that officers may be described along two dimensions, labeled *Coercion* and *Dialogue*. Personality was only weakly related to differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics.

Introduction

...there are officers who are 'experts at turning parking tickets into riots' as well as officers who can arrest extremely dangerous suspects and 'leave em laughing'. To say we know both types of officers exist, however, is not to say that we know anything systematic about their personal characteristics or methods.

(Braithwaite, 1996, p. 2)

The concept of *police personality* has been frequently discussed by police researchers (e.g. Balch, 1972; Bennett & Greenstein, 1975; Hogan & Kurtines, 1975; Twersky-Glasner, 2005). The discussion concerns whether or not police officers share certain personality characteristics that make them different from the public they serve. If a police personality really exists, does this imply that all officers behave more or less the same? Or are there differences between police officers in terms of how they choose to handle different situations? If so, are these differences related to differences in personality characteristics? These questions will be discussed in the current paper, starting with an examination of the police personality.

The Development of the Police Personality

The discussion concerning the police personality has mainly focused on two areas: its definition and its development. How should the concept of police personality be defined, and how does the police personality develop? Personality refers to "the unique organization of characteristics that define an individual and determine that person's pattern of interaction with the environment" (Kleinmuntz, 1982, p. 7). The concept of police personality refers to the question as to whether there is evidence "for describing policemen as a somewhat homogeneous group, differing psychologically from the general population and/or other occupational groups" (Lefkowitz, 1975, p. 4).

Concerning the development of the police personality, there is a discussion whether people who choose to become police officers share certain personality characteristics beforehand, or whether they become more homogenous throughout the process of occupational socialization. Two different paradigms have typically been proposed in relation to this question. According to the *psychological* paradigm, police officers share certain characteristics in advance that make them choose a career within law enforcement (Vastola, 1978); "cops are born and not made" (Bonifacio, 1991, p. 147). As people possess certain stable personality characteristics that endure throughout life (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1994), the personality characteristics that officers entail before they join the police, form the basis of the police personality.

Researchers supporting the *sociological* paradigm perceive the police personality to be a product of occupational socialization; the demands inherent in the work as a police officer shape the personality of individual officers (Twersky-Glasner, 2005; Vastola, 1978). Occupational socialization has been defined as "the process by which newcomers become full members of organizations or groups" (A. L. Parker, Mohr, & Wilson, 2004, p. 2). During the process of socialization, an individual acquires the behaviors and skills that are necessary in order to act out a certain role, as well as the norms and values of the particular group. His or her attitudes and beliefs are formed by being in an environment in which certain terms, concepts, and belief systems prevail (Radelet & Carter, 1994). The result is that police officers learn to appreciate certain values; they develop the same mind-set (Bennett & Greenstein, 1975).

Support for the psychological paradigm was found in a study in which the scores of unsuccessful applicants to the police on the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) were compared with those of the public (Hogan & Kurtines, 1975). Unsuccessful applicants were men who had applied for jobs as police officers, but who were rejected due to lack of physical alertness, or on the basis of an oral interview or an IQ test. The researchers found that the unsuccessful applicants seeking a career within the police scored above the mean of the general male population on several CPI scales (indicating good adjustment). Hanewicz (1978) also found that a certain type of people chooses the police officer profession. This type was described as being practical, impersonal, and orderly. Such people also preferred routine and rules to spontaneity and lack of structure.

Support for the socialization model of the police personality was provided in a study in which police science students' value rankings were compared with the value rankings of non-police science students and experienced officers (Bennett & Greenstein, 1975). For the majority of the values, the police science students' rankings lay between those of non-police science students and those of experienced police officers. The researchers explain this finding as being a function of the police science students still being students, but at the same time gradually adopting the values of the police. This is a form of anticipatory socialization (Bennett & Greenstein, 1975). Several other researchers agree that officers change as a result of socialization into the police force (Evans, Coman, & Stanley, 1992; Niederhoffer, 1969; Stradling, Crowe, & Tuohy, 1993).

In sum, if a police personality does exist, it seems to be a product of both disposition and occupational socialization (Atamer, 2003; Lefkowitz, 1975; Trojanowitz, 1971; Twersky-Glasner, 2005). Certain types of people choose to become police officers. Certain types are admitted to education within the police, and those who do not fit the work as a police officer, quit. In addition to this self-selection and formal selection, certain experiences and pressures make their impact on the officers. Concerning authoritarianism, for example, there are sufficient elements in the everyday work life of a police officer that may contribute to the development of authoritarian attitudes (Balch, 1972). However, it is also possible that individuals with authoritarian traits may choose to become police officers as the activities as a police officer may fit with the needs of such people. The lack of consistent findings lead C. Wilson and Braithwaite (1995) to claim that no firm conclusions yet can be made regarding where the police personality stem from.

Some attributes that are assumed to be part of the police personality have already been mentioned. What specific characteristics make up the police personality?

The Contents of the Police Personality

The police personality has been described in terms of a value orientation that makes the police distinct from the public (Bennett & Greenstein, 1975). A value has been

defined as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5). Rokeach (1973) discusses value systems as being equivalent to personality traits; a group of traits can be viewed as a system of values. According to this definition, then, police officers vary from the rest of the population in terms of the personality traits they possess. Even though police officers may not possess distinct characteristics, they may differ from the public in terms of emphasis of certain personality characteristics (L. C. Parker & Roth, 1973).

Characteristics that have been defined as common for police officers are attributes such as courage, authoritarianism, cynicism, and aggression (Lefkowitz, 1975; Twersky-Glasner, 2005), as well as suspicion, conventionality, and isolation (Evans et al., 1992; Rokeach, Miller, & Snyder, 1971; Skolnick, 1994; Vastola, 1978). Others claim officers to isolate their feelings and perceive expression of emotion as a weakness, as well as being pragmatic and action oriented (Twersky-Glasner, 2005). Several researchers agree that the literature portrays police officers as being conservative and authoritarian (Hanewicz, 1978; L. C. Parker & Roth, 1973), as well as cynical and isolated (Berg & Budnick, 1986). Rubin (1973) describes those who choose to join law enforcement as assertive and restless men with a lot of physical energy.

Skolnick (1994) believes the elements of danger, authority, and efficiency to make up police officers' working personality. These elements are combined in a distinctive way for police officers, making them view the world through certain cognitive lenses. The danger element makes officers suspicious and influences the way in which they interpret the behaviors of other people. Being suspicious of other people, officers may seek isolation from others and group together. Isolation is also stimulated by the authoritarian element of the police personality. The police are most often in command in the situations in which they are involved. This may induce a feeling of separation from the public.

Compatible with Skolnick's (1994) assumptions regarding the contents of the police personality, Lefkowitz (1975) believed that officers could be described by means

of two groups of "trait syndromes" (i.e. clusters of characteristics). Trait Syndrome I includes the following characteristics: Isolation and Secrecy; Defensiveness and Suspiciousness; Cynicism. Within Trait Syndrome II are: Authoritarianism, Status Concerns, and Violence. Lefkowitz (1975) also noted that psychopathology is less frequent among police officers compared with the rest of the population. In the same vein, police officers have been found to be both more sound and to function better socially, as measured by the CPI (Hogan & Kurtines, 1975).

Much research has been conducted with respect to the police personality, although it is hard to extract any consistencies from this research. Despite some researchers having found the same attributes to characterize police officers, the literature easily appears quite chaotic. A number of different attributes have been mentioned, and some researchers have failed to find evidence of a police personality (Mahanta & Kathpalia, 1984; Murrell, Lester, & Arcuri, 1978). Also, much of the research conducted with respect to the police personality took place between the 60s and early 80s. More research examining the police personality is thus needed.

Personality Differences Between Police Officers

The notion of police personality may give the impression that police officers possess very much the same personality characteristics. Certain types of people choose a career within law enforcement, and these people socialize into becoming even more distinct from the rest of the population. Contrary to the assumption of such homogeneity among police officers, a number of researchers have found personality differences between police officers. Such differences have typically been detected when studying the relationship between personality and job performance. The question of interest has often been whether or not personality inventories can predict which officers are going to succeed and which are not (Sanders, 2003). Job performance has typically been evaluated using criteria such as supervisory ratings, academy performance, suspension, and disciplinary actions. Officers' personality characteristics have in most studies been measured using either the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI), or the California Psychological Inventory (CPI).

Hiatt and Hargrave (1988) categorized officers into problem and non-problem officers. They found the MMPI scales *Lie* (L) and *Fake* (F) to distinguish between these two groups. (The L and F scales are validity scales that can be used to identify unusual response sets. The L scale is designed to detect individuals who try to present themselves favorably, while the F scale is meant to identify respondents that amplify their psychological problems.) The problem officers scored higher on the F scale and lower on the L scale. Non-problem officers scoring higher on the L scale and lower on the F scale than problem officers indicate that non-problem officers represent themselves more conventionally and socially desirable than do problem officers (Hiatt & Hargrave, 1988). Hiatt and Hargrave (1988) also found the *Paranoia* (Pa) scale to distinguish between problem and non-problem officers, with problem officers scoring higher than non-problem officers. The *Masculinity* (Mf) and *Hypomania* (Ma) scales also differentiated between problem and non-problem officers. Azen, Snibbe, Montgomery, Fabricatore, and Earle (1974) found that non-resignation among police officers was related to an Mf score of 56.2 or less. This scale is associated with cultural or "feminine" interests. Non-problem officers scoring low on this scale is consistent with other research (Azen, Snibbe, & Montgomery, 1973), suggesting that good policemen often are factual, practical, and unsentimental.

The IPI was used to predict police officer job performance in Appalachia, West Virginia (Mufson & Mufson, 1998). Only three IPI scales were found to predict poorer police officer behaviors. High scores on *Driving Violations* (DV) and *Lack of Assertiveness* (LA), together with low scores on the *Type A* (TA) scale, predicted low performance. Such scores predicted likelihood of terminations as well. Contrary to the findings of Mufson and Mufson (1998), Shusman, Inwald, and Landa (1984) found the *Lack of Assertiveness* (LA) scale to be associated with positive job performance in law enforcement settings.

Mills and Bohannon (1980) compared the CPI scores of officers that had completed this test while still on academy training, with supervisory ratings of leadership and "overall suitability for police work" after they had been working for one year. Three CPI scales correlated positively with ratings of leadership. These were *Tolerance* (To), *Achievement via Independence* (Ai), and *Intellectual Efficiency* (Ie). Six

CPI scales correlated positively with ratings of overall suitability for police work. These were *Socialization* (So), *Tolerance* (To), *Communality* (Cm), *Achievement via Independence* (Ai), *Intellectual Efficiency* (Ie), and *Flexibility* (Fx).

Police Types

It appears from the studies above that officers may vary in terms of personality characteristics, and that such differences at least to a certain extent predict the degree to which officers succeed in law enforcement. Consistent with the finding that police officers differ with respect to personality characteristics, different police *types* have been discussed by various researchers in the field of police research. People who belong to the same type have in common that they possess certain characteristics; a "clustering of many different traits" (Pervin & John, 2001, p. 5). Several typologies of police officers have been suggested.

Muir (1977) speculates why different police officers develop different styles of working. Some are tough and offensive, and allow themselves a great deal of freedom, while others are caring and not offensive. Muir (1977) is inspired by Max Weber's (1958) *Politics As a Vocation* in which is discussed the politician's dilemma of balancing goals and means. Common for both the police officer and the politician is that good ideals should be protected without getting cynical or bitter. "The mature man" is able to handle this conflict. This is an ideal person, and in order to become such a person, one has to strive for two virtues: "passion" and "perspective".

"Passion" may be described as engagement, and is related to the degree to which an officer is able to justify using force. Officers that have an Integrated Morality of Coercion believe that that the goal sometimes is so important that the moral of the means used to get there may suffer (Hochstedler, 1981). If necessary, such officers have no problems using force. Officers with a Conflicted Morality of Coercion, on the other hand, have problems accepting that the use of force is necessary on some occasions. The "perspective" dimension reflects the way officers view citizens (Hochstedler, 1981). On one side of this dimension is the officer with the Tragic Perspective. This officer is able to take both sides of a conflict into account; there is both an offender and something or someone provoking the offender. On the other

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side of the perspective dimension is the officer having the Cynic Perspective. Such officers divide the world into good and bad, black and white, and do not encompass empathy (Hochstedler, 1981). Within the mature man is a balance between engagement and perspective. Based on the concepts of passion and perspective, Muir (1977) develops a typology consisting of four police types. The foundation for making the typology was interviews with and observations of 28 patrol officers.

The Professional encompasses a Tragic Perspective and an Integrated Morality of Coercion (Hochstedler, 1981). This officer acknowledges that force has to be used on some occasions, but tries to restrict the use of force as much as possible by talking with colleagues and being open to new ideas. Still, the officer is aware that he or she may have to use force on some occasions in order to be fair to citizens not having the possibility to use force (Muir, 1977). *The Reciprocator* entails a Tragic Perspective and a Conflicted Morality of Coercion (Hochstedler, 1981). This officer is eager to help, but has got problems accepting that he or she sometimes has to make use of force. Such an officer believes prevention to be more important than being a fighter. *The Enforcer* encompasses a Cynic Perspective and an Integrated Morality of Coercion (Hochstedler, 1981). This officer is more a fighter than is the Reciprocator, and typically divides people into good and bad. Such officers run the risk of getting too caught up in enforcing the law, and have no problems using force. *The Avoider* has a Conflicted Morality of Coercion and hesitates to use force. Also, this officer lacks empathy for citizens (Hochstedler, 1981). A likely consequence is for such officers to do as little as possible when at work.

Finstad (2000) also discusses different police types, focusing on eight types of *bad* police officer colleagues. These types do not necessarily exist in reality, but many officers would claim to have met at least some of them. Good colleagues are also best defined by looking at their counterparts – at what they not are (Finstad, 2000). *Quick-Tempered* officers demonstrate lack of control both when they speak and when they act. They are unfriendly and not tolerant of citizens. Good colleagues are on the other hand friendly, and they deliberately try to reduce conflicts. *Over-Zealous* officers do not let any violation of the law go unnoticed. They do not make humorous comments, they check every individual that looks suspicious, and exhort youths that just "hang around". *Paralyzed* officers stand in opposition to the

good colleague that knows what needs to be done in all situations. The ability to act quickly is especially important in situations in which the police need to cooperate and act rapidly, even though they may experience fear and disgust (Finstad, 2000).

Lazy colleagues may be hard to get to work after having had lunch. They may also lack initiative when it comes to finding solutions. Such officers do not try to get in touch with citizens, and do several private errands while at work. The good colleague, on the other hand, is engaged and active, but still not over-zealous. Officers that are *Bent and not loyal towards their colleagues* are acting opposite to officers that show discretion both towards colleagues and towards the public. A good officer is loyal to the law and to superordinates even though he or she disagrees in private. Good officers are also humorous, in contrast to officers *Without humor.* Humor and irony is a way of communicating among police officers that confirms that one is a good colleague (Finstad, 2000).

Frustrated officers express frustration without trying to do something about whatever is causing them to be frustrated. This may be salary or resources, or the physical and psychological demands inherent in the work as a police officer. These are all areas in which many officers may experience frustration, but a good colleague does not reveal frustration during interactions with the public. Critique should be directed at appropriate targets at appropriate times. *The World Champion* has too much self-confidence and enjoys wearing the uniform. He or she always knows the best (Finstad, 2000).

Granér (2004) investigated the work culture among Swedish police officers. He found that police officers' ways of relating to their work can be described using the police jargon. From this jargon, Granér distinguishes between: Hungry and Tired officers, Tough and Soft officers, and Intellectual and Mechanic-Intuitive officers. *Tired* officers are characterized by lack of initiative. The *Hungry* officer, on the other hand, seeks situations in which he or she gets to do something. Before the Tired officer is willing to act, there has to be a clear case in which a crime has been committed, the perpetrator has to have been caught, and there has to be clear evidence (Granér, 2004). For the Hungry officer to do something, nothing but a

feeling that something is wrong is necessary. The Tired officer chooses to patrol in calm areas while the Hungry officer does not even have time to take a break.

Tough officers seek quick and short-term results. Physical strength is viewed as necessary in order to withhold a superior position in relation to the public. Respect comes through inducing fear among citizens. Competence is reflected in large muscles, ability to show authority, to handle technical equipment, to shoot, to handle the baton, and to drive fast (Granér, 2004). Cooperation and persuasion are keywords for *Soft* officers. Such officers believe thoughtfulness and confidence to be more important than physical strength in order to gain respect from the public. It is more important to use as little force as possible than to get quick and short-term results. The repressive functions of the police, such as arresting, reprimanding, and commanding are more important for Tough officers. For Soft officers, the service functions of the police are most important.

An *Intellectual* way of relating to the public is characterized by logical conclusions based on facts. Officers with such a style of thinking believe that work ideally should remain unaffected by personal preferences. There should be a clear work ethic that emphasizes human rights and that keeps a clear distance from racism. Use of violence is viewed negatively (Granér, 2004). A *Mechanic-Intuitive* way of relating to other people is characterized by quick decision making. Officers with such a style of thinking want knowledge that is concrete and easy to get. Mechanic-Intuitive officers do not like ambivalence, and are therefore likely to view their own perspective as the only perspective.

The Working Personality of Police Officers

The research concerning police officers' personality characteristics appears to point in two directions. On the one hand, police officers possess similar attributes that separate them from the non-police population. On the other hand, officers differ from each other in important ways. Such differences have been found to be related to the successfulness of individual officers, and have been captured in the concept of police types. Adlam (1982) provides a solution to the confusion when discussing

police officers' "working personality". He reviews two different schools of thought in psychology. One of these schools considers men to be malleable, while the other looks upon men as possessing fixed qualities. The view that men are malleable exists in contemporary social psychology as role theory. Social roles mold and constrain the individual. The fixed quality perspective focuses on people's distinctive and enduring internal characteristics. People with fixed qualities act consistently across situations, while the malleable man changes according to the situation.

Adlam (1982) applies these contrasting schools of thought to the police. The malleable man would join the police force and experience serious change as he adopts the occupational role of police officer. A fixed quality man would not undergo such change; he would join the police force and keep all of his qualities intact, independent of social situation. According to Adlam (1982), the view that people have fixed qualities is too narrow; all people possess social roles and act according to these roles. He still believes that the view of people as completely malleable is too flexible; we maintain a self that is distinct from other people even though we act out different roles. "Role players have a personality" (Adlam, 1982, p. 346), thus "...police officer A treats prisoners differently from police officer B" (Adlam, 1982, p. 346). Such differential treatment may be due to the two officers possessing different value systems or having different needs.

A police officer may thus keep his private personality, and still play the role as a police officer. This duality is summarized in the notion of a working personality (Adlam, 1982), introducing an anthropological perspective on the development of the police personality (as opposed to the psychological or the sociological perspective). Police officers adopt a role, but at the same time their personal backgrounds are important. This conclusion corresponds to the finding that officers as a group differ from the public, at the same time as individual officers differ from each other.

Background for and Description of the Current Study

The possibility that officers may possess certain common characteristics while at the same time retaining their private personalities, is highly interesting. This means

that a police personality may exist, in addition to individual officers performing differently. Still, it is hard to determine in what ways officers are similar to each other and different from each other in terms of personality characteristics, based on existing research. Researchers have focused on different personality characteristics, as well as gotten inconsistent findings. When investigating the relationship between personality and job performance, researchers have typically used different personality inventories as well as different criteria of success, making it hard to compare the studies. Also, both the predictor- and criterion variables used in such research have been criticized, questioning the validity of the results (Sanders, 2003).

Most researchers examining the relationship between personality test scores and police officer job performance have used one out of the following criteria: academy training performance, job retention, or supervisory ratings (Sanders, 2003). Certain problems are related to each of these criteria. When it comes to academy training performance, there is no evidence that such performance can be linked to field performance (Sanders, 2003). Training performance may be quite distinct from what happens on the street. The job retention criterion may be useful in that it is cost saving to be able to predict which officers are likely to quit. Still, this criterion is not informative as to what characterizes a good police officer and how to identify such officers. Job retention is also a quite extreme criterion variable that is not very common (Scogin, Schumacher, Gardner, & Chaplin, 1995). Supervisory ratings of intelligence and common sense have in several studies been found to have a negative relationship with intelligence scores (Cascio & Valenzi, 1978; Sanders, 2003). Obviously, such findings make supervisory ratings questionable when it comes to evaluating police officer performance. Supervisory ratings have also been found to be biased in the favor of men (Beutler, Storm, Kirkish, Scogin, & Gaines, 1985). Borman (1978) found that even under ideal conditions, raters disagree on the ratings.

Absences, lateness, and disciplinary interviews have also been used as job performance criteria. Such criteria do not tell whether an officer is good or bad at policing (Ainsworth, 2002). An officer that is almost never late or absent, and that is never disciplined, may still not perform well when it comes to handling people or

investigating crimes. Poor validity of job performance criteria may hide the true predictive value of personality tests (Black, 2000).

As a response to these problems, the current study aimed to provide further knowledge concerning the personality characteristics of police officers and how such characteristics are related to job performance.

In order to gain systematic knowledge about officers' personality characteristics, researchers have to employ the same personality inventory. This inventory must capture personality satisfactorily. The Big-Five personality taxonomy has been suggested as an organizing framework for personality.

The personality inventory used in the current study (the BFI) is based on the Big-Five taxonomy of personality. According to the Big-Five, personality can best be defined in terms of five broad factors. These factors are (associated labels in parentheses): Extraversion (talkative, assertive, adventurous, energetic); Agreeableness (good-natured, flexible, cooperative, caring, trusting, tolerant); Conscientiousness (responsible, careful, persevering, orderly, hardworking, planful); Emotional Stability (secure, stable, relaxed, self-sufficient, not anxious, tolerant of stress); and Openness to Experience (intellectual, curious, imaginative, cultured, broad-minded) (Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998, p. 146). The model has been widely acknowledged, and there is a broad consensus that personality best can be described using these five dimensions (Black, 2000; McCrae & John, 1992). The five factors have been detected across various languages, cultures, and nationalities (Paunonen, Jackson, Trzebinski, & Forsterling, 1992). (For a more elaborated discussion concerning the Big-Five, see Goldberg, 1993; Loehlin, 1992.)

Job performance was also examined in a different manner compared with previous studies. Instead of employing job performance criteria such as supervisory ratings or job retention, the officers' preferences for conflict resolution tactics were used as criterion. It was possible to use this criterion as only patrol officers were invited to participate in the study. In many situations police officers are both allowed and encouraged to use discretion. This is necessary because the police do not have the necessary resources to act on everything they see. Also, it would be a burden for the society if every minor offense should be sanctioned (Radelet & Carter, 1994).

Discretion concerns both *what* the police should do, and *how* they should do it (Holmberg, 1999). It has been defined as "the freedom to do what one chooses to do and to use one's personal judgment in reaching decisions" (Reed, 1980, p. 54).

Discretion is autonomy in decision making (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997), meaning that officers have quite a lot of freedom in terms of how they choose to handle most situations. This again means that the views and characteristics of individual police officers may influence how they act and react. The officers in the current study were presented with situations in which they would have the opportunity to use discretion, the intention being to reveal individual differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics.

Preferences for conflict resolution tactics have been found to be related to the way officers behave on the street (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1996). That is, the tactic that a certain officer rates as effective in a certain situation is likely to be the tactic that he or she would employ in this same situation on the street. For example, the effectiveness rating of the tactic of waiting and seeing is related to the frequency with which an officer engages in information exchange on the street (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1996). In the same manner, officers who believe in the effectiveness of mutual discussion instead of physical coercion are those who typically make supportive statements when involved in conflict situations.

The effectiveness ratings of the tactics may thus be used as indicators of how officers would behave on the field. Such ratings thus seem to be a more valid criterion of job performance, compared with the criteria used in previous research. By examining both officers' personality traits and their preferred ways of behaving in different situations, the current study aims to contribute to gaining systematic knowledge about individual officers' personal characteristics and methods, as requested by Braithwaite (1996, cited at the beginning of the introduction).

The present study also differs from previous studies in that the successfulness of the officers was not evaluated. Researchers examining personality differences between officers have typically intended to investigate whether differences in personality test scores predict which officers will succeed and which will not. Still, an indication of the successfulness of the various tactics was provided by examining the

association between preferences for conflict resolution tactics and resistance from offenders. Previous research has identified varying degrees of resistance from offenders, dependent on which conflict resolution tactic is employed in the situation (C. Wilson, 1993; C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1995). Tactics that are less confrontational have been found to be more successful (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1995).

In sum, the intention of the current study was to examine further the personality characteristics of police officers, as well as the relationship between personality and job performance. The study differed from previous research in that personality was measured in terms of the Big-Five personality dimensions, and job performance was measured in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics (indicating officers' behaviors). The successfulness of the different tactics was examined by relating them to degree of resistance experienced from offenders. Specifically, the aim of the study was to investigate the following questions:

Question 1: Do police officers' personality test scores vary from those of the non-police population?

Question 2: Do police officers vary from each other in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics?

Question 3: Do differences in police officers' personality profiles contribute to explaining the variation in preferences for conflict resolution tactics?

Question 4: Are different conflict resolution tactics associated with different levels of resistance from offenders?

Method

Subjects

The subjects in the study were 322 patrol officers working in various police stations and lensman's[1] offices in the police district of Hordaland in Norway. The response rate was 56% (179 officers).

Materials

The respondents were administered a questionnaire in which both their personality, preferred conflict resolution tactics, and degree of resistance experienced from offenders were measured.

The personality test used in the current study was the BFI. This test is based on the Five-Factor model (FFM) of personality. The measure consists of 44 items, measuring each of the five personality dimensions without facets. The items are short statements that describe people. Even though only 44 items are included in the BFI, the inventory has been found to have impressively good psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha is between .75 and .90, and test-retest reliability is between .80 and .90 (Engvik & Føllesdal, 2005). The BFI has also been found to have good concurrent validity with other inventories measuring the FFM, such as the NEO-FFI (Engvik & Føllesdal, 2005). The BFI was translated into Norwegian by Engvik and Føllesdal (2005), and Cronbach's alpha was found to be satisfactory when using the inventory in Norwegian. In a sample consisting of 389 Norwegian students and leaders, Cronbach's alpha was .82 for Extraversion, .75 for Agreeableness, .81 for Conscientiousness, .84 for Emotional Stability, and .80 for Intellect (also called Openness to Experience) (Engvik & Føllesdal, 2005).

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1   No English equivalent to the Norwegian "lensmann".

In order to investigate differences between officers in terms of perceived effectiveness of conflict resolution tactics, seven hypothetical situations were presented as scenarios in the questionnaire. These were typical situations that patrol officers are likely to experience while at work. Even though the officers may not have come across the exact situations that were described, it was expected that they had experienced similar situations. It should therefore be easy for the officers to imagine how they would react in the hypothetical situations. An element of aggression was purposely included in all of the situations in order to fulfill the requirement of aggregation (Epstein & O'Brien, 1985). Thus, the conclusions drawn from the study will only be valid for this kind of situations. As many of the situations in which the police are involved are conflict situations, the results will still apply for a large part of police officers' working life.

The situations were based on those used in an Australian study (C. Wilson, 1993), examining the relationship between officers' preferences for various conflict resolution tactics and the degree of resistance they encounter from offenders. Three police officers working in the police districts of Oslo and Asker og Bærum commented upon those of the situations from C. Wilson's (1993) study that were planned to be included in the present study. This was done in order to assure that the situations were representative of what the Norwegian police are likely to experience. Only details were changed in some situations while other situations were completely rewritten as a result of this feedback.

Following each situation were ten alternative approaches to conflict resolution. These conflict resolution tactics were based on the approaches used in the study by C. Wilson (1993). C. Wilson (1993) included 12 tactics in her study. 10 of these were adopted from a study conducted by Sternberg and Dobson (1987) while two tactics were supplemented. In the current study, nine of the 12 tactics used in C. Wilson's (1993) study were included. In the analyses, these are coined: *physical force, bargain/compromise, wait and see, third party, argue, confrontational discussion, exchange information, call for advice,* and *arrest.* One additional tactic was included, called *mutual discussion.* The following three tactics used by C. Wilson (1993) were

not included: *accept, diffuse,* and *manipulate.* These tactics were removed due to feedback from the same officers that commented upon the situations. The nine conflict resolution tactics that were included were also changed somewhat due to feedback from the officers.

The respondents were told to read each story carefully and then to rate on a scale ranging from 1-9 how effective they believed that *each* of the approaches would be in dealing with *each* conflict situation. 1 indicated an approach with minimal effectiveness, while 9 indicated an ideal approach. (See Appendix C for the situations along with the ten approaches.)

C. Wilson (1993) found that police officers' behaviors influence the degree of resistance they experience from offenders. This finding was sought replicated in the current study. Level of resistance was investigated through descriptions of eight different police situations. Like the situations measuring conflict resolution tactics, these situations were based on C. Wilson's (1993) study. The situations were somewhat changed in order to adapt them to the Norwegian culture.

For each situation (e.g. high speed pursuit) the respondent was told to remember whether he or she had experienced that particular situation twice during the last two years. If the officer had been involved in such a situation, he or she was asked to report the level of resistance encountered from the offender(s) involved in the situations the last two times that they were experienced. Level of resistance was reported by marking a number on a scale from 1-6. 1 indicated minimum amount of resistance (No contact with offender), while 6 indicated maximum amount of resistance (Attack on police with weapons or dangerous objects). (See Appendix D for the situations along with the resistance scale.) If the respondent had experienced the situation only once during the last two years, this person was allowed to mark level of resistance for this situation only. If the respondent had not experienced the situation at all during the last two years, he or she was told to skip the question.

A researcher at the research department of the Norwegian Police University College provided thorough feedback on the entire questionnaire, leading to further adjustments on several details.

Procedure

All patrol officers in the police district of Hordaland were invited to participate in the study. The study was carried out in collaboration with the Chief of Police in this police district. The officers were informed by e-mail beforehand that they in a few days would receive an electronical questionnaire by e-mail. Along with the questionnaire, a short e-mail was sent inviting the officers to participate in the study. On the first page of the questionnaire the respondents were informed about the intention of conducting the study (see Appendix A). They were also informed that participation was voluntary, and that the responses would be anonymous.

After eight days, the non-responders received a reminder. This reminder was electronically generated, as the researchers did not know which of the respondents had replied and which had not. One of the respondents reported that there were some problems using the Internet, and that answering the questionnaire therefore could be somewhat problematic. The respondents were thus informed in the reminder that they could get a paper version of the questionnaire by contacting the research department at the Norwegian Police University College. An e-mail address was provided.

A second electronically generated reminder was sent out five days after the first reminder to those who had not yet replied. The respondents were informed in the reminder that they were going to receive a paper version of the questionnaire due to the problems that had occurred filling out the questionnaire electronically. Because the researchers did not know which officers had not replied, one exemplar of the paper version was sent to all respondents. The officers were informed that those who had already replied electronically should ignore the paper version. In the final data file, it was controlled that no respondents had replied to the questionnaire more than once. Based on inspection of certain key variables, no duplicates could be found. Officers that chose to use the paper version returned the questionnaire in a sealed pre-addressed reply envelope. The respondents were given an additional two weeks to reply either electronically or on paper, after they had received the paper version. In total, they were given five weeks to reply to the questionnaire.

Results

The results from the study will be presented in five parts. First, the officers' personality test scores compared with the scores of a non-police sample; second, the degree to which officers vary in terms of conflict resolution tactics; third, the degree to which personality test scores explain variation in conflict resolution tactics (controlling for several demographic variables); fourth, the degree to which different conflict resolution tactics are related to resistance from offenders; and fifth, an exploratory part investigating evidence of different styles of policing.

Comparison Between
the Personality of Police Officers and a Reference Group

The police officers' personality test scores were compared with those of the sample on which the reliability of the BFI in Norwegian was investigated (Engvik & Føllesdal, 2005). This sample consisted of Norwegian students and leaders. In order to minimize the possible discrepancy between the group of police officers and the group of non-police officers (in order to avoid falsely assuming the existence of a police personality), reference group t-scores were constructed based on the personality test scores of both the original reference group and the police officers. Standardized (t-score) means and standard deviations for each of the five factors for both the reference group and the police officers are reported in Table 1.

Independent samples t-tests were carried out for each of the five personality factors in order to compare the t-scores of police officers with those of the reference group. The results are reported in Table 2.

Table 1: Comparison between the police sample and the reference group

Norm	Sex		E	A	C	ES	O
Ref.	F	Mean	50.07	48.79	49.41	46.82	51.52
group		N	301	303	303	303	303
		SD	9.86	10.36	9.48	9.90	10.14
	M	Mean	48.74	47.96	47.36	49.42	51.63
		N	234	234	234	234	234
		SD	10.61	9.87	10.37	9.86	9.58
	Total	Mean	49.49	48.43	48.52	47.95	51.57
		N	535	537	537	537	537
		SD	10.21	10.15	9.92	9.96	9.89
Police	F	Mean	49.90	54.84	54.97	54.13	44.53
sample		N	31	32	30	32	32
		SD	11.63	6.62	6.19	7.53	8.73
	M	Mean	50.86	55.11	54.39	56.53	45.32
		N	142	142	142	141	142
		SD	8.79	7.74	8.70	7.22	9.36
	Total	Mean	50.69	55.06	54.49	56.08	45.17
		N	173	174	172	173	174
		SD	9.33	7.53	8.31	7.31	9.23

Table 2: T-tests between the means of police and a reference group on each Big-Five dimension (SD in parentheses)

	Reference group	Police sample	t-value	Statistical significance of difference
E	49.49 (10.21)	50.69 (9.33)	1.37	n.s.
A	48.43 (10.15)	55.06 (7.53)	9.21	**
C	48.52 (9.92)	54.49 (8.31)	7.81	**
ES	47.95 (9.96)	56.08 (7.31)	11.57	**
O	51.57 (9.89)	45.17 (9.23)	7.54	**

** p<.01

In sum, there was no significant difference between the police and the reference group on Extraversion. There was a significant difference between the two groups on Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability, with police officers scoring higher than the reference group on all of these dimensions (about half a standard deviation). The officers differed the most from the reference group on Emotional Stability, implying that they are considerably more emotionally stable than the reference group. Openness to Experience was the only dimension on which the officers scored lower than the reference group (about half a standard deviation). Officers thus appear to be less open for new experiences compared with the reference group.

The results of the comparison between police officers and the reference group were the same when conducted independently for males and females. That is, the differences between male police officers and males in the reference group on the Big-Five dimensions are about the same as the differences between female police officers and females in the reference group.

Police Officers' Range of Personality Test Scores

The variance in scores for police officers and the reference group was compared for each of the five personality dimensions (see Table 2 for the standard deviations). The intention was to investigate whether police officers are more similar to each other compared with the reference group. If so, this would indicate that police officers constitute a more homogeneous group in terms of personality characteristics than does the reference group. There was a significant difference in variance between the police and the reference group on the following three dimensions: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability. There was significantly less variance in the group of police officers on these dimensions (about 75% of the variance in the reference group), indicating that the police officers are more homogenous with regard to personality characteristics.

Further, the skewness in the officers' personality test score distribution was investigated (see Table 3).

Table 3: Skewness in the distribution of personality test scores in the police sample and the reference group

	E	A	C	ES	O
Reference group	-.02	-.20	-.10	-.10	-.29
Police sample	-.20	-.68	-.34	-.36	.13

As can be seen from Table 3, the skewness was negative for *Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness,* and *Emotional Stability* in the police sample. The skewness ranged from -.20 (Extraversion) to -.68 (Agreeableness), indicating that the vast majority officers had quite high scores on these dimensions. On *Openness to Experience* the officers' mean scores were slightly positively skewed (.13). This is in line with the finding that Openness to Experience was the only dimension on which the officers' average score was lower than in the reference group. In the reference group consisting of students and leaders, the skewness was negative for all personality dimensions. The greatest skewness was -.29 (Openness to Experience). For the other factors, the skewness ranged from -.02 (Extraversion) to -.20 (Agreeableness). Thus, the police officers' personality test scores deviate from the normal distribution to a larger degree than the personality test scores of the reference group.

Internal Consistency in Police Officers' Preferences for Conflict Resolution Tactics

When examining internal consistency reliability for each of the ten conflict resolution tactics, all but one of the tactics ("Third Party") had Cronbach's alpha values above .60 (see Table 4). For nine out of ten conflict resolution tactics, it was thus justified to construct mean score indices representing officers' inclination to use the respective tactics. The Third Party tactic may be regarded as more situation specific by nature than the other tactics. This may possibly explain the low Cronbach's alpha for this tactic. Due to the low reliability, this tactic was excluded from further analyses.

Table 4: Reliability of conflict resolution tactics

	Cronbach's α	Mean (SD)
Wait & See	.71	3.43 (1.55)
Third Party	.51	2.88 (1.19)
Physical Force	.74	4.58 (1.43)
Bargain/Compromise	.77	5.21 (1.64)
Argue	.86	3.96 (1.87)
Confrontational discussion	.73	6.22 (1.55)
Mutual discussion	.77	6.58 (1.51)
Exchange information	.79	4.95 (1.65)
Call for advice	.91	2.48 (1.66)
Arrest	.64	3.51 (1.42)

Variation in Officers' Mean Ratings of the Tactics

The degree to which officers vary in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics was then examined. If the officers very much agree on the effectiveness of a given tactic, it would be meaningless to examine the degree to which personality explains the variance in preferences for that tactic (due to the fact that there would be little or no variance to explain). When investigating mean scores on each of the nine tactics (having excluded one tactic due to low reliability, see Table 4), the officers proved to vary considerably from each other.

On five of the nine tactics, the officers' mean rankings ranged from 1 to 9. The group of police officers thus made use of the entire scale when ranking the tactics (the scale ranging from 1 to 9). Some of the officers did not believe in the effectiveness of certain tactics at all, while other officers rated these same tactics as highly effective across all situations. On the other four tactics the mean scores ranged from either 2 to 9, or from 1 to 8 (in both cases providing a range of 7). Even though the officers did not vary maximally from each other in effectiveness ratings of these tactics, they made use of almost the entire scale. SD for the nine tactics varied from 1.4 to 1.9.

The effectiveness ratings of two of the tactics differed from the others in that most of the officers ranked the tactics quite high. When dividing the officers into quartiles on the tactic "I would emphasize that the person does not have any choice but doing as I say", 25% of the officers scored below 5.1. 50% of the officers scored below 6.4, and 75% of the officers scored below 7.4. On the tactic "I would be prepared to exchange opinions and give consideration to the other person's position", 25% of the officers scored below 5.6, 50% of the officers scored below 6.6, and 75% of the officers scored below 7.7. On both of these tactics, then, only one fourth of the sample gave effectiveness ratings below 5. On one of the tactics, most officers scored quite low. This was on the tactic "I would ask for advice from a senior officer". When dividing the officers into quartiles, 25% of the officers scored below 1.1, 50% of the officers scored below 1.9, and 75% of the officers scored below 3.4.

Thus, most officers would gladly tell citizens that they have no choice but following the officer's commands, as well as exchange views with the public (seeming like two quite contradictory tactics, though). The officers are not that happy involving senior officers in resolving conflicts. Even though the officers seem to agree somewhat as to the effectiveness of a few of the tactics, the officers used either all of the scale or most of the scale when ranking all of the tactics. Such disagreement as to the effectiveness of the different strategies makes it interesting to examine what factors underlie the variation in preferences for tactics. In the present study, this investigation was limited to the influence of personality characteristics on preferences for conflict resolution tactics.

The Effect of Personality on Conflict Resolution Tactics

It was controlled for the influence of gender, years of experience in the police, and size of working area on the effectiveness ratings of the different conflict resolution tactics. As these variables explained only a small proportion of the variance in preferences for tactics, it seems reasonable to assume that regarding the present set of variables, any observed relationship between personality test scores and preferences for conflict resolution tactics is due to personality differences.

The relationships between each of the Big-Five personality factors and mean effectiveness ratings of each of the nine conflict resolution tactics were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlations between personality and conflict resolution tactics

	E	A	C	ES	O
1. Wait & See	-.04	-.05	-.00	-.03	-.01
2. Physical Force	.11	-.10	-.13	-.05	.19*
3. Bargain/Compromise	-.01	.17*	.13	.12	.12
4. Argue	-.01	-.06	-.01	-.09	.07
5. Confr. discussion	.14	.02	-.09	-.08	.06
6. Mutual discussion	-.04	.13	.07	.03	.10
7. Exchange information	-.00	.22**	.10	.09	.16*
8. Call for advice	-.09	.05	.03	-.18*	-.12
9. Arrest	.00	.01	-.09	.03	-.01

Note. N=173-179

* p<.05

** p<.01

As can be seen from Table 5, only a few correlations reached statistical significance. The largest correlation was that between Agreeableness and the conflict resolution tactic "I would be prepared to exchange opinions and give consideration to the other person's position" [r=.22, n=176, p<.01]. Personality thus seems to be somewhat related to differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics. Still, the correlations are not very impressive. The restriction of range of the officers' personality test scores may have lowered the correlations that were found. In order to detect any relationships between personality and preferences for conflict resolution tactics, there has to be a certain variance in personality test scores.

**The Effect of Preferences
for Conflict Resolution Tactics on Level of Resistance**

It was controlled for the influence of gender, years of experience in the police, and size of working area on level of resistance. Gender explained only a small proportion of the variance in level of resistance encountered from offenders in one particular situation. Years of experience in the police, and size of working area were not related to level of resistance. In previous research, police officers' preferences for conflict resolution tactics have been found to predict actual behavior (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1996). Thus, it is likely that any observed association between preferences for conflict resolution tactics and degree of resistance is due to the officers having employed these preferred tactics on the field.

The relationship between preferences for conflict resolution tactics and level of resistance was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The correlation between preferences for conflict resolution tactics and level of resistance was not significant. Most officers reported low levels of resistance, with a few exceptions reporting high levels of resistance across all situations. Low variance in resistance scores may explain why no relationships were found between conflict resolution tactics and resistance. The officers that scored high on resistance may correspond to the officers that C. Wilson (1993) calls "resistance prone". As few officers in the current sample reported high levels of resistance, no conclusions can be made concerning what tactics such officers typically employ in conflict situations.

Exploring Patterns in Police Officer Conflict Resolution

When investigating police officers' preferences for conflict resolution tactics, it appeared that a substantial number of the tactics were significantly correlated. That is, a preference for one tactic (e.g. tactic 1), across situations, tended to be related to the preferences for other tactics (e.g. tactics 3 and 6). The correlation matrix is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlations between conflict resolution tactics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Wait & See	1.00								
2. Physical Force	-.06	1.00							
3. Bargain/Compromise	.30**	.00	1.00						
4. Argue	.00	.27**	.30**	1.00					
5. Confr. discussion	-.07	.41**	.02	.27**	1.00				
6. Mutual discussion	.21**	-.09	.51**	.18*	.15*	1.00			
7. Exchange information	.18*	-.11	.52**	.28**	-.10	.53**	1.00		
8. Call for advice	.06	-.01	.27**	.23**	.02	.24**	.36**	1.00	
9. Arrest	-.07	.46**	-.02	-.02	.48**	-.01	-.21**	.06	1.00

Note. N=173-179

* p<.05

** p<.01

With reference to the concept of police types, as discussed by several research-ers (Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 2000), these patterns were highly interesting. Assuming that the relationships between tactics may reflect different patterns of preferences, the indices of each of the nine tactics (having excluded one tactic due to low reliability, see Table 4) were factor analyzed[2]. In an initial principal component analysis, both the Eigenvalue criterion and the scree plot criterion suggested two factors. A Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rota-tion was thus conducted, resulting in the factor loadings presented in Table 7.

It seems like one factor is made up of tactics 1 to 5, while the other factor is made up of tactics 6 to 8. The Wait and See tactic (tactic 9) did not load substantially on any factor. This factor was thus excluded from further analyses, as recommended by Kline (1994). The tactics from 1 to 3 load the highest on the first factor, all in-

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2   The idea of a factor analytic study of police officers' preferences for conflict resolution tactics was origi-nally suggested by Jon Strype, who also performed this statistical analysis in cooperation with the author. See Strype and Abrahamsen (2006).

volving an element of information seeking. This factor was thus labeled "Dialogue". The second factor is made up of tactics being primarily related to the use of force. This factor was thus labeled "Coercion". Only three tactics make up this factor, making it statistically weaker than the first factor. Combined, the factors explain 51.1% of the variance in preferences for tactics. Factor 1 (Dialogue) explains 28.5% of the variance, and factor 2 (Coercion) explains 22.6% of the variance.

Table 7: Factor loadings of the conflict resolution tactics

	Factor 1	Factor 2
1 Exchange information	**.83**	-.23
2 Bargain/Compromise	**.68**	-.08
3 Mutual discussion	**.68**	-.05
4 Call for advice	**.41**	.04
5 Argue	**.41**	.27
6 Confrontational discussion	.10	**.70**
7 Physical Force	-.02	**.66**
8 Arrest	-.06	**.62**
9 Wait & See	.20	-.25

Mean scores (i.e. scores preserving the original scale metrics) were computed for both factors. The tactic "Wait & See" was not included in the mean scores due to the low loadings on both factors. Four styles of policing can be extracted from these two factors. One group of officers is high on the Dialogue factor and low on the Coercion factor. Another group is high on Coercion and low on Dialogue, while a third group is high on both Coercion and Dialogue. A fourth group of officers is low on both Coercion and Dialogue. The distribution of these groups in the current sample is shown in the scatterplot below (Figure 1). In the plot, each dot is constructed from respondents' scores on both factors. It should be noted that this investigation of policing styles was exploratory. That is, no hypotheses were launched beforehand as to the nature of different styles. Thus, further research should be conducted that examines more systematically such differences. Ideally,

both more scenarios and more options regarding conflict resolution tactics should be provided in order to gain further knowledge concerning different styles of policing among patrol officers.
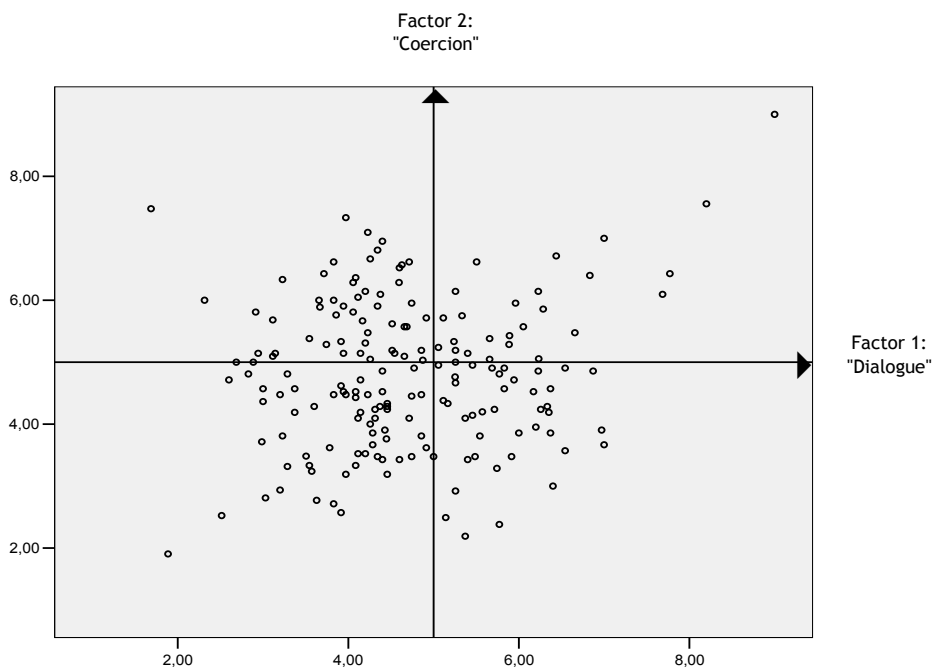

Figure 1: Distribution of officers on each of the four styles of policing

Discussion

Main Findings

The intention of the current study was to investigate police officers' personality characteristics, as well as the relationship between these characteristics and job performance. Job performance was evaluated by examining preferences for conflict resolution tactics and their association with perceived levels of resistance in conflict situations. The main findings were these:

Evidence for a police personality comes from the comparison between the police officers' personality test scores and the scores of a reference group. Police officers differed from the reference group on four of the five Big-Five personality dimensions (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience). It was also found that police officers constitute a rather homogeneous group when it comes to scores on the Big-Five personality dimensions. The variance in police officers' personality test scores was considerably lower than the variance in the personality test scores of the reference group.

Police officers differ from each other in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics. Differences in personality profiles are only weakly related to the differences in preferences for tactics. There still appears to be a certain system in officers' preferences for tactics. Officers that prefer a certain tactic across situations also prefer certain other tactics across these same situations. An exploratory factor analysis of preferences for conflict resolution tactics suggested that two separate dimensions can be construed: a preference for dialogue and a preference for coercion. This paves the way for placing police officers according to their position on these two dimensions, yielding four different styles of conflict resolution.

Different conflict resolution tactics are not associated with different levels of resistance from offenders. Level of resistance does therefore not seem to be a

useful way of evaluating police performance, based on the current findings. During the discussion, it will be further elaborated on the finding that police officers differ systematically from the public in terms of personality characteristics, supporting the notion of a police personality. The officers do not possess characteristics that are lacking in the general population, but they vary from citizens in terms of emphasis of certain characteristics. Still, even though officers are different from the public, they also seem to differ somewhat from each other. Differences in preferences for tactics are so out-spoken that one may speak of different styles of policing, as mentioned above. The challenge is to discover the factors underlying these differences, as personality did not appear to be an important predictor, at least as measured in the present study. An alternative view is that more nuanced personality models are necessary in order to capture personality differences between officers, as they were found to constitute a rather homogeneous group.

Support for the assumption that police officers may be placed in four separate groups, based on their style of resolving conflicts, would be provided if the grouping bears resemblance to the typologies discussed by other researchers. Different types of people have been detected both among police officers (Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 2000) and in the non-police population, examining differences in styles of conflict resolution (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Sternberg & Soriano, 1984).

Further Evidence of a Police Personality

The present findings without doubt support the assumption that police officers vary from the public in terms of emphasis of certain personality characteristics. It was found that police officers are significantly more *conscientious, agreeable,* and *emotionally stable,* compared with non-police officers. The only dimension on which police officers did not differ from the public, was on *Extraversion.* On *Openness to Experience,* the officers scored lower than the public. This latter finding is similar to that of Atamer (2003), that non-police students scored higher on Openness to Experience compared with police students. Topp and Kardash (1986) discovered

that police officers are more conservative than the rest of the population, indicating less openness for new experiences.

Consistent with the finding that officers are more emotionally stable compared with the non-police population, Atamer (2003) found that students in the first year at the police academy scored lower on neuroticism (indicating emotional stability) compared with the general population. Also, neuroticism decreased from the first to the second grade of the academy, indicating that officers socialize into becoming more emotionally stable. Burbeck and Furnham (1984) also found that successful applicants to the police were less neurotic compared with unsuccessful applicants. These same researchers found that even the unsuccessful applicants scored higher on Emotional Stability compared with the non-police population. These findings suggest that applicants to the police force differ from the general population in terms of emotional stability, and those who are accepted into the police are those who are most emotionally stable. Several other researchers have also found that police officers are more emotionally stable than the public (Carpenter & Raza, 1987; Evans et al., 1992; Fenster & Locke, 1973; Topp & Kardash, 1986).

In line with the current findings, Atamer (2003) also found that police students scored higher than the control group on Conscientiousness.

The personality differences that were detected between the police and the public are thus supported by previous research. As discussed in the introduction, though, relatively few researchers have used inventories based on the Big-Five dimensions when studying the police personality. Therefore, there are few studies with which the current findings can be compared.

Further Evidence of Variation in Police Officer Job Performance

The officers did not only differ from the non-police population; they also differed systematically from each other. These differences were reflected in four different styles of conflict resolution. Some of the officers rated coercive strategies highly across situations while not believing in the effectiveness of strategies involving

dialogue. Others consistently believed in the effectiveness of tactics involving dialogue, while they gave low rankings to coercive tactics. Still others were high on both the Coercion factor and the Dialogue factor. The remaining officers did not believe in the effectiveness of either coercion or dialogue. It should be noted that the four different groups are constructed using the scale means as cut-off points. Thus, an individual officer falling within one group may differ more or less from an officer falling within another group (see Figure 1).

The distinction between tactics involving dialogue and tactics involving coercion, seems somewhat similar to the distinction made by Westley (1970) between aggressive and withdrawn officers. Aggressive officers resort to violence, while withdrawn officers are more likely to listen and observe. Muir (1977) also distinguishes between the power of the sword (coercion) and the power of the word.

Comparing the Styles of Conflict Resolution With Police Officer Typologies

Several researchers have discussed different police types (Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 2000). Some of these typologies were presented in the introduction. The officers found to be *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* in the current study seem to be similar to the *Enforcer* in Muir's (1977) typology. Even though such officers do not necessarily believe in the legitimacy of all possible means, they hesitate less than others using tactics such as physical force and arresting people. The police are indeed allowed to make use of such strategies, but some officers believe more in the effectiveness of these tactics than do other officers.

The officers in the present study that are *high on Dialogue and low on Coercion* seem to be similar to the *Reciprocator* in Muir's (1977) typology. Officers high on Dialogue and low on Coercion share the preference for certain strategies with the Reciprocator. These are tactics such as talking to citizens and resolving conflicts by means of negotiation and compromise. The officers that are *high on both Coercion and Dialogue* resemble the *Professional* officer in Muir's (1977) typology. These officers believe that tactics involving force would be most effective in some situations, while they believe in the superiority of more calm strategies in other situations.

Lastly, the officers in the current study that are *low on both Dialogue and Coercion* appear similar to Muir's (1977) *Avoider.* It may simply be that such officers do not consistently believe in the superiority of one type of tactic. An alternative explanation is that they just do not care. Muir (1977) believes in the latter explanation as he claims that such individuals should not have become police officers in the first place.

Reiner (2000) also detected four different types of officers in his research. He concluded that these types were similar to those discussed by Muir (1977). This is interesting as the styles of policing found in the current research also seem comparable to Muir's (1977) typology. *The uniform-carrier* (Muir: Avoider) in Reiner's (2000) typology, does as little as necessary and seems similar to *Tired* police officers, as described by Granér (2004). *The professional policeman* (Muir: Reciprocator) is ambitious, as well as aware of all of the different elements in law enforcement. *The bobby* (Muir: Professional) is the traditional officer who uses common sense in law enforcement. *The new centurion* (Muir: Enforcer) is confident and action-oriented. This officer usually does not have problems using violence (Knutsson & Granér, 2001). Other researchers have also found a typology of police officers that resembles the types detected by Reiner (2000) (Broderick, 1977; Brown, 1981; Shearing, 1981; Walsh, 1977), supporting the validity of this typology.

Finstad's (2000) restriction to bad colleagues makes it somewhat hard to compare this typology with the styles of policing that emerged in the current study. There is no evaluation in the present study as to whether the different groups of officers represent bad or good colleagues. Still, it is possible to speculate about possible links between some of Finstad's (2000) types and the styles of conflict resolution that seemed to appear in the present study. The officers that are *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* may somewhat resemble the officers that Finstad (2000) characterizes as being *Quick-Tempered*. Quick-Tempered officers are described as being unfriendly and intolerant. Intolerance may also characterize officers high on Coercion and low on Dialogue as they believe in the superiority of tactics such as using force and making arrests. They may simply not be sufficiently patient in order to make use of more calm tactics, such as waiting and negotiating. Again, these are only speculations. Officers high on Coercion and low on Dialogue may indeed be very patient, but simply believe coercive tactics to be most effective.

Intuitively, officers *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* also seem to resemble *Over-Zealous* officers. The Over-Zealous type takes the job extremely seriously and notices everything that could be sanctioned in one way or another. Officers categorized as being *low on both Coercion and Dialogue* may be similar to the colleagues that were described by Finstad (2000) as being *Lazy*.

Comparing the policing styles with the typology described by Granér (2004), the officers that were found to be *low on both Coercion and Dialogue* may resemble *Tired* officers, as Granér (2004) describes this type as being characterized by lack of initiative. Officers that are *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* believe in the efficiency of tactics such as using physical force and arresting people. Granér (2004) describes *Tough* officers as seeking quick results. Tactics such as using physical force and arresting offenders are likely to give immediate results. Thus, there may be certain similarities between officers high on Coercion and low on Dialogue, and Granér's (2004) Tough officers.

Officers *high on Dialogue and low on Coercion* rate tactics such as talking to the person about the problem, exchanging views, and negotiating, as being more effective than the repressive tactics preferred by officers high on Coercion and low on Dialogue. Officers high on Dialogue and low on Coercion therefore appear to resemble the *Soft* officer, as described by Granér (2004). The officers *high on Dialogue and low on Coercion* also appear similar to Granér's (2004) *Intellectual* type of officer. Intellectual officers use facts to guide their behavior, and they prefer to avoid using violence. Such officers would thus be likely to engage in tactics such as talking to the person, and exchanging views. These tactics are rated as being efficient by officers high on Dialogue and low on Coercion.

J. Q. Wilson (1968) did not discuss different types of police officers, but instead various types of police departments. Different departments have different policing styles that lead officers to behave differently. Three different styles of policing are discussed. One such style is called the *Service* style, meaning that the police try to avoid arrest on minor offenses. Both the characteristics of the situation and the attributes of the offender are taken into account when determining what to do in a particular situation. The *Watchman* style is characterized by a policy of

maintaining order more than imposing law. Thus, small offenses are typically disregarded. This style of policing is quite opposite to that of the *Legalistic* style in which offenders are likely to be arrested, even when having conducted only minor offenses.

J. Q. Wilson (1968) discussed the policing styles of different police departments. Still, these different styles of policing may provide a hint as to policing styles of individual officers (Wortley, 2003). Comparing this typology with the policing styles that appeared in the current study, officers being *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* seem to have a style of policing similar to that of officers using the Legalistic style in J. Q. Wilson's (1968) terminology. Such officers prefer to use arrest as a tactic of resolving conflicts. Officers *high on Dialogue and low on Coercion* seem somewhat similar to officers using the Watchman style, as such officers are not mainly concerned about imposing law. They prefer other tactics to performing arrests in order to maintain order. Officers that are *high on both Coercion and Dialogue* appear similar to officers that employ the Service style. Such officers use dialogue in some situations while they believe in the superiority of arresting offenders in other situations.

It appears from the comparison above that the different styles of policing detected in the current study at least to a certain degree resemble the various types of officers discussed by other police researchers. In particular, the four groups of officers seem similar to the typology discussed by Muir (1977). As Reiner (2000) also detected a typology that was comparable with Muir's (1977) typology, it seems like these four types of police officers have been detected by several researchers. This certainly supports the validity of the four policing styles that were found in the current research. Hochstedler (1981) failed to replicate the types of Muir (1977) when studying the police population. Hochstedler (1981) found several more types than those detected by Muir (1977). None of the 14 types that appeared in the study of Hochstedler (1981) seemed similar to those discussed by Muir (1977). It is thus interesting that Muir's (1977) typology seemed to be replicated both in the current study and in the studies of Reiner (2000), Broderick (1977), Walsh (1977), Shearing (1981), and Brown (1981).

Muir (1977) developed his typology based on interviews and observations. Reiner (1978, 2000) also used interviews with police officers when developing his typology. Finstad's (2000) study was based on observational data, whereas Granér (2004) detected his typology in the police jargon. The fact that the styles of conflict resolution that seemed to appear in the current study were based on a different way of collecting data (self-reports) strengthens the validity of this categorization.

C. Wilson (1993) and C. Wilson and Braithwaite (1996) appear to be the only researchers that have investigated police officers' conflict resolution tactics specifically. Neither of these researchers investigated the degree to which officers show stable styles of conflict resolution. C. Wilson (1993) examined the relationship between conflict resolution tactics and level of resistance from offenders, and C. Wilson and Braithwaite (1996) investigated the difference between "skilled" and "average" officers in ways of interacting with the public. Cross-situationally constant differences in styles of conflict resolution have been found in the general population (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Sternberg & Soriano, 1984), though, making it interesting to compare the current findings with the styles detected by these researchers.

Styles of Conflict Resolution in the General Population

Sternberg and Soriano (1984) posed the question as to whether or not people possess cross-situationally consistent styles of conflict resolution. If they do, are such styles related to dispositions such as intelligence and personality? In their study, these questions were investigated providing subjects with nine stories in which conflict situations were described. The subjects were asked to rate to which degree seven different conflict resolution tactics would be effective in dealing with each of the situations. The researchers found that people possess consistent styles of conflict resolution across different situations. Also, styles of conflict resolution could be predicted from personality and intelligence variables.

Sternberg and Dobson (1987) investigated further people's styles of conflict resolution. The study differed from that of Sternberg and Soriano (1984) in that the

researchers used real life situations instead of hypothetical situations. Sternberg and Dobson (1987) conclude that "striking consistencies exist in styles of conflict resolution" (p. 802). Still, they warn that one must be "careful in specifying exactly what these consistencies are" (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987, p. 802). This warning comes from the finding that styles of conflict resolution showed only weak relationships with personality characteristics. In a second experiment, both real and hypothetical conflicts were examined, compared with only real conflicts in the first experiment. The patterns of tactics were quite similar for real and hypothetical conflicts, supporting the ecological validity of hypothetical situations (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987).

In sum, Sternberg and Dobson (1987) found that people possess strong preferences for particular styles of conflict resolution. These preferences are independent of whom the individuals experience conflict with, and preferred styles of conflict resolution can only to a small degree be predicted from ability and personality scales. Styles of conflict resolution were also independent of the conflict situations being hypothetical or real. The researchers found that the conflict resolution tactics could be described along the following two dimensions: passive-active, and mitigating-intensifying. Based on these dimensions the researchers categorized four different styles of resolving conflicts: active/mitigating, passive/mitigating, active/intensifying, and passive/intensifying (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987). These approaches to conflict resolution emerged when activity of the style was crossed with passitivity, and intensification of the conflict was crossed with mitigation.

The styles of conflict resolution discussed by Sternberg and Dobson (1987) do not seem directly comparable with the styles that appeared in the current research, partly because these researchers based their categorization on the outcome of the conflict (mitigating-intensifying). The categorization in the current study did not take into account the likely effects of the different approaches to conflict resolution. Still, there may be certain similarities between the two categorizations. Applying the passive/active distinction on the styles of conflict resolution found in the present study, officers *low on both Coercion and Dialogue* do not appear very active. As for the mitigating/intensifying dimension, one may hypothesize that officers *high on Coercion and low on Dialogue* may be at greater risk of intensifying

the conflict compared with officers *high on Dialogue and low on Coercion.* It has been found that officers that rate arrest as a highly effective tactic when it comes to resolving conflicts, are more "resistance prone" compared with officers that prefer to use tactics such as bargaining and compromising (C. Wilson, 1993).

The current findings along with the findings of Sternberg and Soriano (1984) and Sternberg and Dobson (1987), suggest that both police officers specifically and the general population display stable styles of conflict resolution. Also, individuals differ from each other in fixed ways when it comes to which tactics they typically prefer. This finding raises the question as to how such differences can be predicted. What factors underlie the differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics?

Sternberg and Dobson (1987) found that personality and intellectual variables were not very good predictors of preferences for conflict resolution tactics. They suggest that the best predictors of future styles of conflict resolution are current styles of conflict resolution. That is, the way a particular individual resolves a conflict today, is the best predictor of the way he or she will resolve a conflict tomorrow. This suggestion is based on the finding that styles of conflict resolution are consistent across situations and interpersonal relationships. The way individuals handle conflict in one situation with one particular person, thus predicts how they will handle conflict in another situation with another person. Stagner (1971) believes perceptual style to be determinant in predicting individual differences in styles of conflict resolution. People that typically experience more intense conflicts are likely to have perceptual styles that emphasize the importance of certain cues across various situations, while at the same time paying less attention to other cues.

Other researchers, however, have found personality factors to predict styles of conflict resolution. Terhune (1970) investigated whether personality variables are related to ways of resolving conflict. He found that personality characteristics *do* predict styles of conflict resolution. In fact, he claims that there is no longer a need to demonstrate that personality is important in predicting how people behave in conflict situations. What remains to be established is the specific nature of the relationship between personality and behavior in such situations. This is not to say

that situational factors are not important; Terhune (1970) stresses the value of situational influences while also believing in the importance of personality variables.

Sternberg and Soriano (1984) also found personality to be related to conflict resolution tactics. The findings from both the current study and the study of Sternberg and Dobson (1987) indicate the opposite: that personality is not very important in predicting conflict resolution tactics. Still, it is interesting that personality variables *have* been found to be related to the way people resolve conflicts. This suggests that personality may be of importance in a manner that was not detected neither in the current study nor in the study of Sternberg and Dobson (1987).

Ecological Validity

More research is needed in order to investigate whether the findings from the current study apply for other Western countries as well. It might be expected that somewhat similar findings would appear as officers from different Western countries work within cultures that are quite alike. Still, this assumption remains to be examined. It may be that some Western countries differ in important ways from the Norwegian culture. The findings concerning police officers' personality characteristics and methods may thus differ somewhat from what was found in the current study. Police officers working in the United States for example, are daily exposed to more violence and brutality compared with Norwegian officers. This makes the work as a police officer more dangerous. Thus, different attributes and abilities may be required from American police officers, making it possible that the characteristics of the police personality, as found in the present study, would differ somewhat. The status of being a police officer may also vary from one country to another, influencing which individuals choose a career within law enforcement. Both the length and the content of education may also differ, affecting the socialization process that the cadets undergo.

Also, the American police may diverge from the Norwegian police in terms of which ways of resolving conflicts they consider most efficient. This applies for all countries in which violence is more brutal and more prevalent than in Norway.

For example, it has been found that police officers from the United States are more ready to use violence compared with European officers (Cedermark & Klette, 1973). If officers working in such countries differ from Norwegian police in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics, the four different styles of conflict resolution that were detected in the current study, may not appear. The same styles are probably more likely to be found in other Scandinavian countries, as well as other countries in which the criminal activity is somewhat alike to that of Norway. This assumption remains to be investigated, as researchers have reported a quite similar categorization when studying officers in non-Scandinavian countries (e.g. Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1978, 2000).

In addition to the possibility of differences between countries, there may also be national differences between the personalities and working styles of police officers. The respondents in the current study were all patrol officers in the police district of Hordaland in Norway. For practical reasons, a representative sample could not be reached. Still, there is no reason to believe that police officers in Hordaland differ significantly from police officers in other districts of Norway. The second largest town in Norway (Bergen) is situated within this police district, and there are several built-up areas and rural districts in Hordaland. 14% of the officers in the sample worked at a police station or a lensman's office that covered a rural district. 31.8% worked at a police station or a lensman's office that covered a built-up area. 9.5% worked in a small town, and 44.1% worked in an urban area. The officers seem to be spread quite equally between rural districts/built-up areas and towns (small and large). Thus, there is reason to believe that the results would apply for other samples of Norwegian police officers, both those working in small areas and those working in towns. Still, regional differences in officer views of conflict resolution cannot be ruled out based on the current sample.

The sample seems to be representative of officers of both sexes with varying degrees of experience. 35.2% of the officers in the current sample had been working in the police for 7 years or less. 29.1% had been working in the police between 8 and 19 years, and 31.8% had been working in the police for 20 years or more. 3.9% did not state how long they had been working in the police. The vast majority of respondents in the current study were males (79.3%). 17.9% of the officers in the

sample were females. 5 officers did not report their gender. With only 32 of the respondents being women, the comparison between males and females should be interpreted with caution. Only about 13% of the entire Norwegian police force are women, though (Finstad, 2000). The proportion of females in the current sample is thus representative of the Norwegian police force. Still, one should not draw any firm conclusions concerning gender differences, or the lack of such, with the female part of the sample consisting of quite few women.

Limitations

The relationship between personality and preferences for conflict resolution tactics was investigated in the current research using hypothetical situations. Using scenarios is advantageous in that they are standardized, as well as easily administered. Still, this benefit may be at the cost of external validity (A. L. Parker, Mohr, & Wilson, 2004). The possibility that officers would use other tactics on the field than those being rated as most efficient in the questionnaire, cannot be excluded. Still, officers' preferences for conflict resolution tactics have been found to predict the way they behave on the street (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1996). Sternberg and Dobson (1987) also found evidence to support the ecological validity of hypothetical situations. Thus, there is reason to believe that the respondents' ratings indicate how they would actually respond on the field. This assumption should be further examined though, given the fact that there may be several factors influencing officers' actual behaviors on the street. These may be factors such as temperature and noise, as well as the presence of spectators and other police officers (C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1995). Such influences are impossible to take into account when filling out a questionnaire.

In addition to the problems mentioned above using hypothetical situations, there are several deficiencies related to the use of questionnaires in data gathering. Such limitations apply to the current research as well. These are problems related to causal relationships, the possibility of third variables influencing observed relationships, those who do not respond differing in important ways from those who do respond, as well as the opportunity of respondents to distort their responses (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). Response distortion has been frequently discussed by

researchers, especially in the context of personality tests being used to predict job performance. Rosse, Stecher, Miller, and Levin (1998) discuss the possibility that job applicants may report personality characteristics that are slightly more positive than the reality. Applicants may also respond in a manner that reflects the characteristics they believe people with a certain role should possess. Such socially desirable responding always constitutes a challenge when data is gathered by means of self-reports. This way of responding has been defined as a "tendency to endorse items in response to social or normative pressures instead of providing veridical self-reports" (Ellingson, Smith, & Sackett, 2001, p. 122).

Even though the subjects in the current study were incumbents and not job applicants, it is still possible that their responses were somewhat distorted in a socially desirable manner. The officers may picture an ideal police with certain personality characteristics as well as certain ideal ways of behaving. Also, all officers have gone through extensive training in which they have learnt how to proceed in different situations. Such training combined with individual officers' perceptions of how an ideal police would behave, may lead them to believe that certain ways of acting are preferable (an assumption that certainly may be true). The respondents may thus rate certain tactics as effective, independent of these strategies being the ones that they would actually employ on the field.

In the same manner, the officers may report personality characteristics that they believe to be indicative of the ideal police. Such characteristics may or may not correspond to the officers' real attributes. Finally, the officers may report having experienced a certain level of resistance from offenders that match the level of resistance that they believe the ideal police would experience. From the present data, it may seem like the ideal level of resistance is quite low. Still, it is perfectly possible that the respondents reported both personality characteristics, preferences for conflict resolution tactics, and levels of resistance that correspond completely to reality. However, the possibility that the responses are somewhat distorted should not be excluded.

Even though researchers have found that people are able to provide socially desirable responses when told to (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994;

Rosse et al., 1998), they do not necessarily do so in real life (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Reiss, 1996). Even if they do, several researchers have concluded that socially desirable responses do not distort the criterion-related validity of personality inventories (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Hogan, Hogan, & Roberts, 1996; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990). This is opposite to the traditional view that socially desirable responses are destructive for the validity of a questionnaire (Borkenau & Amelang, 1985). Also, it has been found that scores on social desirability scales are correlated with scores measuring personality characteristics (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Dicken, 1963; McCrae & Costa, 1983; Nicholson & Hogan, 1990; Ones et al., 1996; Smith & Ellingson, 2002). Social desirability thus seems to represent personality trait variance instead of error variance (Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999; Hogan, 1991), meaning that socially desirable responding does not threaten the construct validity of personality inventories (Smith & Ellingson, 2002). McCrae and Costa (1983) actually found that validity *decreased* when socially desirable responses were controlled for. It has also been found that police officers portray themselves in a less socially desirable manner compared with the non-police population (Mahanta & Kathpalia, 1984).

These findings concerning the small (or non-existent) impact of socially desirable responses are good news to the present research, given that several respondents seemed to view the questionnaire as some sort of an evaluation. This was despite them being told specifically that they were not being evaluated. The assumption that the respondents may have felt evaluated is based on the fact that quite many of the respondents used the extra space that was available in relation to each situation to explain in detail how they would proceed in the exact situation. Some of the officers even included law paragraphs to support their decisions, making the responses look somewhat like the answers to a school exam. Such detailed responses certainly give the impression that the respondents tried to give the "correct" answers.

Many respondents also described behavioral chains in relation to the situations. In addition to rating the effectiveness of the different tactics, they described that they first would use one tactic. If that did not work, they would use another tactic. Analyzing our data quantitatively does not permit the inclusion of such behavioral

chains. Some officers also included additional details in the situations, as they regarded these details as determinants for their behaviors.

Such supplementation of information from respondents reflects one important limitation of questionnaires: the researchers decide which details should be included and which should not. Even though the respondents are invited to elaborate on some of the answers, the inclusion of open-ended questions is very much limited. Thus, the researchers largely decide upon the pool of answers that the respondents may choose from, not allowing for much freedom for the respondents (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). Observing officers in real-life situations would thus provide an important supplement to the present research.

Conclusion

Police officers seem to be different from the non-police population in terms of personality characteristics. Mean scores on the Big-Five personality dimensions differed significantly from those of a reference group on four of the five dimensions. This provides evidence of a police personality, as discussed in the literature. Police officers were also found to differ from each other in terms of preferences for conflict resolution tactics. Four different *styles* of conflict resolution were identified from these differences in preferences. Support for this grouping of officers was found when comparing the styles with other typologies proposed by police researchers (Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 2000). Also, research on conflict resolution styles in the non-police population have found that people vary from each other in stable ways when it comes to how they resolve conflict situations (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Sternberg & Soriano, 1984).

Personality test scores were not strongly related to differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics. Police officers appear to constitute a rather homogeneous group when personality characteristics are measured in terms of the Big-Five personality dimensions. This homogeneity is evident in the low variance in personality test scores, and may be the reason why personality fails to predict more variation in preferences for conflict resolution tactics. If personality differences do underlie the differences in style of conflict resolution, more fine-grained models of personality may be necessary in order to capture these differences.

Different conflict resolution tactics were not associated with different levels of resistance from offenders. Future research should examine further the relationship between conflict resolution tactics and resistance, as some researchers have found differences between tactics in terms of the level of resistance they elicit from offenders (C. Wilson, 1993; C. Wilson & Braithwaite, 1995). Also, the successful-

ness of different tactics may be investigated by other means than the level of resistance they are associated with. Knowledge concerning which officers prefer which tactics, along with knowledge concerning the successfulness of different tactics would enable police administrators to include in the police force those individuals that are likely to make use of successful tactics in conflict situations. This increases the likelihood of adaptive outcomes.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Information at the first page of the questionnaire

TIL DEG SOM ARBEIDER I POLITIETS ORDENSTJENESTE I HORDALAND POLITI-DISTRIKT!

Denne undersøkelsen gjennomføres av Politihøgskolen i samarbeid med politimesteren i Hordaland.

Undersøkelsen setter søkelys på ordenstjenesten, særlig politiets egne oppfatninger av møtet med publikum. Målet er å øke kunnskapen om konflikthåndtering og problemløsning i politiets ordenstjeneste. Resultater skal formidles til ansatte i politidistriktet og publiseres i Politihøgskolens forskningsserie og i internasjonale fagtidsskrifter. Deler av undersøkelsen skal også inngå i en mastergradsavhandling ved Psykologisk Institutt, Universitetet i Oslo.

Anonymitet/personvern
Undersøkelsen er anonym. Utfylte skjemaer kommer tilbake uten avsender, og det er heller ikke mulig på annen måte for forskerne å koble innsendte svar til deltakernes identitet. Resultater vil likeledes rapporteres på samlenivå, dvs. som gjennomsnitt, prosenter osv., slik at det ikke er mulig å identifisere enkeltsvar i rapporter fra undersøkelsen. Deltagelse i undersøkelsen er frivillig.

Utfylling av nettskjemaet
Nettskjemaet fylles ut ved å sette kryss i ruter, eller ved å velge blant svaralternativene i nedtrekksmenyer. Les instruksjonene nøye! Svar det som virker umiddelbart riktig for deg uten å bruke for lang tid på hvert spørsmål!

Du blar til neste side i skjemaet ved å trykke EN GANG på "Neste"-knappen i skjemaet. Det anbefales ikke å bruke nettleserens "Back"-knapp under utfyllingen av skjemaet. Dersom du bruker den, må du oppdatere siden i nettleseren (F5-knappen) for å komme tilbake til skjemaet.

Dersom du må avbryte utfyllingen av skjemaet, kan du komme tilbake til der du stoppet ved å trykke på linken i epostinvitasjonen på nytt.

Når du er ferdig med skjemaets siste side, trykker du på "Send".

Appendix B: Demographic variables

Kjønn:

☐ Kvinne   ☐ Mann

Hvor mange år har du arbeidet i politiet?

Hva slags område dekker lensmannskontoret/politistasjonen/nærpolitistasjonen der du jobber?

☐ Bygd

☐ Tettsted

☐ Liten by (færre enn 50 000 innbyggere)

☐ Stor by (flere enn 50 000 innbyggere)

Hvor mange ansatte er i operativ tjeneste ved lensmannskontoret/politistasjonen/nær-politistasjonen der du jobber?

☐ Færre enn 15

☐ Mellom 15 og 29

☐ Mellom 30 og 59

☐ Flere enn 60

Hvor godt trives du alt i alt med jobben din i politiet?

☐ Jeg trives svært godt

☐ Jeg trives ganske godt

☐ Jeg trives verken godt eller dårlig

☐ Jeg trives ganske dårlig

☐ Jeg trives svært dårlig

Appendix C: Measure of police preferences for various modes of conflict resolution

Situation 1:

Politiet blir tilkalt til en skolegård i helgen. En forbipasserende bilist har observert en ungdom med et stort balltre som slår løs på en lyktestolpe i skolegården. Politiet nærmer seg forsiktig ungdommen som ser ut til å være i 15-årsalderen. Et par andre gutter er også på stedet. De trekker seg litt bort fra gutten med balltreet, samtidig som de kommer med sinte tilrop til han. Politiet ber han legge fra seg balltreet, noe han gjør. De spør han hva han heter, og hva han holder på med. Ungdommen svarer kort at det har de ikke noe med.

1 = minimalt egnet tilnærming - 9 = ideell tilnærming

Tilnærminger[3]:

1. Jeg ville ha sett ting an og gitt det hele mer tid, for å se om situasjonen forbedret seg

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Wait & See

2. Jeg ville ha benyttet meg av en tredjemann, f.eks. helsepersonell, barnevern eller foresatte for å finne den beste løsningen

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Third Party

3. Jeg ville ha forsøkt å få det som jeg ville ved å bruke en viss mengde fysisk makt

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Physical Force

4. Jeg ville ha forsøkt å løse konflikten ved hjelp av forhandlinger og kompromiss

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Bargain/Compromise

5. Jeg ville ha vært forberedt på å ta en krangel for å forsøke å utøve kontroll og autoritet

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Argue

6. Jeg ville ha påpekt at vedkommende ikke hadde annet valg enn å gjøre som jeg sa

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

    Confrontational discussion

---

3   The labels on the tactics were not included in the questionnaire.

7. Jeg ville ha snakket med vedkommende om problemet

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Mutual discussion

8. Jeg ville ha vært villig til å utveksle synspunkter og å ta i betraktning vedkommendes perspektiv i saken

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Exchange information

9. Jeg ville ha bedt om råd fra en overordnet politjenestemann

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Call for advice

10. Jeg ville ha informert personen om at han eller hun var arrestert

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Arrest

Situation 2:

Klokken elleve en lørdags kveld kjører politiet patrulje i en bakgate. De følger en bil langs en vei helt til bilen møter et stoppskilt. Bilen fortsetter forbi trafikkskiltet uten å sakke ned. Politibetjentene stanser bilen. I bilen sitter en mann, midt i trettiårene, kledd i dress. De ber om å få se førerkortet hans og spør hvorfor han ikke stoppet ved stopp-skiltet. Mannen virker sur og svarer at han ikke har førerkortet på seg. Han forteller at han har jobbet sent, og at han måtte skynde seg hjem ettersom kona hadde venner på besøk, og han var sen. "Dere har gjort meg ennå senere nå", roper han, "det var ingen på veien, og jeg kjørte ikke for fort. Dere politifolk burde ha tatt virkelig kriminelle og ikke pirket på hardt arbeidende menn som meg. Jeg kommer til å klage på dere".

Situation 3:

Politiet passerer en fotballklubb klokken seks en søndag morgen. En mann i slutten av trettiårene ligger på trappa og synger klubbsangen så høyt han kan. Klubben ligger i et overklassestrøk og deler gjerde med et pleiehjem rett på siden. Politiet nærmer seg mannen og ber han være stille og dra hjem. Mannen svarer med å synge enda høyere. En av politibetjentene bøyer seg ned og drar han opp på beina. Mannen trekker seg raskt bort og slår politibetjentens hånd av skulderen sin. Han knytter nevene og inntar en kampholdning.

Situation 4:

To politibetjenter patruljerer området på en fotballkamp når de observerer en ung mann i begynnelsen av tyveårene, som tømmer søppelet fra en stor søppelkurv lokalisert nær inngangen til området. Det virker som om han ser etter tomflasker, og han kaster søppelet på bakken mens han leter. Politibetjentene nærmer seg gutten som, når han ser politibetjentene, forsøker å flykte. En av politibetjentene får tak i guttens arm idet gutten dytter seg forbi han. Gutten reagerer ved å forsøke å bite politibetjentens hånd.

Situation 5:

Politiet blir tilkalt til et varemagasin for å håndtere en kvinne i femtiårsalderen som nekter å forlate lokalene. Hun har også revet ned varer fra hyllene. Når politiet kommer, forklarer hun at hun er med i en enslig protest mot måten butikken "svindler kundene på". Politibetjentene informerer henne om at hun gjør seg skyldig i eiendomskrenkelse, og at hun blir nødt til å gjennomføre protesten på en annen måte. Kvinnen roer seg litt, men anklager politibetjentene for "delaktighet i en kapitalistisk sammensvergelse for å holde arbeiderne nede".

Situation 6:

Politiet observerer en personbil som beveger seg langs hovedveien i en liten by. Den kjører litt over fartsgrensen i buss- og taxifeltet. Jenta som kjører den forfalne Volkswagen, er omtrent 19 år gammel. Politiet stanser bilen og spør jenta om hvorfor hun kjører for fort og i feil felt. Jenta ser redd ut og kikker rundt i bilen flere ganger. Politibetjentene ber henne om å gå ut av bilen, men hun nekter. En av politibetjentene åpner døren og drar jenta ut av bilen. Hun blir da hysterisk og forsøker å slå politibetjenten som fortsatt holder armen hennes.

Situation 7:

Politiet blir tilkalt til den lokale ungdomsskolen av rektoren. Når de kommer inn på kontoret hennes, finner de rektoren som krangler med en gutt i 16-årsalderen. Rektoren forteller politiet at gutten var blitt observert idet han forsøkte å bryte seg inn i kantinen. Rektoren vil at politiet skal snakke med gutten om de mulige konsekvensene av slik atferd ettersom gutten hadde en lang historie med dårlig oppførsel. Gutten avbryter

rektoren mens hun gjenforteller historien til politiet og sier: "jeg er ikke nødt til å høre på dette gamle stabeistet. Faren min kommer til å få deg i trøbbel fordi du tilkalte politiet. Jeg gjorde ikke noe. Og uansett sier faren min at politiet suger". Gutten viser fingeren til læreren idet han reiser seg. Han går mot døren og dytter i den ene politibetjenten som står i døråpningen, for å komme forbi.

Appendix D: Measure of resistance police encounter

I politiets møte med gjerningsmenn kan tjenestemenn møte forskjellig grad av motstand. I den neste seksjonen er det beskrevet åtte forskjellige situasjoner som politiet kan oppleve. For hver type hendelse ber vi deg tenke på om du har opplevd hendelsen i løpet av de to siste årene. Dersom du har opplevd hendelsen i løpet av de to siste årene, spør vi om hva slags motstand du møtte fra gjerningsmennene som var involvert i hendelsene de to siste gangene de inntraff. Ranger på en skala fra 1 til 6 hvor mye motstand du møtte. Skalaen er altså slik:

1: Ingen kontakt med gjerningsmann (f.eks. gjerningsmann dro, falsk alarm)
2: Kontakt, men ingen motstand (full føyelighet)
3: Verbal motstand (f.eks. utskjelling, krangel)
4: Noe fysisk motstand (noe kamp)
5: Fysisk angrep på politi (ingen våpen eller farlige gjenstander)
6: Angrep på politi med våpen eller farlige gjenstander

Angi den alvorligste formen for motstand du møtte i hver situasjon.

Situation 1:

Har du i løpet av de to siste årene deltatt i forfølgelseskjøring?

☐ Ja
☐ Nei

Situasjon: Forfølgelseskjøring, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

1: Ingen kontakt med gjerningsmann (f.eks. gjerningsmann dro, falsk alarm)
2: Kontakt, men ingen motstand (full føyelighet)
3: Verbal motstand (f.eks. utskjelling, krangel)
4: Noe fysisk motstand (noe kamp)
5: Fysisk angrep på politi (ingen våpen eller farlige gjenstander)
6: Angrep på politi med våpen eller farlige gjenstander

Husker ikke

Situasjon: Forfølgelseskjøring, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

    0: Har ikke opplevd dette to ganger de siste to årene
    1: Ingen kontakt med gjerningsmann (f.eks. gjerningsmann dro, falsk alarm)
    2: Kontakt, men ingen motstand (full føyelighet)
    3: Verbal motstand (f.eks. utskjelling, krangel)
    4: Noe fysisk motstand (noe kamp)
    5: Fysisk angrep på politi (ingen våpen eller farlige gjenstander)
    6: Angrep på politi med våpen eller farlige gjenstander
    Husker ikke

Situation 2:

Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å håndtere bråk på utested?

    ☐ Ja
    ☐ Nei

Situasjon: Bråk på utested, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Bråk på utested, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 3:

Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å gripe inn i familievold?

    ☐ Ja
    ☐ Nei

Situasjon: Familievold, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Familievold, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 4:
Har du i løpet av de to siste årene bistått med tvangsinnlegging av akutt psykotisk mann?
☐ Ja
☐ Nei

Situasjon: Bistått med tvangsinnlegging av akutt psykotisk mann, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Bistått med tvangsinnlegging av akutt psykotisk mann, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 5:
Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å gripe inn mot skadeverk?
☐ Ja
☐ Nei

Situasjon: Skadeverk, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Skadeverk, siste to år
Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 6:
Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å gripe inn mot vold på åpen gate?
☐ Ja
☐ Nei

Situasjon: Vold på åpen gate, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Vold på åpen gate, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 7:

Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å assistere en forretningseier med å fjerne en uønsket person?

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

Situasjon: Fjerne uønsket person, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Fjerne uønsket person, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

Situation 8:

Har du i løpet av de to siste årene vært med på å pågripe en person for besittelse av narkotika?

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

Situasjon: Pågripelse for besittelse av narkotika, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann siste gang:

Situasjon: Pågripelse for besittelse av narkotika, siste to år

Jeg møtte følgende grad av motstand fra gjerningsmann nest siste gang:

SOLVEIG **ABRAHAMSEN**

POLICE **PERSONALITY**

There has been an ongoing debate as to whether or not police officers possess a distinct *police personality*. The research is equivocal on this issue. Further complicating the matter, important personality *differences* have been detected between individual police officers, predicting differences in officers' success at work.

This report describes further research on the police personality. Officers' job performance is also examined, measured in terms of preferences for different tactics in conflict situations. Finally, the relationship between personality and preferences for conflict resolution tactics is investigated. In the report is described how police officers diverge from the public when it comes to personality characteristics, supporting the notion of a police personality. The research also reveals that officers differ from each other in terms of which strategies they believe to be effective in conflict situations. Personality is not strongly related to such differences in preferences for conflict resolution tactics.