Attitudes Toward the Policeman Among First Grade Children

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ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICEMAN AMONG FIRST GRADE CHILDREN

by

Rose Mary Z. Finnegan

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

A 2x2x2 (sex x race x class) factorial analysis of variance was the design used to study, by both a verbal and a nonverbal technique, the attitudes toward the police among first grade children. It was hypothesized that black and/or lower class children would have more negative attitudes toward the police. The results of the verbal inquiry supported the hypothesis and indicated that lower class subjects (p.< .005) verbalized less favorably concerning the role of the policeman while black subjects (p.< .10) also tended to evaluate the role of the policeman more negatively. The results of the nonverbal measures did not support the hypothesis. White subjects (p.< .10) tended to place more distance between the self-figure and that of the policeman and the scores of lower class white boys brought about a marginally significant (p.< .10) sex x race x class interaction effect. A second measure using the nonverbal technique indicated that white subjects (p.< .05) placed more intervening figures between the self-figure and that of the policeman. The relationship between the two nonverbal measures was highly significant (p.< .0001) but there was no relationship found between the verbal and nonverbal measures.
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Since the viability of a democratic society depends on the cooperation of the citizens with those who exercise the legitimate power of government, the individual's attitudes toward authority figures are an important aspect of his citizenship. These attitudes, according to much of the psychoanalytic literature, are laid down largely in the earliest period of life, especially in the period before the sixth year (McGuire, 1968). If this is so, one might then assume that first graders have established attitudes toward common authority figures in their environment and that these attitudes may be investigated.

It is reported in the daily press (Lubasch, 1970) and in professional journals (Black and Labes, 1965) that an extremely difficult relationship between the police and the community exists in the mainly black inner city areas of our country. It is of practical and theoretical interest whether the children in such a community differ significantly from all others in their attitudes toward the police. It is the purpose of this study to systematically explore the attitudes of first graders, black and white, lower and middle class toward the role of the policeman, by using a verbal and a nonverbal technique.
Attitudes Toward the Police

The manner in which 90 third graders perceived the police was studied by Derbyshire (1968,b). Thirty of his subjects were Negro children from an area of low social and economic stability; 30 were Mexican-American children living in an area of average or lower social and economic stability; 30 were Caucasians living in an area of high social and economic stability. The task of drawing a policeman at work was introduced as an art lesson by the children's teacher. The drawings were rated according to a "general antipathy score." Derbyshire and three resident psychiatrists in a social psychiatric training program did the rating. Antipathy was judged according to the children's feelings as reflected in the content of their drawings as well as in the affective implications of color, movement and line variations.

It was found that the Negro group and the Mexican-American group showed statistically comparable high degrees of antipathy. Analysis of picture content made by one independent rater, indicated that the Negro group had significantly more concern with aggressive police behavior than either the Mexican-American or Caucasian group. The "aggressive" and "assistance-with-negative-overtones" categories were combined; both Mexican-American and Negro children were found to differ significantly from the middle class white American children. The drawings made by the latter displayed a high interest in the "assistance-positive" category and the "neutral-behavior" category.

These findings would seem to confirm the impression that minority groups perceived the police less positively than do the majority of mainstream middle class Americans. Derbyshire wisely used nonverbal material
in judging his subjects' attitudes since, as Webb et al. (1966, p.176) have noted, "When one is working within a single society, there is always the question whether the differential verbal skills of various subcultures will mislead the investigator." Even in a task of drawing a picture, however, there is the possibility that the motor development, previous instruction and experience in art, and rapport with the teacher who assigned the task, may have influenced the children's productions. It is hoped that the non-verbal technique used in the present study has obviated this possibility.

Another possible bias is mentioned in a study by Rubin (1969,b). She found that underachieving primary children tended strongly to answer an attitude questionnaire about school with a "halo effect." The children replied in the direction they perceived as being approved by adults. These youngsters said that they liked school and that reading was easy for them whereas the opposite was plainly obvious. It was concluded that in this instance, a verbal measure of attitude yielded inaccurate results.

It might have been interesting if Derbyshire had used a verbal measure of attitude in addition to the pictorial one and had compared the relation between them. For it is commonly understood that when a hypothesis can survive complementary methods of testing, it probably has greater validity.

It appears that Derbyshire has confounded the two variables of ethnicity and class. Without experimental groups designed to control for these separate variables, the results are essentially journalistic. The median inter-rater reliability reported (in the .60s) is only moderately high. The subjectivity of the scoring of antipathy raises concern about validity; the use of a single rater for the analysis of content precluded the possibility
of establishing reliability for that score.

In a study of 92 middle class urban children in a Northeastern nursery school, Goodman (1959) assumed that the authority figures most important to a four-year old were mother, father, teacher and policeman, in that order. Such appeared to be the case. The policeman was a "shadowy figure on no more than the periphery of perception for some 45% of the children (p. 249)."

The majority of children appeared to value most of the figures in a positive way. Only one social class of subjects was studied. No reference was made as to the racial composition of the group. The interview seemed to consist solely of verbal questions.

In a study of four-year old Negro nursery children living in a public housing project on the West Side of Chicago, Costello (1969) using the social role questions of the Caldwell Preschool Inventory, found that more of the children were able to give a relevant answer to an inquiry about "mother" than about any other adult. Responses to an inquiry about the policeman were next in frequency. Costello found that the majority of children defined a policeman's role negatively, with increasing frequency over a period of time, 89% in October compared to 93% the following June. Again, only a single social class within an ethnic group was studied. The results, in terms of the child's awareness of the nature of the different roles and the character of his attitudes, are in sharp contrast to those of Goodman's (1959) study.

In a descriptive study of political socialization, Hess and Torney (1968) surveyed 12,000 white children in primarily non-ethnic city neighborhoods in the four major geographical regions of the United States.
exploratory interviews included questions about the subjects' experience with policemen. The final questionnaire included items regarding attitudes toward the policeman. The results led the authors to conclude that the policeman is a salient political figure for the young child: he believes that the policeman is nurturant and that his job is to help persons in trouble and to prevent crime. The subjects did not dwell on his more punitive functions. They expressed a strong personal liking for the policeman, but this liking declined steadily throughout the years of elementary school. Girls were found to perceive the policeman as more helpful and competent and to consider him more likeable than the boys did. While lower class subjects expressed more positive feelings about the policeman than did the middle class children, the lower class children tended to view the role of the policeman as punitive.

Derbyshire (1968,b) found that Mexican-American adolescent males used more negative adjectives than females when describing the police.

Easton and Hess (1965) found that the policeman and the President are two authority figures with which the child is quite familiar and, at the early grades, just about the only two for most children. They found that most children felt uniformly warm and positive toward all figures in their political community. There was scarcely a note of dissatisfaction throughout all the elementary grades.

Marvick (1965) surveyed certain attitudes characterizing the political outlook of a group of American Negroes, in comparison with that of a white group deliberately matched with the group of Negroes on five dimensions—geographical region, locale, age, income level and sex. Of the white count-
erpart group, however, only 58% held jobs as low in status as those held by the Negroes, and only 44% had comparable educational handicaps. Forty-six per cent of the Northern Negro subjects felt they would receive equality of treatment from the police in contrast to 84% of Northern whites. The Negroes were also less confident, 29% compared to 51%, than the Northern whites that the police would listen to them and take their views seriously. The author notes that there is a "level of caution and distrust among Negro Americans toward representatives of the law with whom they have had dealings which may well be substantially realistic (p. 188)."

Alex (1967) found in a sociological study of the black policeman, that in the Negro community, he ceases to be a Negro when he becomes a policeman and works in the ghetto. He is then viewed as an agent for white society who must constantly be reminded of his Negro identity. Young Negro offenders are likely to create special difficulties for him in carrying out his role. He is avoided by friends and neighbors, who fear they may be discovered in a situation making them liable to arrest. If he acts in an overzealous manner, especially in the presence of white policemen in order to justify his "professionalism", he runs the risk of becoming associated with the most hated manifestation of white power.

Larsen (1968) used two measures of attitudes toward the police and one measure of authoritarianism in a study of 103 college students. The correlation between the two measures of attitudes toward the police was .92. The correlation between authoritarianism and the Likert-type scale of attitudes toward the police was .82, while the correlation between authoritarianism and the semantic differential scale of attitudes toward the police was
All correlations were significant. Larsen concluded that authoritarianism was strongly related to favorable attitudes toward the police. No reliable sex differences were found. Age, however, correlated negatively with favorable attitudes toward the police and with authoritarianism.

Social Schemata Studies

Kuethe (1962,a) found that the grouping of human figures in a free-response situation showed that a schema determined the subject's organization. The content of the figures determined the schema; several specific social schemata showed a high commonality, such as the tendency to place the child nearer to a woman than to a man, and the tendency to place a dog nearer to a man than to a woman. He also termed these social schemata, response sets, insofar as they produced constant errors when subjects were asked to reconstruct them. In another study, Kuethe (1962,b) showed that the distortion of judgment occurred at the time of the reconstruction rather than in the original perception or in the retention of the schemata.

Kuethe and Stricker (1963) using the felt-figure technique, reported that college students of both sexes used the same social schemata. Human figures were kept together; male figures were placed with female figures, and same-sex figures were rarely placed together. The female subjects, in contrast to the male subjects, tended to form male-female pairs removed from the other figures. They also used idiosyncratic schemata with geometric forms, in contrast to the male subjects, who ordered their arrangements according to height. There were no sex differences observed in the use of aggressive schemata with a set of figures of armed men.

The placing of outline felt-figures on a felt background was a tech-
nique subsequently used in a number of personality and clinical investigations. Kuethe (1965) studied the placement of man and woman figures in a visual and non-visual (blindfolded) situation. He also studied the subjects' responses to a word association test. He found that those subjects who put man and woman figures together in pairs under free placement conditions, made the largest errors of replacement under the blindfolded condition. They consistently underestimated the original distance of separation and put the man and woman figures closer together. These subjects were also more likely to give "man" and "woman" as reciprocal verbal associations. Kuethe concluded that the same social schema was aroused by the specific social content whether the stimuli were visual, non-visual or verbal.

Kuethe and Weingartner (1964) invested male-female schemata among prison inmates. They compared an overt homosexual group with a non-homosexual group. They found that the latter group employed man-woman schemata comparable to that found in normal populations. The non-homosexuals did not usually permit the men figures and the women figures to be separated. The free organization of the homosexuals often failed to show man-woman pairings. On a replacement task, the non-homosexuals usually replaced the men and women figures closer together, while the homosexuals replaced the two men figures closer together than they did the male-female pair.

Weinstein (1965) compared emotionally disturbed boys with normal boys using the felt-figure technique. She found that the normal group placed the child figures closer to the mother figure than to the father figure or peer figures; emotionally disturbed boys did the reverse. The disturbed boys placed the human figures farther apart than the non-human figures. She interpreted her results as indicating a tendency for emotionally dis-
turbed boys to construe people, and especially females, more negatively than do normal boys.

Hobbs (1966) also used the felt-figure technique in evaluating the effectiveness of a treatment program for emotionally disturbed children. Boys comprised 75%-80% of the population. After the therapeutic treatment, the children placed the child figure closer to the mother, as normal children do. Also, there was a decrease in symptoms reported by parents, an increase in social maturity on a Vineland-type check list and a more favorable rating of school adjustment by teachers.

Tolor and Orange (1969) measured "psychological distance" in a group of advantaged and a group of disadvantaged children. One technique they used required the subject to replace combinations of pairs of figures differing in social or nonsocial value, on a felt-covered board. They found that disadvantaged children were more variable in their distance responses than were advantaged children. The disadvantaged children consistently placed farther apart all classes of social stimuli but not neutral nonsocial stimuli. The disadvantaged group was 75% black and the advantaged group was 100% white. This study, like some others, does not distinguish between economic level and race.

Rubin (1969,a) found differences in the social schemata organization of achievers and underachievers in arithmetic at the primary grade level. All children were white, enrolled in a de-facto segregated school. Achieving boys placed the same-sex figure closer to the mother than did the underachieving boys; the achieving boys also placed the same-sex figure closer to the mother than to the father. Achieving girls, however, placed the
same-sex figure farther from both mother and father than did their male counterparts. Underachieving girls placed the same-sex figure closer to the father than the achieving girls or the underachieving boys did. The method used in this study permitted the free placement of only the child figures on the pages of a test booklet.

Higgins, et al. (1969) compared the performance of two groups of male undergraduates using the felt-figure technique. One group was high in social adjustment, the other, low. Those subjects low on the social adjustment scale placed the son figure closer to the father; those with good social adjustment placed the son closer to the mother. Those with poor social adjustment also placed more intervening figures between the son and the mother.

Hypotheses

The literature contains several references to the generally unfavorable attitudes of black adults toward the police. Since community sentiment is a known influence in the development of social attitudes (Sherif and Sherif, 1956) it would seem to follow that children might reflect such attitudes.

Previous investigations of children's attitudes toward the police have not systematically separated race and class, nor have they used both a non-verbal and a verbal measure of attitude. These studies do suggest, however, that either black and/or lower class children probably hold more negative attitudes toward the police. It is hoped that the design of the present study, examining race, class and sex as independent variables will yield less ambiguous results than some of those reviewed above.
It is hypothesized that the least favorable attitudes toward the police will be found among the lower class black boys, while middle class white girls will have the most favorable attitudes toward the police. Although the literature is not clear as to whether race or class is more or equally important, one is lead to infer that the triple effect of lower class, minority race and male sex combine to produce the least favorable attitudes toward the police. The same assumptions would point toward middle class white girls as holding the most favorable opinions about the police.

With the figure arrangement technique, it is assumed that children with more negative attitudes toward the police will a) put greater distance between the figure of the same-sex child and that of the policeman and b) will place more intervening figures between that of the same-sex child and the policeman. Social schemata studies applied in personality-clinical settings have interpreted the greater physical distance between the figure representing the subject and another figure, to be indicative of more negative, less affiliative feelings held by the subject about the person represented by the other figure. This same quality of interpretation has also been given when a greater number of figures in the social schemata were placed between the self-figure and another figure.

It is hypothesized that the two measures derived from the figure arrangement technique will be positively correlated. A subject who places greater distance between the self-figure and that of the policeman is also expected to have more intervening figures between the self-figure and that of the policeman.

It is assumed that children with less favorable attitudes toward the
police will express their view of the role of the policeman in more negative, i.e., more punitive terms. A lower score on the rating scale will indicate a more negative expression concerning the role of the policeman; a higher score will indicate a more positive, i.e., helpful verbal expression about the role of the policeman. It is assumed that there will be sufficient inter-rater agreement among the judges on the question concerning the role of the policeman to warrant the inclusion of this measure in the thesis.

Further, it is hypothesized that there will be a consistent relation between the nonverbal and verbal measures of attitude used in this study. The two measures are expected to be negatively correlated. A subject whose lower score on the question concerning role reflects a more negative view of the role of the policeman is expected to place greater distance between the figure of the same-sex child and that of the policeman, thereby yielding a numerically higher score on that variable. Likewise, such a subject is expected to place more figures intervening between that of the self-figure and that of the policeman, thereby yielding a higher score on that variable.

Though girls have been found to consistently rate policemen more favorably, this differentiation was more pronounced at the higher grade levels. Therefore, in the present study, sex differences are not expected to be significant.

In summary, it is hypothesized that either race, class or some combination of these two variables will be the factors determining first graders' attitudes toward the police. No significant sex differences are expected. The two nonverbal measures of attitude are expected to be positively correlated with one another while their scores are expected to be inversely
related to scores on the verbal measure of attitude concerning the role of the policeman.
METHOD

Subjects and Design

The design of this study is a 2x2x2 factorial design using sex (male and female), race (black and white) and social class (lower and middle). The subjects were 120 first graders enrolled in the Catholic schools of Chicago. Social class is herein defined according to the occupation of the head of household or source of the child's support. A child from a household whose head is engaged in a blue-collar or service type of occupation or whose source of support is public funds was considered in the lower social class. A child from a household whose head was engaged in a white-collar occupation was considered to be in the middle social class. The U. S. Statistical Abstract (1970) was used as a guide in differentiating between lower class and middle class occupations. The lower class black children were drawn from two schools located in a South Side, non-integrated black neighborhood receiving federal funds under the Model Cities program. The lower class white children were selected from two schools near the central area of the city; one was located on the North Side, the other on the South Side. The middle class black children were selected from a school in a non-integrated black neighborhood on the South Side. The middle class white children were selected from a school in a non-integrated white neighborhood on the South Side. There were 15 subjects in each of the eight experimental treatments.

Procedure

Each subject was brought individually by the investigator to the room where he was interviewed. On the way to the room, the investigator, holding
the subject's hand, said, "I'm asking some children to help me with some work. I'm interested in how kids look at things. I'll be writing down what we say so that I can remember it. Then we're going to do something with pictures of people." Upon reaching the designated room, the subject was presented with his chair and told, "You may sit there." Then the investigator sat down opposite the subject and giving him two cookies, said, "let's have some cookies. While you eat your cookies, I'm going to get things ready." The investigator allowed the subject two minutes to eat the cookies. If he was not finished by that time, the investigator suggested, "While you're finishing your cookies, we can begin our work."

Holding the subject's hand, giving a simple explanation, giving him cookies to eat---all such actions were intended to foster his comfort and security. Then the investigator proceeded to ask: 1. "What does a mother do?" 2. "What does a brother do?" 3. "What does a teacher do?" 4. "What does a father do?" 5. "What does a sister do?" 6. "What does a policeman do?" The investigator said "A-huh" when a subject completed a response and wrote down the response. A copy of the form on which responses were recorded can be found in Appendix I.

The question concerning the role of the mother was asked first because, in most cases, the mother is the most significant person in the lives of young children, and in a preliminary study, the question concerning the role of the mother was found to elicit the greatest number of responses from young children. The question concerning the role of father was not asked next because of the possibility that the subject's response could be determined by association (mother-father) rather than by his knowledge of the
father's role.

In responding to the first question concerning role, the subject might have hesitated, said, "I don't know." or given a shrug of the shoulders, a nonverbal equivalent of "I don't know." In such a case, the investigator said, "Do you know what a mother looks like?" The purpose of this question was to draw on the subject's visual imagery as a source of his knowledge about role. The investigator continued: "Try to think what a mother looks like. She is a grown-up lady who has one or maybe more children." After a brief pause, the investigator said, "Now, tell me, what does a mother do?" If the subject answered this question appropriately, the investigator said, "That's good!" If again the subject gave no response, or a verbal or nonverbal equivalent of "I don't know", the investigator rephrased the question to "What do you think a mother does?" If again the subject gave no appropriate response, the investigator proceeded through all the questions concerning roles.

If at any point the subject did give an appropriate response, the investigator said, "That's good!" and continued through the final question. When that was completed, the investigator returned to the question or questions that had not been responded to appropriately and asked them again in their original form. The investigator waited for a short time (no longer than 10 seconds) and if no appropriate response was given to a question, rephrased it ("What do you think a _____ does?").

The investigator continued with any other question concerning role that previously may not have been answered appropriately. In each case the investigator waited no longer than 10 seconds for an answer.
The 10 seconds seemed to be long enough to wait for a subject's answer, if he was going to give one, and short enough not to have provoked undue anxiety within him.

There was no further repetition of any of the questions. Only the subjects who did not respond to the question concerning the role of the policeman would have been eliminated from the study.

Time was measured by a stopwatch.

At the termination of the questions concerning roles, the investigator said, "O.K. Now I want to show you some pictures of people. Let's go over here." The investigator took the subject by the hand and lead him to the flannelboard.

The flannelboard was placed to the rear of the investigator's chair. This arrangement was intended to minimize the subject's opportunity for seeking or receiving cues from the investigator during this exercise. The flannelboard was a 9"x 40" x ½" piece of plasterboard covered with gray felt. The board was only an inch higher than the tallest figure, so that the subject would be constrained to place the figures vertically.

The subject was asked to arrange six cut-out cardboard figures on the board--representations of a mother, a brother, a teacher, a father, a sister and a policeman. These figures ranged in height from 8" for the adult male figures to 5" for the male child figure. There were two sets of colored figures. In one, the persons depicted had Negroid features and in the other, Caucasian features. Only the first set was presented to black subjects; only the second set to white subjects. Their illustrated clothing was ambiguous as to social class. The policeman is in uniform, the teacher illustrated
with a long-sleeved blouse and skirt; the father figure is drawn wearing slacks and a knit sports shirt. The mother figure is wearing an overblouse and a skirt. The boy figure is illustrated wearing jeans and a knit shirt while the girl figure is drawn wearing a jumper and blouse. All figures had backing that adhered to felt.

A shoe-box lid, measuring 12" x 6" x 11" hereafter is referred to simply as the "box". The inside of the box was a medium gray cardboard; the outside was a darker gray. The box was placed at the center front of the flannelboard.

The investigator took the subject by the hand and lead him to the center front of the flannelboard and said, "Why don't you sit down here?" indicating the floor. Then the investigator took her place on the floor in a half-kneeling position across the flannelboard from the subject. The investigator presented each figure to the child at eye level, saying, "This is a (role name)." Then she placed the figure face-up in the box. The figures were presented in the following order: mother, brother, teacher, father, sister, policeman. When all the figures were presented, the investigator walked to the subject and put her hand on his shoulders so that he did not begin the task before directions were completed. She said, "Take them all out of the box and put them on the board any way you want. You can put anybody next to anybody you like. You can make any kind of picture you want, any way you want to do it. Be sure to use all the pictures. I'm going to write down some things and let you do this by yourself. Tell me when you are finished." Then the investigator returned to her chair. This placed her in a back-to-back position in relation to the subject.
If the subject had not indicated after one minute that he was finished, the investigator said, "How are you doing?" If the subject said he was finished, the investigator turned around to see whether he actually was. If he was, she said, "That's fine!" This response was made at any time that the subject completed the task.

At this point the investigation was considered to be concluded. Had the subject not responded, the investigator would have said, "I'm interested in how kids do these things. Take them all out of the box and put them along the board. Any way you do it is O.K." If after another minute the subject had not said he was through, the investigator asked, "Finished?" If the subject had not completed the task, the investigator would have urged him to do so, saying, "Go ahead." If in another two minutes the task was not completed, the investigator considered the task concluded. She said, "Thank you for helping me with my work" and shook the subject's hand. Then she returned the subject to his classroom or sent him by himself, if that was permitted at his school.

When the subject had left the testing room, the investigator took a 9" x 40" sheet of tracing paper and placed it over the figures on the flannelboard. She had a supply of xeroxed copies of the various figures and glued the appropriate ones to the tracing paper in the locations chosen by the subject.

Scoring and Rating Procedure

The two variables derived from the nonverbal figure arrangement technique were scored by the investigator. A 50-centimeter ruler was used to measure the distance between the figure of the same-sex child and that of
the policeman, in the center of the head at eye level. The distance in centimeters was used as the score.

The number of figures intervening between that of the same-sex child and the figure of the policeman were counted. The total number of intervening figures was used as the score.

Three female psychologists, two with M.A.s and one with a Ph.D. were used as judges to rate the responses on the question concerning the role of the policeman. Two of the judges were native white Americans; the third was a native of the Philippines. The investigator met with the judges for one training session. During that session, two different sets of 10 responses each—ones not used in this study, were rated individually by the investigator and the judges. They were provided with a 7-point scale with guidelines as can be found in Appendix II. The results of scoring were discussed after each set was rated. The judges were told the grade level of the subjects and the content of the role question. No information was given about the sex, race or class of the subjects. At the end of the training session, the responses gathered in this study were distributed to the judges. The order of the responses was randomized. The ratings were completed independently and returned to the investigator within a week of their distribution. The arithmetical average of the three judges' ratings was used as the score.
RESULTS

(A 2x2x2 (sex x race x class) factorial analysis of variance (Edwards, 1960) was performed, with the distance between the figure of the policeman and that of the same-sex child being the dependent variable. The mean distance for each subgroup is presented in Table 1.) The results of this analysis of variance are found in Table 2.) One source of variation in these scores that approached statistical significance was a marginally (p. < .10) significant main effect of race. This result indicates some trend for black children to place the figure of the policeman closer to that of the same-sex child than is noted for white children. Another source of variation was a marginally significant (p. < .10) triple interaction effect of sex x race x class. This result indicated that scores on the distance variable were somewhat differentially affected by a combination of all three factors.

The number of figures intervening between the same-sex child figure and that of the policeman was the dependent variable in another 2x2x2 (sex x race x class) factorial analysis of variance. Table 3 reports the means; Table 4 presents the results of the analysis of variance, in which the effect of race (p. < .05) was the only significant finding. This finding indicates that whites placed more figures between the same-sex child figure and the policeman figure than did blacks.

Three Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed among the ratings of the three judges on the question concerning the role of the policeman. The coefficients obtained were .92, .94 and .96. The average correlation coefficient was .94. It was significant beyond the .0001
level and indicated very good agreement among the judges about the scoring of the responses to the question concerning the role of the policeman.

A 2x2x2 (sex x race x class) factorial analysis of variance was performed with the ratings of the subjects’ responses to an open-ended question concerning the role of the policeman being the dependent variable. The means are presented in Table 5. The results of the analysis of variance are found in Table 6. The category of class was strongly significant (p. < .005). This result indicates that lower class children were considerably more negative in their evaluation of the policeman’s role than were middle class children. A marginally significant (p. < .10) effect of race also appeared, indicating that black children tend to be more negative than do white children. A Duncan new multiple range test (Edwards, 1960) revealed a significant (p < .01) difference between the negative conceptions of the policeman’s role found in lower class black boys and the more positive responses given by middle class white girls.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed between the scores of the two nonverbal measures of distance and intervening figures between that of the same-sex child and that of the policeman. The coefficient obtained was +.77, significant beyond the .0001 level. It indicated that the subject who tended to place greater distance between the self-figure and that of the policeman also tended to place more intervening figures between the self-figure and that of the policeman.

In addition, two Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed between each of the nonverbal measures and the verbal measure. A coefficient of -.06 was obtained between the distance scores and the re-
sponses to the role question. A coefficient of +.01 was obtained between the intervening figures measure and the responses to the role question. Neither correlation was significant, indicating that there was no relationship between either the distance scores or the intervening figures scores and those obtained from the verbal inquiry about the role of the policeman.
# TABLE 1

Mean Distance from Same-sex Child to Policeman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>lower</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M 29.43</td>
<td>24.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 15.99</td>
<td>13.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>M 27.23</td>
<td>30.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 17.74</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>27.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=15 in each cell.

# TABLE 2

Analysis of variance of Distance from Same-sex Child to Policeman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.16</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>671.29</td>
<td>3.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class (C)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>278.53</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>619.40</td>
<td>2.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within cell)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>219.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p.<.10
### TABLE 3

Mean number of Intervening Figures Between Same-sex Child and Policeman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lower</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black M SD</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white M SD</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 15 in each cell.

### TABLE 4

Analysis of Variance of Intervening Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>4.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class (C)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within cell)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p. < .05
### TABLE 5
Mean of Scores on the Role Question About Policeman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Sex</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>lower</th>
<th>middle</th>
<th>ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>lower</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 15 in each cell.

### TABLE 6
Analysis of Variance of the Role Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>2.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class (C)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>9.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B X C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within cell)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p. < .10  **p. < .005
DISCUSSION

This study was designed so that the factors of race, class and sex and their possible influence on children’s attitudes toward the police might be systematically observed. The usual comparison between middle class white children and lower class black children has yielded ambiguous results, so a group of middle class black children and a group of lower class white children were included. It was also thought that two measures, a nonverbal and a verbal one would yield more information about children’s attitudes toward the police. The relationship between these two methods of assessing attitudes was thought to be valuable apart from the information they provided for the present study.

While it was hypothesized that either black and/or lower class children would place more distance between the figure of the same-sex child and that of the policeman, the results of a minimally significant effect of race (p. < .10) was in the opposite direction. White children tended to place more distance between the self-figure and that of the policeman. The figures used were racially equivalent for the subjects so that it may be said that black children tend to feel more positively toward black policemen than white children feel toward the white policeman. One possible reason for this result is that in the estimation of black children, the black policeman may have higher status than does the white policeman have for white children. Another possibility is that the children’s attitudes about policemen may be a function of their attitudes toward other significant authority figures and those attitudes may be different for each race.

The analysis of variance also revealed a minimally significant (p. < .10) triple interaction effect (sex x race x class) for the distance between the
self-figure and that of the policeman. This was brought about by the anomalously low scores among lower class white boys which tended to reverse the general patterns found for sex, race and class.

Using the dependent variable of number of intervening figures between the same-sex child and that of the policeman, the effect of race (p. < .05) strengthens the trend found in the distance variable. White used more intervening figures between the self-figure and that of the same-race policeman than did blacks. Possible reasons for this finding are the same as mentioned above, viz., a possibly different status of the policeman for each racial group of children and/or attitudes toward the police may be a function of attitudes toward other authority figures which may not be the same for both races.

The results of the verbal inquiry concerning the role of the policeman seem to support the hypotheses insofar as class (p. < .005) was strongly significant. Lower class children were decidedly more negative in their evaluation of the policeman's role than were middle class children. Although the effect of race was only of marginal significance (p. < .10) it was in the predicted direction. Black children tend to be more negative in their expressions about the policeman's role than white children. The inference that the least favorable attitudes might be found among lower class black boys and that the most favorable attitudes would be among middle class white girls received support (p < .01).

The hypothesis concerning a strong positive relationship between the two nonverbal measures was supported (p. < .0001) whereas the insignificant correlations between each of the nonverbal measures and the verbal measure
were not expected. Clearly, the attitudes concerning the role of the policeman were not the basis for the organization of the figures on a felt-board.

The verbalized statements about the role of the policeman support previous research and clarify the influence of race and class on young children's attitudes toward the police. However, the figure arrangement measurements do not. Tolor and Orange (1969) reported that disadvantaged children used greater distance between figures while the present study found no such class effect. There are several differences between that study and the present one: a) in defining class, b) in age of subjects, and c) in characterization of stimuli and manner of presentation. These may account for the disagreement between results.

One might investigate the relationship between the distance of figures presented in pairs to the distance between those pairs when they are presented within a group of figures.

As the role question was administered before the figure arrangement task, it is possible that the children may have been responding to a racially ambiguous, same or different image when giving their responses to the verbal inquiry whereas a racially defined figure was involved in the figure arrangement. It would be interesting to see if the same racial effect obtained if the order of presentation were reversed with the racially defined policeman in the figure arrangement possibly serving as a basis for defining the policeman's role. If two presentations of the figure arrangement technique had been made, one involving the same-race policeman and the other an opposite-race policeman, the examiner variable should also have been more carefully controlled than was possible in the present unfunded study. Whatever was the rationale used in the figure arrangement technique, beyond the
negative or positive characterization made herein, remains to be clarified.

One might investigate the possibly higher status of the black policeman among black children by asking them to rate the names of the figures according to importance and subsequently present the figure arrangement task. The same procedure might be followed for other possible characterizations such as affiliation, fear, dependency and awe.

It may be possible to explore whether attitudes toward the police are a function of attitudes toward other authority figures. One might compare the results of the distance variable used in this study with the distance between the self-figure and that of other authority figures and then determine whether any consistent relationship is present.

In conclusion: verbalized expressions of attitudes toward the policeman's role were most strongly influenced by class while also being minimally affected by race. The results of the nonverbal measure seemed to conflict with the effect of race found with the role question.
REFERENCES


Kuethe, J.L. Social schemas. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1962, 64, 31-38. (a)

Kuethe, J.L. Social schemas and the reconstruction of social object displays from memory. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1962, 65, 71-72. (b)


Rubin, D. Halo effect in individual subjects' responses to an attitude


APPENDIX I

(Form for Role Questions)

Name ___________________ Sex _____ School ___________ Date __________

Let's have some cookies. While you eat your cookies, I'm going to get things ready. (allow 2 min., if nec.) While you're finishing your cookies we can begin our work.

1. What does a mother do? __________________________________________

(if n.r.) Do you know what a mother looks like? Try to think what a mother looks like. She is a grown-up lady who has 1 or maybe more children. (pause)

Now tell me, what does a mother do? THAT'S GOOD!

If nec., What do you think a mother does?

If still n.r., continue with

2. What does a brother do? __________________________________________

3. What does a teacher do? __________________________________________

4. What does a father do? __________________________________________

5. What does a sister do? __________________________________________

6. What does a policeman do? _______________________________________

a) Repeat any unanswered questions. Wait 10-30 sec.
b) Rephrase to: What do you think a _______ does? SMILE Wait 10. Continue
APPENDIX II
(Guidelines for Judges)

   very negative


3. Gives tickers. Stops you speeding
   Watches you. Tells you to get going.
   Questions you.

4. Policeman rides, walks, drives, works
   neutral

5. Directs traffic. Gives directions
   "Helps" (no elaboration)
   Greets people.

6. Finds and returns stolen goods.
   Takes you to the hospital.
   Protects you.
   Cares for you when you're lost.

7. Saves lives.
   Rescues people
   very positive
The thesis submitted by Rose Mary Z. Finnegan has been read and approved by two members of the Department of Psychology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 14, 1971

Signature of Thesis Director