

4. Personality and Organisation

What sort of people become chief officers in the police service?

Are top cops any different from other senior executives in different organisations?

To what extent does the top man in the organisation influence the future identity, values and development of the organisation?

Does the man mould the job, or does the job mould the man to conform and behave in particular ways?

These four questions were frequently debated in interview. Numerous examples were offered of how a change of Chief Constable stimulated numerous changes in the organisation, ranging from change of style in terms of the Chief Constable managing his direct reports, to some re-allocation of resources in order to address a change of mission for the organisation. Therefore, do different personalities directly influence the future and the development of the organisation?

In order to explore the relationship between personality and organisation, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator questionnaire (Thomas, 1983) was utilised. Based on Jungian psychology, this questionnaire provides insights into how people think, feel and, as a consequence, are likely to behave over periods of time. Undoubtedly, individuals do change their views, beliefs and behaviours over time, but it is considered that certain key stimuli do not dramatically alter. In this way, it is possible to deduce how a person in an influential role will determine both the policies and practices to be pursued, and the relationships that are likely to be formed in the senior management team in attempting to influence such strategies. Specifically, the dimensions that are measured are:

- how individuals meet and relate to other people
- how individuals make sense of the world around them in terms of generating and gathering information
- how individuals make decisions

- how individuals naturally set priorities and cope with ambiguity.

Each of these four dimensions is measured by two factors, indicating the degree to which an individual is geared more one way or the other. Table X identifies the four dimensions and the eight factors. The key questions addressed are:

In terms of relating to people, is the individual more extraverted or introverted?

In understanding the world around them, does the person use more of a sensing approach or intuitive approach?

In making decisions, is a thinking and rational approach utilised, or is more a feelings and beliefs based approach as to what is right or wrong for the situation used?

When prioritising, does the individual focus on particular issues and pursue only those (judgemental preference) or reach a more balanced decision by taking his time to gather sufficient information (perception preference)?

It is assumed within the structure of the questionnaire that each individual holds a preference more one way than the other, on each of these four dimensions. Hence, how does an individual's array of personal preferences influence the way he/she works and thereby shapes the job.

In well-structured jobs, such as supervisor or middle manager, the impact of an individual's personality (i.e., personal preferences) will have only little influence on how that role is to be acted out. In roles where considerable discretion (choice) exists as to what should be done and how it should be done, the person's psychological makeup could strongly influence not only the identity of the role, but possibly the whole organisation.

The results (Table XI) indicate that chief officers are considerably more extraverted than introvert; marginally more practical and down-to-earth (sensing) than creative and intuitive; more thinking than feeling, and only marginally more judgemental than perceptive. In comparison to the two samples of private sector chief

Table X.

Relating	
E <i>Extravert Preference</i>	I <i>Introvert Approach</i>
Prefers to live life in contact with others and things	Prefers to be more self-contained and work things out personally
Understanding	
S <i>Sensing Preference</i>	N <i>Intuition Preference</i>
Puts emphasis on facts, details and concrete knowledge	Puts more emphasis on possibilities, imagination, creativity and seeing things as a whole
Deciding	
T <i>Thinking Preference</i>	F <i>Feeling Preference</i>
Puts emphasis on analysis using logic, rationality and powers of deduction	Puts emphasis on human values, establishing personal friendships, decisions mainly on beliefs and likes/dislikes
Prioritising	
J <i>Judging Preference</i>	P <i>Perceiving Preference</i>
Puts emphasis on order through reaching decisions and resolving issues; a well structured and organised approach to getting things done	Puts emphasis on gathering information and obtaining as much data as possible; high tolerance for ambiguity

Source: Margerison, C. (1982)

Table XI.

	<i>Police Chief Officers</i> %	<i>USA CEOs</i> %	<i>UK CEOs</i> %
Extravert	79	73	68
Introvert	21	27	32
Sensing	51	53	45
Intuitive	49	47	55
Thinking	60	69	77
Feeling	40	31	23
Judgemental	51	61	73
Perception	49	39	27

Table XII. *Australian vs USA Senior Police Officers*

	<i>Australian</i> (n = 119)	<i>USA</i> (n = 617)
Extravert	43	55
Introvert	57	45
Sensing	90	79
Intuitive	10	21
Thinking	64	63
Feeling	36	37
Judgemental	87	63
Perceptive	13	37

Source: Cacioppe and Mock (1985), p. 26.

executives, similar findings emerge for the extraversion/introversion factors; with the UK CEOs more intuitive than the USA CEOs or police chief officers. Both groups of private sector CEOs exhibit a stronger preference for thinking and logic than for feelings and rapport than the chief officers, and again, a stronger preference for the judgemental dimension than the chief officers. A study by Cacioppe and Mock (1985) examining Australian and USA senior police officers reports considerably different findings to the UK chief officer sample (Table XII). The UK police chief officers are considerably more extravert, creative, feelings and rapport oriented and less inclined to be judgemental and more oriented towards reaching a balanced decision.

Balanced Personality

In contrast to certain commonly held stereotypes, UK police chief officers are identified as appreciably more people-oriented, creative, and attempt to reach balanced and thought-through decisions, than their Australian and American counterparts and private sector executives. Hence, in terms of thinking of new approaches and policies for the future, and sensitivity to people, UK chief officers are potentially more capable of addressing such issues. The manner in which such matters are likely to be handled will probably be more thoughtful in order to realise the consequences of one's actions before acting.

In essence, considerably different sorts of people are appointed to the role of chief officer, indicating that the range of interpretations concerning the role of the chief officer and the different directions police organisations can be taken, is considerable. In practice, substantial differences of vision, managerial style, allocation of resources, team work, attitudes to the public, and to structuring and organising the service, are likely to exist across the different police authorities. In fact, greater

potential diversity of opinion concerning what is desired current practice and future performance exists among British police chief officers than amongst private sector senior executives or Australian and USA senior police officers. The results indicate considerable differences of attitude and approach exist to leading and managing police organisations.

Significantly, a cross-correlation analysis was conducted relating personality (Myers Briggs) types with the significant styles identified in Section 3. Only two significant relationships emerged. Those chief officers who are concerned with managerial control, organisation structure, being efficient and practical (i.e. sensing, thinking, judgemental types) considered it significant to achieve results. Those officers who are more long term and strategically-oriented did not consider the need to

achieve results as that important. Equally, the more controlling types found it significant to maintain the rituals and traditions of police organisations, whilst this is an insignificant issue for the more intuitive and longer-term thinker.

The findings indicate that irrespective of personality type, the key competencies apply to all, namely recognising broader issues, managing a wide variety of people well, etc. No one personality type has a distinct style. Different types of people utilise whatever approaches are most appropriate for them and their situation.

As can be seen, under circumstances of considerable diversity of personality types, styles and approaches to problem solving, the training and development of chief officers become of crucial concern.

