



Sexual misconduct in police officers: development
of a risk assessment tool for the early identification
of police officers and staff who abuse their positions
for a sexual purpose

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Abstract

Sexual misconduct in police officers (PSM) is a form of police corruption which although rare, has a detrimental impact on police reputation and adverse outcomes for victims. PSM often involves targeting of vulnerable people and officers abusing the authority of their role for sexual gain. Colleagues may be targeted in the form of sexualised language and behaviour. The National Police Chief's Council of England and Wales (NPCC) has requested an evidence based risk assessment tool for the identification of officers involved in PSM. This thesis therefore sought to identify potential risk factors and also to understand the individual, organisational and cultural factors linked to PSM. Chapter 2 identified eight types of PSM in England and Wales and found that misconduct hearing outcomes were inconsistent. Chapters 3 and 4 explored case studies and identified two styles of victim approach and selection – predatory shark officers and exploratory fishermen. Chapter 5 explored barriers to reporting, finding that external targeting is perceived by police officers to be more serious and more likely to be reported than internal targeting. In Chapters 6 & 7, police trainers experiences of sexual misconduct in recruits were explored, finding that PSM can occur within the early stages of officers' careers. Chapter 8 examined behavioural, personal, and service characteristics of officers involved in PSM and identified factors which increase the risk of engagement. Officers with certain characteristics were also found to make purposeful selections of victims with specific vulnerabilities.

This thesis has identified potential risk factors for engagement in PSM in new recruits and established officers. The findings suggest evidence to support individual differences in officers who target external victims combined with manipulation of the working environment to avoid detection. Organisational issues and evidence of internal sexual misconduct suggests that the culture of the police needs reform to successfully address PSM.

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Table of contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	4
Contents.....	5
Tables.....	7
Abbreviations.....	8
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	10
1.1 Defining police sexual misconduct.....	11
1.2 Background.....	13
1.3 Characteristics of officers who are involved in PSM.....	16
1.4 Risk assessment and philosophical research stance.....	17
1.5 Theories of police corruption applied to sexual misconduct: individual, organisational, and environmental factors.....	22
1.5.1 Individual factors: the bad apple.....	23
1.5.2 The slippery slope and the steep cliff.....	25
1.5.3 Social learning theory.....	28
1.5.4 Social norms and identity.....	31
1.5.5 Noble cause.....	32
1.5.6 Organisational factors: the bad barrel.....	33
1.5.7 Working environment.....	35
1.5.8 Police culture.....	36
1.5.9 Bad barrel makers or the “rotten orchard”.....	38
1.5.10 Conclusion.....	40
1.5.10.1 Officers who target vulnerable victims of crime, juveniles, and offenders.....	40
1.5.10.2 Officers who target colleagues.....	42
1.6 Outline of the integrated thesis.....	45
Chapter 2 Research Article.....	48
<i>Outcomes of sexual misconduct the UK.....</i>	48
Chapter 3 Research Article.....	72
<i>“PC Just do Enough”.....</i>	72
Chapter 4 Research Article.....	96
<i>The sharks and the fisherman.....</i>	96
Chapter 5 Research Article.....	122

<i>Is the blue wall of silence a fallacy in cases of police sexual misconduct?</i>	122
Chapter 6 Research Article.....	159
<i>Sexual misconduct in police recruits as identified by police trainers</i>	159
Chapter 7 Research Article.....	193
<i>“We do employ some morons”: Police trainers’ perceptions of the recruitment process</i>	193
Chapter 8 Research article.....	222
<i>Development of a risk assessment tool for the early identification of officers and staff who abuse their position for a sexual purpose</i>	222
Chapter 9 Discussion of the integrated thesis.....	255
9.1 Introduction and structure.....	255
9.2 Summary of findings.....	255
9.2.1 Basic overview of the research findings.....	256
9.3 Common implications.....	261
9.3.1 Vetting.....	261
9.3.2 Individual vs Organisational factors.....	265
9.3.3 Officers who target victims external to the police.....	265
9.3.4 Officers who target victims internal to the police.....	267
9.3.5 Officer personality.....	271
9.4 Theoretical considerations.....	273
9.5 Review of the principles of pragmatism	276
9.6 Use of the risk assessment tool.....	278
9.7 Direction of future research.....	279
9.8 Concluding remarks.....	282
References.....	283
Appendices.....	335
<i>Appendix i: Letter to police forces for participation in focus group research</i>	335
<i>Appendix ii: Participant information sheet for focus groups with police trainers</i>	337
<i>Appendix iii: Letter to police forces for participation in scenario testing</i>	341
<i>Appendix iv: Summary of cases studies used in chapter 6</i>	343
<i>Appendix v: Tables 2-8 of additional analysis from Chapter 8 data</i>	353

Tables

Table 1.5.2.....27
 Summary of Gottlieb and Younggren’s (2009) ethical acculturation model.....27

Table 1.6.1.....46
 Summary of research papers, methodology, analysis, and theoretical orientation.....46

Table 9.4.1.....278
 Comparison of proposed typologies applied to pre-existing theories.....278

Abbreviations

NPCC	National Police Chiefs Council
APSP	Abuse of position for a sexual purpose
PSD	Professional Standards Department
CCU	Counter Corruption Unit
PSM	Police sexual misconduct
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
BTP	British Transport Police
CNC	Civil Nuclear Constabulary
MOD	Ministry of Defence
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
SC	Special Constable
PC	Police Constable
DC	Detective Constable
Sgt	Police Sergeant
D/Sgt	Detective Sergeant
COP	College of Policing
CoE	Code of ethics

Thesis Structure

This thesis conforms to an 'integrated thesis' format in which chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 consist of articles written in a style that is appropriate for publication in peer reviewed journals. The initial and final chapters present an introduction and discussion of the field of research undertaken. The articles included in this thesis are at various stages of the publication/review process, and the status of the papers is summarised at the beginning of their respective chapters. The main text in each chapter is presented as exact replications of the submitted manuscript and inevitably, there is some repetition as a consequence.

Chapter One

Sexual misconduct in police officers: development of a risk assessment tool for the early identification of police officers and staff who abuse their positions for a sexual purpose

Introduction

In July 2021, PC Wayne Couzens of the Metropolitan Police pleaded guilty to the rape and murder of 33-year-old Sarah Everard. An authorised firearms officer, who had previously served with the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and as a volunteer for Kent Police, Couzens was previously known to female colleagues as “The Rapist” (Evening Standard, 2021). Over the course of his police service, Couzens had been the subject of complaints of indecent exposure and sexually motivated approaches to both colleagues and members of the public (Daily Mail, 2021). His behaviour was described by the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police as “a betrayal of everything we, the police stand for” (Metropolitan Police, 2021). This case has prompted many urgent and valid questions as to how an officer with a history of sexual misconduct across three separate police forces was seemingly able to evade detection and dismissal. Furthermore, such cases raise important questions regarding how police forces select and vet their staff. It also prompts debate around potential warning signs and prior behaviours which may have led to the early identification and removal of such officers from a policing role.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the personal, work related, and behavioural characteristics of police officers who engage in sexual misconduct. It will seek to evaluate which of these characteristics could be predictors of sexual misconduct, with the overarching aim to

design an actuarial risk assessment tool to assist the police in the early identification of police officers and police staff who engage in this behaviour.

1.1 Defining police sexual misconduct

Police sexual misconduct (PSM) includes a wide range of behaviours, some of which may fall under criminal law (e.g., rape, harassment); and others fall under breaches of police codes of practice and professional standards (e.g., sex on duty). Due to this wide range of behaviours, establishing a sufficiently broad definition of sexual misconduct has proven difficult (Maher, 2003). In England and Wales, there are two policies for police sexual misconduct which have been produced by two police agencies. The first deals with abuse of position for a sexual purpose (APSP) and is defined by the National Police Chiefs Council of England and Wales (NPCC) as:

“Any behaviour by a police officer or police staff member, whether on or off duty, that takes advantage of their position as a member of the police service to misuse their position, authority or powers in order to pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with any member of the public. This includes committing a sexual act, initiating sexual contact with, or responding to any perceived sexually motivated behaviour from another person; entering into any communication that could be perceived as sexually motivated or lewd; or for any other sexual purpose.”
(NPCC, 2017a, p6).

This definition outlines how police officers have a role in society which affords them powers and authority that members of the public do not have. To abuse this creates an imbalance of power

between officer and victim (NPCC, 2017a). In addition to this, many victims of APSP will be vulnerable people with histories of life trauma, domestic and sexual abuse that serves to widen this power imbalance (Cottler, O’Leary, Nickel, Reingle & Isom, 2014; HMIC; 2016, Stinson, Brewer, Mathna, Liederbach & Englebrecht, 2014). As the NPCC’s definition of APSP states that this behaviour can be directed towards any member of the public, APSP is generally committed against victims who are external to the police.

The second policy to cover police sexual misconduct is within the Police Code of Ethics, produced by the College of Policing – the professional body for English and Welsh police forces. It states:

“You must ensure that any relationship at work does not create an actual or apparent conflict of interest. You must not engage in sexual conduct or other inappropriate behaviour when on duty. You must ensure your behaviour and language could not reasonably be perceived to be abusive, oppressive, harassing, bullying, victimising or offensive by the public or your policing colleagues.”(College of Policing, 2014a, p6)

The Code of Ethics, therefore, covers behaviours such as having sex on duty and sexually inappropriate behaviour directed to both the public and staff.

For the purpose of this thesis, police sexual misconduct (PSM) will be used to describe the full range of inappropriate sexually-motivated behaviours by police officers. For further clarity, the term ‘external targeting’ is used to describe cases where officers have targeted persons who are

members of the public; and 'internal targeting' is used to describe cases where officers have targeted colleagues or any other person working for the police, e.g., contractors and volunteers.

1.2 Background

Research into police corruption is thought to have started in the 1960s in the United States. This was a time when anti-police sentiments were particularly strong and much of the research found police officers to often be no more than criminals in uniforms (Punch, 2009). Considerations of sexually-deviant behaviour began to be included in the late 1970's within a general context of corruption (for example, having sex on duty, (Barker, 1978). It wasn't until the mid-1990's onwards that sexual misconduct in police officers was researched as a separate type of police corruption. This was thought to be due to increasing media coverage of high profile cases and resulting public concern (Maher, 2003). Despite this, police sexual misconduct remains under-researched with the bulk of findings concentrated within the US (Maher, 2008).

In addition to being under-researched, PSM is also likely to be under-reported and therefore it can be difficult to establish its prevalence. In the UK, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary recorded 436 cases of APSP between 2014 and 2016 (HMICFRS, 2017a). In a follow-up review, 415 cases from 2016-2019 were identified (HMICFRS, 2019b). There are no nationally held figures on the prevalence of other types of police sexual misconduct. Maher (2008; 2010) reported that within the police, officers perceive that some types of PSM - particularly criminal behaviours such as rape - to be rare but other behaviours, such as internal sexual harassment, are commonplace. Most recently, a freedom of information (FOI) request obtained by The Guardian identified 1491 cases of sexual misconduct (including APSP) across a six year period (Jayanetti 2019). However, ten of the terrestrial police forces in England and Wales did not

respond to the FOI request and it was not inclusive of Police Scotland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Therefore, it is currently not possible to establish the true rate of PSM and, in common with other sexual offences such as rape, PSM is likely to be under-reported. For this reason, Stinson et al (2014), describe PSM as a “hidden” type of police corruption.

The reasons for under-reporting cases of PSM lie both within the police and the victims, similar to reasons why survivors do not report rape; and why sexual harassment in other workplaces is not widely reported. Police officers may not fully understand which behaviours are corrupt and which are acceptable and therefore may be unclear about what must be reported (Hickman, Powell, Piquero & Greene 2016; NPCC, 2017a). However, the official definitions of PSM are now well established and, with training and other initiatives in place to ensure officers understand, it is questionable as to how much longer this explanation can be feasibly used (HMIC, 2016). Furthermore, police officers may also be reluctant to report PSM by colleagues due to feelings of loyalty and/or fear of ostracisation as a result (Kutnjak Ivković, Haberfield, Kang, Peacock, Porter, Prenzler & Sauerman, 2019; Lee, Lim, Moore & Kim, 2013). This reluctance to report is referred to as the blue wall, or blue code of silence, and is thought to be a result of the “insider culture” of the police; where officers develop strong working relationships with colleagues and see themselves as set apart from the rest of society (Loftus, 2010; Westmarland & Conway, 2020, p379). The blue wall of silence and how it may influence the reporting of PSM is explored in detail in chapter 5.

Victims of PSM are often vulnerable people who have experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, and life trauma (NPCCa, 2017; Sweeting, Hills & Cole, 2020). Often, those with criminal histories and substance abuse issues will not report officers due to concerns that they will not be believed, or will be retaliated against (Cottler et al, 2014). In addition to this, victims who

have experienced domestic abuse or sexual assault may also feel that they will be blamed for being further abused by police officers (Cottler et al, 2014; Decker, Holliday, Hamedduddin, Miller, Dantler & Goodmark, 2019). As seen in sexual offending research, there may also be a general lack of understanding within victims as to which behaviours constitute a criminal offence, particularly when the perpetrator is known to them, or if the offence occurs within the context of a relationship (Klemmer, Neill & Jarvis 2021; Schwarz, Gibson, Lewis-Arevalo, 2017). Where victims are in APSP relationships with police officers, they may not identify themselves as either being victims, or understand the power imbalance, especially if any sexual activity is consensual (NPCCa, 2017).

In addition to damaging public trust and confidence in the police, PSM may also result in adverse outcomes to victims. Recent research into the long term impacts of PSM finds that victims are at an increased risk of serious mental health outcomes such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Stringer, Marotta, Goddard-Eckrich, Akuffo, Richer, El-Bassel & Gilbert, 2020). Such outcomes are similar to those experienced by victims of rape and sexual assault (Spohn, Wright & Peterson, 2017). Furthermore, as many victims of PSM are vulnerable, the effect of being re-victimised by police officers is associated with alcohol and drug misuse, increased risk of suicide and severe mental illness (Classen, Paresh, & Aggarwal, 2005). In keeping with outcomes for workplace sexual harassment more generally, police colleagues who have experienced internal sexually inappropriate behaviour feel greater work-related stress and reduced productivity (Brown, Gouseti, Fife-Schaw, 2018; Roscigno, 2019). Other police victims expressed an intention to leave the police as a result of the behaviour they had experienced (Wilson, Sweeting, Poate-Joyner & Cole, 2021, in preparation). Research has also suggested that police officers may be at an increased risk of mental health issues when colleagues are involved in corruption such as sexual misconduct (Papazoglou & Chopko, 2017). This finding falls into the definition of moral injury; an incident where there has been a betrayal of trust or morals either

on an individual or organisational level (Shay, 2014). Moral injury has previously been explored in the context of the military, where the high-stakes environment of a war zone may cause individuals to make choices e.g., to take life, which conflict with their values and morals (Litz, Stein, Delaney, Lebowitz, Nash, Silva & Maguen, 2009). As is the case within the military, moral injury may increase the risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and, in severe cases, suicide in police officers (Stancel, Russo, Koskelainen, Papazoglou & McQuerrey Tuttle, 2019).

1.3 Characteristics of officers who are involved in PSM

A particularly under-explored aspect of PSM research relates to findings pertaining to the characteristics of involved officers. US research has attempted to address this but has generally been limited to analysis of news media reports on cases of PSM (Lopez, Ford & Mitchell-Miller, 2017). Accessing highly sensitive police data on PSM has proved difficult for researchers and although studies based on media reports have done much to increase the body of research on PSM, data quality can be uneven (Stinson et al, 2014). A disadvantage of using media reports for analysis is the tendency for only the most serious or high impact cases to receive detailed coverage (Lopez et al, 2017).

Perpetrators of criminal PSM in the US are most frequently male and select a female victim (Stinson, et al, 2014; Lopez et al, 2017). They are most likely to have a public facing role, are between 36 and 43 years old with up to five years of police service (Stinson et al, 2014). Rabe-Hemp & Braithwaite (2013) reported slightly different findings: a mean officer age of 35.41 and a mean service length of 9.85 years. The difference in these findings may be explained by the use of media reports: Stinson et al (2014) only analysed cases where officers were arrested from across the entire US. Rabe-Hemp & Braithwaite (2013) included cases resulting in police

discipline as well as arrested officers, used a smaller sample size and concentrated on mid-western states only. One study examining predictors of general police corruption in the US linked a higher number of civilian complaints to an increased risk of engagement in corruption by officers, but it is unclear if this finding is applicable to PSM (Rozema & Schanenbach, 2019). Such research provides a basic overview of the characteristics of officers involved in PSM, but the characteristics summarised are very limited (both because of the data collection method and identified traits). To successfully address the issue of PSM, more needs to be understood regarding not only personal and service characteristics but also on duty and off duty behaviours.

1.4 Risk assessment and philosophical research stance

In 2017, the NPCC published a new national strategy document to improve how police forces identify and deal with APSP which included the following objective:

“All forces to use an evidence based risk assessment methodology to assess available intelligence and identify potential abuse of position for a sexual purpose and take appropriate action” (NPCC, 2017a, p9).

The aim of this research is to meet the objective of the NPCC by assisting them in developing an evidence based, actuarial risk assessment tool for early identification of police officers and staff who abuse their positions for a sexual purpose.

Within the field of forensic psychology, risk assessment generally refers to an evaluation of the likelihood of future anti-social behaviour, for example, the risk of first time offending or the risk

of recidivism (Singh & Brown, 2014). Risk assessment of offenders will evaluate both the unchanging elements (static factors) of the individual (e.g., their childhood experiences, age, and gender) and dynamic, changing factors (e.g., lifestyle and peer group), Lofthouse, Totsika, Hastings, Lindsay, Hogue & Taylor, 2014).

Forensic risk assessment was historically based on clinician based assessments of risk. However, by the 1970's increasing evidence was mounting that this method was unreliable, with clinicians tending to over-estimate risk and thus making inaccurate predictions in approximately two in three cases (Cooper, Greisel & Yuille, 2008). From the 1990's onwards, there was a shift toward actuarial risk assessments which provide probability statements of risk for an individual within a particular sample (Sjöstedt & Grann, 2002). Actuarial risk assessment tools overcome many of the issues of clinician based risk assessment including subjective biases and inclusion of irrelevant information (Barbaree, Seto, Langton & Peacock, 2001). However, actuarial risk assessment tools alone can over-rely on static factors and do not consider the possibility for individual change (Yang, Wong & Coid, 2010). In order to address this, third generation risk assessment tools combined actuarial assessment with professional judgment. Therefore, third generation tools take into account dynamic factors such as the impact of rehabilitation and treatment, in addition to static factors, and are often completed alongside the individual being assessed, increasing the likelihood of their engagement with it (Campbell, French & Gendreau, 2009). Finally, fourth generation risk assessment tools continue the methods of the third, but with structured monitoring of individuals to continually assess that the treatment and rehabilitation pathways are still valid and effective over time (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006).

The aim of this research is to give an empirical evidence base to assist the NPCC'S requirement for an evidence based risk assessment tool and therefore, this study takes a pragmatic approach. Pragmatic research seeks to identify practical solutions to real-world issues (Kaushik & Welsh, 2019). Rather than having a hypothesis to test or research questions to answer, a pragmatic approach aims to solve problems. As such it often utilises mixed methods research - such as this thesis - in order to use whatever scientific techniques are necessary to help solve the problem. Rather than a philosophical position, pragmatism is 'a set of philosophical tools that can be used to address problems' (Biesta, 2010, p3). Therefore, to create an evidence based risk assessment tool, a combination of the most appropriate research methods will be used to advance the understanding of officers involved in PSM.

Pragmatism in research has been described as the middle ground between positivism and hermeneutics (Birgden & Ward, 2003). The focus of positivism in social science research is to understand why humans behave in certain ways and the focus of hermeneutics is to establish meaning and interpretation (Age, 2014). Therefore, positivist, empirical research aims to develop universal laws and hermeneutic, qualitative research seeks to uncover meaning; a pragmatic approach can use elements of both (Birgden & Ward, 2003). For example, in the field of forensic psychology, pragmatic researchers often adopt an approach to research which considers base rate data combined with case study information (Helibrun, De Matteo & Marczyk, 2004). Pragmatic research is "driven by its core need to be of practical relevance" (Fishman, 1999 p145) and therefore "the functional utility of the research takes precedence over the requirement to adopt a particular theory" (Crego & Alison, 2004, p212).

Patton (2002) describes the four main principles of pragmatic research as utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. UTILITY: The aim of this research is to meet a nationally recognised policing need to create a usable risk assessment tool which will identify police officers and staff

who are at risk of abusing their positions. FEASIBILITY: The resulting tool must be cost effective, easy to use by specific police personnel and utilise data which is readily available to the police. PROPRIETY: This research will use extremely sensitive data pertaining to real world victims of police sexual misconduct and perpetrators. It will also involve the author accessing police premises and gaining an understanding of confidential investigative processes. Therefore, consideration with regards to the legal and ethical requirements of accessing such data is imperative. ACCURACY: The findings and interpretation of the results of this research, alongside any limitations from the data or how it was collected must also be evaluated. For example, quantitative measures will be tested for reliability and validity, qualitative analysis will consider triangulation and any forms of potential bias.

Although sexual misconduct within the police has been the subject of academic enquiry since the late 1970's, the issue rose to prominence on a national level within the United Kingdom in 2011 following the case of PC Stephen Mitchell. Mitchell had been dismissed from his force for abusing his position for a sexual purpose but was re-hired by the same force, where he escalated his behaviour against vulnerable women to rape and indecent assault (The Daily Mail, 2010). This case led to urgent reviews by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IOPC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICFRS, 2014, IOPC, 2012). These reviews found many police forces were lacking in how they investigated sexual misconduct and, despite the high profile media coverage of Mitchell, which detailed the serious offences he committed, many forces did not consider sexual misconduct to be a serious issue (HMIC, 2016).

I am a former police officer. I joined my local force of Dorset Police in 2004 and left just before submitting this thesis in 2021. In my first years of service I served in a small, rural area with a close knit team of very supportive and experienced officers. At this point in my service, I was only exposed to working with officers who, in my opinion, embodied integrity and

professionalism. At this time, I would have confidently told anyone who asked that there was no corrupt or sexually inappropriate behaviour within the police. Then in 2009, Dorset PC Richard Allen was suspended due to engaging in a sexual relationship with a vulnerable victim of crime who had subsequently been murdered by her former partner. My husband (a serving Dorset PC) attended the murder scene and, as a result, developed post-traumatic stress disorder. When he learned of PC Allen's involvement in this case he felt utterly betrayed and I shared his feelings of devastation.

My own world view of sexual misconduct in the police is that although I believe abuse of position to be a rare type of police corruption, the consequences of this behaviour can result not only in a loss of public trust and confidence but also similar loss of trust and confidence within the police. It can also result in the loss of life. After each PC Stephen Mitchell, PC Wayne Couzens or PC Richard Allen, the temptation is to say, 'this must never happen again', and yet it does.

On commencing this research, I became aware of the many gaps and absences within the literature in regards to PSM. I therefore planned a series of research projects which would cover some of the gaps I considered to be critical in establishing before commencement of the risk assessment tool project. These were: establishing the types of police sexual misconduct seen in the UK, how early within a police officer's career PSM is seen, how seriously PSM is perceived to be, and does this influence how likely it is to be reported. I felt that this approach was logical, systemic and would establish the context of PSM in the UK prior to focusing on creation of the risk assessment tool. I reviewed this approach regularly and made small adaptations as I progressed.

1.5 Theories of police corruption applied to sexual misconduct: individual, organisational, and environmental factors

Zimbardo (1972) used college students at Stanford University to explore the psychology of imprisonment. The students were assigned either the role of prisoners or guards. The prisoners were provided with plain clothing, fitted with ankle chains, and were locked in cells. The guards were equipped with smart uniforms and nightsticks. Initially, the “guards” showed some sympathy towards the “prisoners” – they were, after all, fellow college students. But by as early as day two of the experiment, some of the guards began to show cruelty towards the prisoners and their language became increasingly impersonal and humiliating. The prisoners by contrast became distressed, apathetic, or rebellious (Zimbardo, 1972).

Some of the guards followed the rules of the research and were fair and just in their interactions towards the prisoners. Some appeared to revel in the opportunity to abuse the power of their role and some became passive, watching the abuse without challenging or engaging in it. The researchers discussed the possibility that some of the guards had pre-existing tendencies towards violence and/or sadism, and the simulated prison environment provided them with the opportunity to express these traits. Another explanation was that the nature of the prison environment caused the previously moral college students to become violent and sadistic.

The Zimbardo experiment and further research gave rise to the theory of bad apples, bad barrels, and bad barrel makers within the workplace (Muzio, Faulconbridge, Gabbioneta & Greenwood 2016; Sellman, 2013). Bad apples are the individuals who are predisposed in some way to abusing power, the bad barrel is the organisation, and the bad barrel makers are the

holders of power within the organisation. This theory has been applied to explain corruption within the education system, the armed forces, government, health care, and the police.

If all police corruption is the result of bad apple individuals, their removal from a policing role would effectively remove the problem. However, where corruption is prolonged, not reported, or not dealt with effectively, organisational and environmental factors must also be considered (Maher, 2003; Punch, 2009).

1.5.1 Individual factors: the bad apple

The use of the bad apple theory to explain police sexual misconduct (PSM) suggests that officers involved have joined the police with certain personality traits which will pre-dispose them to this behaviour. In the high profile court case of PC Naude, a Cheshire police officer found guilty of raping an underage girl, the prosecution asserted that he was a predatory paedophile who joined the police to exploit potential access to young and vulnerable female victims (Everett, 2018). From the perspective of the police, explaining sexual misconduct as the result of one individual officer operating in isolation can be advantageous. To do this downplays issues such as management failures and shifts public focus away from the police as an organisation towards the individual perpetrator (Lee et al, 2013).

To support the idea of bad apple theory, it is necessary to understand what previous research finds these traits to be. Arrigo and Clausen (2003) link lower conscientiousness and the associated traits of laziness, carelessness, and irresponsibility with a greater risk of future corruption. Detrick, Chibnell & Luebert's (2004) use of psychometric testing on police recruits

appeared to support Arrigo & Clausen's findings by linking non-graduates from police training to lower levels of conscientiousness and higher levels of vulnerability, depression, and impulsivity. In addition, egocentricity, cynicism, a lack of guilt, and a general disregard for other people have been linked to police corruption (Melig, 2012). Although these findings are applicable to general police corruption, which may include some sexual misconduct, psychometric testing of sexual offenders has also found lower scores of conscientiousness when using the same tests (Dennison, Stough & Birgden, 2001; Grubin & Mars, 2006). Currently, there is not enough evidence from the research to suggest that the above traits are linked to sexual misconduct, and this type of psychometric testing is not currently used within the UK on police recruits.

Although the identification of individual traits to explain corruption is useful, there is not enough research to definitively link them to sexual misconduct and ultimately predict which officers will become involved. However, an awareness of traits such as a lack of conscientiousness and how this may manifest in police officers, such as poor written work or a low arrest rate etc., may serve as a useful starting point. Summers, Cole, Hills & Sweeting (2021, in preparation) identified deviant behaviour traits in officers involved in sexual misconduct, such as misusing police systems, taking excessive sick days, and supervisor concerns over performance. These behaviours, which appear to support a poor work ethic, may potentially link into the personality trait findings of the previous research, and therefore provide some support for the bad apple theory.

Dean and Gottschalk (2011) propose three motivating factors to explain police misconduct on an individual level: greed, opportunity and overzealousness. Officers motivated by greed will subvert the police role to exploit others for personal gain. This draws parallels with child sex

offenders who may seek to establish a position of trust in their community to facilitate access to, and abuse of, children (Craven, Brown & Gilchrist, 2006). The opportunity motivation refers to officers who have developed a “them and us” mentality (Dean & Gottschalk, 2011, p22). This mentality is developed when officers develop cynicism and suspicion towards members of the public, which strengthens bonds with colleagues creating an attitude of police vs public (Nhan, 2014). Such officers will take the initiative to misuse their roles when an opportunity presents itself and are motivated to gain personal satisfaction. The overzealous officer sees themselves as a tough, uncompromising and effective police officer who will at times act in an unlawful way. This may fall under noble cause corruption and is discussed later in this chapter.

Overall, it cannot be said that all police officers involved in sexual misconduct join the police with the intention to abuse their role or that all such officers are pre-disposed to this kind of behaviour.

1.5.2 The slippery slope and the steep cliff

Slippery slope theory is the idea that an individual can commit a series of minor ethical transgressions and still consider themselves to be a moral individual (Hicks, 2015). When applied to general police corruption, the slippery slope has been compared to a ladder – some officers may descend from minor infractions to major corruption, whereas others may settle on a particular rung or stop altogether (Punch, 2009). At all stages on the ladder, an individual will justify and rationalise the corrupt behaviour to themselves, and it will eventually become normalised (Köbis, van Prooijen, Righetti, & Van Lange, 2017). A frequently used example of the slippery slope in policing is that of accepting gratuities. Police officers are often offered hot drinks or food when on duty. Some researchers argue that the acceptance of a free hot drink or

similar may be the first rung on an evitable descent into corruption, but others find no evidence of this (Colman, 2004; Ruiz & Bono, 2004). It is thought that by transgressing in a relatively minor way, such as accepting a free drink, officers become desensitised to behaviour they know to be unethical and therefore become comfortable with more serious transgressions (Brown, Rennekamp, Seybert & Zhu, 2011). Punch (2000) suggests that internal justification of the wrong-doing is also important, and officers will only descend as far as they can reasonably justify their behaviour. For example, an officer can justify using force against a violent person as reasonable, but they would not justify the routine use of violence in the course of their duties. Furthermore, if police officers are taught that accepting a small gratuity is unethical, they may feel as though they have already been compromised, and therefore are more likely to engage in more serious behaviour because “they have nothing to lose” (Colman 2004, p39). Finally, some officers may stop their behaviour completely or settle at a certain level of corruption in response to a specific threat e.g., a colleague being caught for similar behaviour or internal reminders/training regarding professional standards (Chugh & Kern 2016).

There is little research to link the slippery slope to sexual misconduct in the police: however, it has been applied in this way to other professions. In medicine and psychotherapy, the slippery slope is characterised as the gradual crossing of boundaries between patient and doctor that may culminate in a full sexual relationship (Galletly, 2004; Sarkar, 2004). The mechanism of teacher/pupil abuse of position also follows a similar pattern, with early boundary blurring in the form of one-to-one tuition and providing personal phone numbers etc (Knoll, 2010). It is quite possible a similar gradual eroding of the professional boundary between police officer and member of the public may account for some cases of police sexual misconduct. For example, former Suffolk police officer Clare Sherman-Potts, who was by all accounts an excellent and dedicated officer, developed a relationship with a prolific offender over a period of time: moving from professional contact, to meeting socially, to a sexual relationship (Hirsh, 2015).

By contrast, the steep cliff theory is characterised by the sudden appearance of a unique opportunity with benefits so great that the potential cost to the individual is outweighed (Kobis, van Prooijen, Righetti & Van Lange, 2017). Although Kobis et al (2017) tested steep cliff theory within situations where the benefit would be financial, this theory may translate to police sexual misconduct. For example, PC Christopher Wilson of Devon and Cornwall police initiated sexual contact with a vulnerable, distressed, and intoxicated victim of crime when he unexpectedly found himself alone in the police station with her. A married officer, the potential cost was presumably his career and marriage and yet, when presented with an opportunity to abuse his role for sexual gratification, he took it (Cornwall Live, 2021).

To evaluate both slippery slope and steep cliff theory, it is important to consider how these concepts drive officers to engage in sexual misconduct; why some officers appear to gradually blur professional boundaries and why some go straight to major ethical transgressions. Gottlieb and Younggren (2009), propose an ethical acculturation model to explain the interplay between personal ethics and work ethics which may provide an explanation. This is summarised in table 1.5.2

Table 1.5.2 : Summary of Gottlieb and Younggren's (2009) ethical acculturation model

Strategy type	Maintenance of own ethics and morals	Belief in ethics and morals of organisation	Risk of sexual misconduct
Integration	High	High	Low
Separation	High	Low	Low
Assimilation	Low	High	Increased
Marginalisation	Low	Low	High

In police officers, those who use the marginalisation strategy would therefore be the most likely to make a rapid descent down the slippery slope or plunge from the steep cliff. The lack of ethics and morals across personal and work life allow for them to engage in sexual misconduct when it suits them or when such opportunities arise, with no consideration of the consequences (Gottlieb & Younggren, 2009). Those who use the assimilation strategy will set aside their personal ethics and morals to embody those of the organisation; however, their lack of personal ethics means they cannot fully understand those of the organisation. This may leave them more vulnerable to a gradual or partial descent on the slippery slope.

1.5.3 Social learning theory

The key principle of Akers social learning theory (SLT) is that criminal behaviour is learned through interactions with other people (Akers & Jennings, 2009; Burgess & Akers, 1966). It has been used to explain criminality across a broad range of offending types e.g., rape, violence, and domestic abuse (Cochran, Maskaly, Jones & Sellers, 2015). SLT comprises of four concepts which are summarised below:

- 1) *Differential association* – the idea that “individuals interact with different types of people with different ideas about the acceptability of a given social action” (Johnson, 2020, p385). Interactions with peers, family and social groups may all influence how an individual perceives criminal behaviour.
- 2) *Definitions* – this relates to the individual’s values and attitudes towards certain criminal behaviours. Simply put, individuals who approve of criminal behaviour are therefore more likely to engage in it, and those who disapprove are less likely to engage. However, the strength of the belief is also important, as weak opposition to

criminal behaviour may also increase the risk of engagement (Sellers, Cochran & Branch, 2005).

- 3) *Differential reinforcement* - refers to the rewards or lack of punishment resulting from a specific behaviour. When an individual engages in a criminal act and is not identified, or receives a benefit from committing the act e.g., money, peer acceptance/encouragement, they are more likely to repeat the behaviour (Pratt, Cullen, Sellers, Thomas Winfree, Madensen, Daigle, Fearn & Gau, 2013).
- 4) *Imitation* – Individuals are likely to imitate the behaviour of those in their closest social group, and also to observe and understand the consequences of the behaviour (Shadmanfaat, Howell, Muniz, Cochran, Kabiri, & Fontaine, 2020)

Chappell and Piquero (2004) theorised that when new officers are introduced to established teams, SLT may influence and shape their beliefs and subsequent behaviours – either towards or away from deviance. To examine this, the researchers tested how seriously officers perceived different types of police deviance e.g., theft, gratuities, and the use of excessive force, in combination with the personal complaint history of each participating officer. They discovered that officers who believed their peers considered theft and excess force to be less serious were more likely to have a history of complaints from the public. Chappell and Piquero concluded that the differential association between officers explained how likely they were to be involved in incidents of excess force and theft. More recently, the research of Garduno (2019), also identified differential association as a predictor of an increased risk of corruption in Mexican police officers.

Despite social learning theory first being linked to police corruption research in 2004, there have been few studies in the intervening time. There have been none conducted on the UK police

population and as far as the author can ascertain, none directly applied to sexual misconduct. However, on a theoretical level, applying the findings of previous research to police sexual misconduct is possible. Just as within general corruption, if an officer's peers do not consider sexual misconduct to be a particularly serious issue, that officer may be more likely to engage in it through the mechanism of differential association. Furthermore, for this theory to be relevant, officers must witness the reward and punishment. By its very nature, much of the sexual misconduct committed by police officers is likely to be carried out in private and, for many cases, officers will be suspended from duty whilst it is investigated, thus limiting opportunities for it to be witnessed.

A potential issue in applying SLT to sexual misconduct is the variation in reported frequencies of police sexual misconduct within the research. In some studies, it is reported as endemic and widespread, yet others report that it is rare (Maher, 2003; Stinson et al, 2015). Regional variations in occurrence have also been reported e.g., Lopez et al's (2007) finding that sexual misconduct appeared common in Texas but far less so in Northern states. Even within the geographically much smaller countries of England and Wales, variations both in behaviour types and outcomes has been observed (Sweeting et al, 2020). If sexual misconduct can be explained by SLT alone, it is likely that a majority of officers would need to hold beliefs that it is accepted and not considered serious, and there is insufficient evidence to support this.

1.5.4 Social norm and identity theory

Police officers tend to see themselves as set apart from the rest of society, with a strong sense of identity (Bradford, 2014). Police officers will often refer to their working lives as being in a "police family" and like a traditional family, this may be perceived as a provider of security, or a

source of disappointment in how it treats its members (du Plessis, Winterbotham, Fein, Brownlow, du Preez, McKenna, Chen, Beel & du Plessis, 2020). In social norm theory, individuals belonging to a particular group may wrongly perceive certain behaviours as contrary to their own, termed as pluralistic ignorance (Berkowitz, 2002). Typically, the occurrence of risky and undesirable behaviours within a group are greatly overestimated, and this in turn promotes engagement and justification of the undesirable behaviour (Berkowitz, 2002). Berkowitz (2002) provides the example of university students overestimating alcohol consumption by their peers and therefore increase their own alcohol consumption in order to fit with the perceived norm. Social norm theory is divided into descriptive norms: belief that a certain behaviour is commonplace and injunctive norms: whether or not it is acceptable to engage in a certain behaviour and whether it is wrong or right to do so (Jackson & Köbis, 2018).

Research into how police officers perceive sexual misconduct provides some support for social norm theory. Maher (2003; 2008), found wide variations in how prevalent officers believed sexual misconduct to be, with police chiefs generally believing it to be rare, and street-level officers believing it was common. Both groups however believed that serious, criminal sexual misconduct was far rarer than consensual sex and sex on duty. An explanation for this was the social distance of police chiefs from street level officers and lack of constant exposure to the culture. Another potential explanation for this may have been the need to toe an official line of denying that sexual misconduct is major issue to avoid damage to police reputation. Maher's (2010) exploration of female officers' perspectives of sexual misconduct identified that behaviours such as workplace sexual harassment was widely accepted and may even be encouraged. This may therefore provide evidence to suggest that the social norm of policing is one where certain forms of sexual misconduct are considered commonplace and acceptable. This is possibly compounded by the organisational response to sexual misconduct. In England and Wales, officers receive regular training inputs on the seriousness of abuse of position for a

sexual purpose (APSP). APSP has its own bespoke definition and policy, and incidents are recorded at a national level (NPCCa, 2017). Other types of police sexual misconduct such as internal sexually inappropriate behaviour are covered in the police code of ethics and there is no requirement for national case recording. This difference may perpetuate the idea that some types of sexual misconduct are normal policing behaviour.

1.5.5 Noble cause and personal gain

Noble cause corruption is derived from the ethical and moral dilemmas frequently faced by most police officers during their service. van Halderen & Kolthoff (2016, p276) describe it as “the choice between two wrongs: abiding by the rules (social, ethical, and legal norms) and letting a criminal walk, or breaking the rules to stop future offending.” Examples of noble cause corruption include planting evidence or intentionally deceiving suspects in order to elicit confessions (Cooper, 2017). Within the UK, noble cause corruption is thought to be rare and is more likely to occur in response to a specific situation e.g., to gain a confession (Porter & Warrender, 2009). The purpose of this type of corruption therefore is to achieve a ‘win’ for the organisation e.g., a conviction, a charge, a detected crime.

Police officers who engage in sexual misconduct are seeking a personal i.e., a sexual gain (NPCC, 2017a). However, some aspects of noble cause may apply to sexual misconduct. One consideration is the motivation for some officers to engage in relationships with vulnerable victims. It is possible that some officers regard themselves as, and indeed some victims regard them as, “knights in shining armour”; by in some way protecting vulnerable victims or providing a nicer relationship than they’d previously experienced (West Yorkshire Police, 2020). Therefore, although the gain is personal, the motivation is internalised as “noble”.

Another factor worthy of consideration is the cognitive dissonance that noble cause and personal gain theories may generate in officers. Cognitive dissonance occurs when individuals face an inconsistency in their belief systems and attempt to reduce this effect (Graesser & D’Mello, 2012). For example, a person who feels love and affection for animals yet eats meat, may justify this inconsistency by rationalising that it is normal and healthy to eat meat (Dowsett, Semmler, Bray, Ankeny & Chur-Hansen, 2018). When applied to police corruption, officers may need to believe that “the end justifies the means” i.e., the officer can retain their perceived morals, despite the corrupt behaviour, if there is a positive result (McClurg, 1997). Page, Pina & Giner-Sorolla (2016) find that cognitive dissonance may lead to moral disengagement in men who engage in sexually harassing behaviour - a notable feature of this being a tendency to down-play and minimise behaviour e.g., as harmless fun or banter. Therefore, noble cause and personal gain may also explain some elements of internal police misconduct where colleagues are targeted rather than victims of crime.

1.5.6 Organisational factors - bad barrels

The bad barrel theory centres on the concept that the police as an organisation has a poor moral ethos which causes officers to behave in a deviant way (Melig, 2012). Punch (2009) has used the term “bad orchards” to indicate how widespread and deep-rooted organisational police corruption can be. In contrast to the individualistic bad apple theory, where some officers join the police pre-disposed to corruption, bad barrel theory suggests that good officers are made bad by the organisation (Gottschalk, Dean & Glomseth 2012). The theory of noble cause corruption (discussed earlier in this chapter) links into the bad barrel in so far as officers may engage in corrupt behaviours in a way that will benefit the police e.g., by manipulating evidence

to secure a conviction (Melig, 2012). Bad barrel theory suggests that engagement in corruption is almost inevitable and that all officers can potentially be corrupted – whether that is by actively engaging in corruption or turning a blind eye to it (Punch, 2009).

Over the past 40 years, research and public enquiries have identified and highlighted corruption as an ongoing organisational issue. In the 1970's The Knapp Commission reported that just over half of all police officers in New York were involved in corruption (Lee et al, 2013). The MacPherson report of 1999 concluded that the Metropolitan Police were institutionally racist – an accusation which was initially rejected by then commissioner Paul Condon (Lea, 2000). More recently, the Metropolitan Police has been accused of institutional corruption after repeatedly failing to properly investigate, and at times, actively frustrate a murder investigation (BBC, 2021a). Cases such as these suggest issues in policing which cannot be explained by individual differences alone (Ivković, 2009).

Bad barrel theory must, however, consider how individual officers interact within the police as an organisation, or there is a risk of assuming that all officers will act in a similar way (Gonin, Palazzo & Hoffrage, 2012). Lee et al's (2013) exploration of bad barrel found that officers from teams with a deviant subculture were less likely to take corruption seriously and those who felt their colleagues would not report corruption were in turn less likely to report it. Lim and Sloan (2009) found smaller police departments were especially prone to maintaining a deviant subculture as bonds between colleagues may have been stronger due to needing to work more closely and frequently with each other. In England and Wales, evidence of a bad barrel was also recorded in the form of a "protective layer" – officers who had witnessed others engaging in corruption failing to report, as they had been witnessed engaging in corruption themselves

(Miller, 2003). Therefore, previous research suggests that bad barrels may exist but may be dependent on police force size, subculture and beliefs of colleagues.

Bad barrel theory has had only limited application to sexual misconduct, notably Gottschalk et al's (2012) research into sexual harassment within the Norwegian police. The researchers concluding that there was little evidence to support bad barrel theory and far more to support individual theories for sexual misconduct. Furthermore, many researchers now believe that whilst there are factors present within the police which may facilitate corruption, such as lone working and collegial bonds of loyalty, bad barrel theory alone does not explain the complexities of police corruption (Lopez et al, 2017; Maher 2003; Maher 2010; Porter & Warrender; 2009).

1.5.7 Working environment

Although not a theory of corruption, it is important to consider the working environment of the police and how this may play a part in sexual misconduct. Police officers typically work according to shift patterns, may frequently work alone, and have many opportunities to engage with members of the public on a one-to-one basis (Maher, 2003; Stinson et al, 2014). In addition to this, certain roles within the police, such as offender management units and covert intelligence units, often require officers to work closely with criminals. Such roles can often be high pressured and stressful and may lead officers into corruption, especially if the officer has financial or substance misuse issues (Moran, 2005). For example, former Cleveland police officer PC Gary Hansford coerced at least three highly vulnerable female informants into performing sexual acts while working as an informant handler (The Daily Mail, 2007).

It is possible that the working environment of the police is more likely to be a factor in cases of sexual misconduct where the victim is external to the police. Where officers are conducting or attempting to engage in relationships with vulnerable members of the public, it is not difficult to understand how lone working etc. will make such behaviour easier. Furthermore, poor supervision whether due to workload, turning a blind eye, or complicit endorsement of the behaviour may also be an enabling factor (Lee et al, 2013; Paoline, Myers & Worden, 2000) The size of the police force may also play a part. Greater frequencies of corruption have been recorded in larger police forces – this is thought to be due to the difficulties in monitoring the behaviour of a larger work force (Eitle, D’Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2014).

1.5.8 Police Culture

Women have worked in policing - albeit mainly in volunteer roles – since the late 1880’s but it wasn’t until the mid-1970’s that female officers were afforded equal pay and role equality with their male counterparts (Greater Manchester Police, 2020; Maher, 2010). The UK police workforce remains predominantly masculine, with approximately twice as many male officers as female officers of constable rank, rising to around two and a half as many men for ranks above this (Clark, 2021). This male working culture is thought to give rise to police sexual misconduct (Lopez et al, 2007; Maher, 2003; Stinson et al, 2014).

Traditionally, male police culture is associated with aspects such as the use of excessive force, dubious interpretations of police regulations and high levels of cynicism and scepticism (Loftus, 2010). Fictionalised accounts of policing from the 1970’s and 1980’s - although often based on true experiences - serve to reinforce these ideas. The TV series *Life on Mars*, and the book series “*Horse’s Arse*” by former police Inspector Charlie Owen, feature male characters who fit

this mould; and often portrayals of female characters who are judged on their physical attractiveness rather than their ability as police officers. Maher (2010) explored this culture from the perspective of US based female police officers and found that sexual harassment appears to be an ingrained and accepted aspect of a male dominated police culture. Furthermore, the various policies and training packages designed to control it were limited in their efficacy. In England and Wales, Brown et al (2018) surveyed police staff and found that the majority had experienced sexually motivated harassment by male colleagues. Participants did not feel that the police took allegations of such behaviour seriously. In their research focusing on senior female police officers, Brown et al's (2018) findings indicated that some of the traditional aspects of male dominated police culture still had a role to play in the sexual harassment of female staff.

The male dominated police culture is also linked to the individual beliefs of officers. Research into police attitudes towards intimate partner violence found evidence of sexist beliefs and low levels of empathy in some male officers (Gracia, Garcia & Lila, 2014; Lila, Gracia, Garcia, 2012). Evidence of sexist beliefs have also been reported in research into rape myth acceptance in police officers (Murphy & Hine, 2019; Sleath & Bull, 2017). It is concerning that recent research into police culture still finds evidence of a sexist culture; it might be expected that outdated attitudes may dissipate with newer generations of police officers, but this does not appear to be the case. In addition to this, Atkinson (2017) argues that police culture can subordinate femininity; resulting in female officers feeling a need to behave in a subordinate way in front of male colleagues. Even working adaptations such as flexible working, which are available to any officer, are looked down upon as they are considered to be a female requirement e.g., to manage children around work (Silvestri, 2017).

Potentially, although male dominated police culture may provide the environment for police sexual misconduct to occur, it is likely that individual factors relating to personal belief systems are also involved (Maher, 2010). In addition to this, social norm theory may also be a factor, in that these beliefs and attitudes are passed from older to younger police officers. In support of this, Lee et al (2013) found that officers in supervisory roles who were tolerant of corruption passed this tolerance down to their staff, who in turn became less likely to report misconduct. Similar results were found when officer's peers had supportive attitudes to misconduct (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011).

From a feminist theory perspective, sexual violence and harassment is the result of a "gender system maintained by a dominant, normative form of masculinity" (Uggen & Blackstone, 2004, p66). The police is a hierarchical, male dominated environment where sexual bullying and harassment serves to strengthen the bonds between like-minded officers and isolate women (Steinþórsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2018). By contrast, organisations with egalitarian values and practises report fewer incidents of workplace sexual harassment (Otterbach, Sousa-Poza & Zhang, 2021). Potentially, therefore, the culture of the police, and the pressure to conform to social norms within it, may override the beliefs and ethics of the individual

1.5.9 Bad barrel makers or the "rotten orchard"

The concept of the bad barrel maker considers corrupt behaviour on a macro-level and goes beyond individual and situational causes of corruption (Roberts, 2020). An often-cited example is the behaviour of military personnel towards Iraqi prisoners of war in the early 2000s. The environment of the prison facilitated the torture and abuse of the prisoners, and senior officers in charge encouraged the abuse to take place (Harding, 2020). In this context, the military

personnel were operating in an isolated environment, away from public and legal scrutiny, with a directive to interrogate prisoners but with a lack of specific guidance on how to achieve this. This is thought to have led the officers to engage in behaviours which they wouldn't otherwise, had they not been placed in that environment.

In police corruption research, Punch (2009), uses the term rotten orchard in preference to bad barrel makers, and states that corruption is not the result of the individual or the environment, but is the result of institutional corruption and failure within the police. Therefore, corrupt police officers are essentially created by exposure to the police environment and institutional tolerance, mismanagement and a lack of scrutiny. An issue with the rotten orchards concept is that it is almost impossible to entirely separate individual and organisational factors from systemic police failure (Gottschalk et al, 2011). Lim & Sloan (2013) found little evidence to support the rotten orchards argument; however, it was possible that the police forces participating in their research were too small to uncover evidence of macro-level corruption. The current Spycops enquiry into police infiltration of environmental activists, some of whom had intimate relationships with protestors to gain information, is a prime example of the rotten orchards concept. The police and media focused on the portrayal of these undercover officers as bad apples and neglected the fact that they were authorised to engage with protestors in this way; therefore, disregarding the relationship between the undercover unit and the actions of the individual officers (Stephens Griffin, 2020).

When applied to police sexual misconduct, there may be some evidence of institutional failure. PC Stephen Mitchell of Northumbria, who was convicted of multiple rapes and sexual assaults of vulnerable women in 2011, had previously been dismissed from the police in 2007 for abusing his position and later reinstated (Daily Mail, 2011). More recently, both the Metropolitan Police

and Kent Police are facing investigations by the Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC) for their response to allegations of indecent exposure by PC Wayne Couzens who, as of September 2021, is awaiting sentence for the murder of Sarah Everard (BBC, 2021b). If evidence of systems failure is seen in some of the highest profile cases of sexual misconduct, it is feasible that more exists within the police.

1.5.10 Conclusion

Police sexual misconduct comprises a wide range of behaviours, some of which fall under criminal law in England and Wales. The author has identified eight different types of sexual misconduct using outcomes of police disciplinary hearings in England and Wales (Sweeting et al, 2020). Of these eight behaviours, at least three were potentially criminal offences – sexual contact with juveniles, voyeurism (both covered by the Sexual Offences Act), and abuse of position for a sexual purpose (misconduct in a public office). Some of the behaviours, for example, using inappropriate language towards colleagues were dealt with using the lowest level of discipline. It is worth considering that the balance of organisational and individual theories relating to sexual misconduct may differ according to the behaviour of the officer.

1.5.10.1 Officers who target vulnerable victims of crime, juveniles, and offenders

Potentially, some officers who seek out and target vulnerable victims for the purpose of personal sexual gratification may have joined the police with some intent to abuse the power of their role. PC Mitchell already had a history of sexual misconduct in the army and PC Naude's conduct was a concern from the first days of his police career. Therefore, these two particular officers

may have been “bad apples”, and both appeared to use the working environment of the police to facilitate their offending: in particular, exploiting vulnerable women and girls at moments where they were especially exposed e.g., after reporting domestic abuse or held in police custody. It is possible that the male dominated culture of the police and differential association were less involved. This particular type of abuse of position for a sexual gain is thought to be rare in England and Wales with the most recent official figures providing an average of 138 cases per year (HMICFRS, 2019b). Even accounting for unreported cases, this does not suggest that this type of behaviour is widespread to the point where a majority of officers would find it acceptable or that it is learned from other officers.

In the case of Clare Sherman-Potts, there may be less evidence to suggest that she joined the police with the intention of abusing her role. Her owning force described her conduct in glowing terms and the allegations against her were met with a sense of astonishment. Furthermore, she began what appeared to be a sexual and emotional relationship with the offender she was involved with as they moved in together - a significant difference from Naude and Mitchell who sought sexual gratification alone from their victims. She met the offender through her role in the police and was able to meet with him for personal reasons under the guise of monitoring his progress following release from prison – suggesting a gradual blurring of professional boundaries “slippery slope” and capitalising on the police environment. There is less detailed media coverage of PC Wilson, but his owning force did not appear to have concerns over his conduct both before and after joining the police. He also took advantage of his working environment e.g., an empty police station, to quickly establish sexual contact with a vulnerable victim (steep cliff).

From consideration of these cases, a proposed theoretical pathway for officers who target vulnerable victims, offenders, and juveniles is suggested below:

- **The individual** - personality traits which increase the likelihood of sexual misconduct and/or an intent to abuse the power of the police role and/or being open to opportunities for sexual engagement which are not compatible with policing.
- **The environment** – recognition of opportunity e.g., lone working, working with minimal supervision, being able to contact vulnerable people within the guise of having a legitimate policing purpose.
- **The line** - Having identified a suitable victim(s) the officer crosses the line, either by blurring professional boundaries over time or achieving immediate sexual contact with the victim.
- **The motivation** – the sexual contact is purely for the purposes of sexual gratification and/or has elements of justification. For example – an emotional relationship, being a “knight in shining armour”.

1.5.10.2 Officers who target colleagues

Where officers target colleagues, there may be some differences in how the various theories can be applied to their behaviour. A commonality appears to be the existence of a sexually charged work atmosphere e.g., chat groups where sexual comments are made, officers smacking each other on the behind at work etc. This would appear to evidence findings of researchers such as Brown et al (2018), Silverstri (2017) and Atkinson (2017) in that the police culture is a major factor in cases of internal sexual harassment, use of sexually inappropriate language, and sexual assault. Social learning theories and differential association originating from the masculine police culture may therefore be more directly applicable to internal sexual misconduct. New recruits may observe and learn sexually inappropriate behaviours from their

peers, or they may have learned them from previous work environments. For example, some police officers come from military backgrounds, where enduring issues with sexism and sexual harassment are well documented (Gibbs, 2019; Rossellini et al, 2017; Schaefer, Bigelman, Gist & Lerner, 2021).

What is perhaps harder to discern in cases of internal PSM is the personality traits of officers involved in this behaviour e.g., are these officers “bad apples” in the same way or to the same degree as PCs Naude and Mitchell? Krings & Facchin (2009) found engagement in sexually harassing behaviour to be more likely in men with higher scores for sexism and lower scores of agreeableness. Interestingly, and apparently in line with the findings of Arrigo & Clausen (2003) and Detrick et al (2004), men who engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour in the workplace have been found to have lower levels of conscientiousness (Hardies, 2019). Therefore, it is possible that officers who engage in internal PSM have some personality traits which could predict this type of behaviour. However, it would be difficult to apply the label of “bad apple” to all such officers, as sexually inappropriate behaviour at work can consist of a very broad spectrum of behaviours, and previous research indicates that the working environment of the police and its culture also plays a part. Linking into this, moral disengagement due to cognitive dissonance may allow individuals to justify and minimise their behaviour (Page et al 2016).

Sexual misconduct in police officers is known to include a range of behaviours and within this, the victim experiencing the behaviour may be external to the police, internal to it, or potentially multiple victims across both arenas may be targeted. In this chapter, various theories of police corruption have been applied to police sexual misconduct research and real life cases as reported in the media. It is suggested that there is not one single theory which can account for police sexual misconduct. To label all officers who have engaged in any type of PSM as bad

apples, or alternatively state that all PSM is a result of the bad barrel of the police environment, is over-simplistic. As McClurg (1997, p411) explains, we can either assume that the majority of officers are essentially good people or that the majority “are unscrupulous wrong doers who do not care about doing the right thing.”

Both the working environment of the police and the culture may provide opportunities for PSM to occur, yet the majority of police officers never engage in this behaviour – thus implying that officer’s personal beliefs, ethics and morals must also be involved. It is hard to believe that most police officers would be supportive of colleagues’ engagement in sexual relationships with vulnerable people, or the sexual abuse of juveniles, although there is evidence to suggest that internal sexual misconduct can be learned, minimised, or justified.

Rather than attempting to explain and account for all PSM with one theory, analysis of individual cases suggests that elements of individual, organisational and environmental factors are all involved. Overall, officers who target vulnerable victims of crime and children appear more likely to be “bad apples” who have exploited the working environment of the police to abuse their role. For those who target colleagues, police culture appears to play more of a role, combined with some individual pre-disposition. In both cases, it is recommended that wider contextual aspects such as motivation and the police environment are considered when determining why some officers engage in sexual misconduct.

1.6 Outline of the integrated thesis

This integrated thesis comprises of nine chapters which include three published papers and four additional papers currently in preparation. Chapter two provides a typology of PSM behaviours recorded in England and Wales with an analysis of how these compare to a US typology. This chapter will also examine the disciplinary outcomes and descriptive findings relating to perpetrator gender and rank. Chapter three is a case study analysis of one police officer's sexual misconduct history and his on and off duty behaviours. Chapter four is a thematic analysis of ten complete police investigations into APSP; the findings of which informed the creation of a proforma document later used to collect data for the risk assessment tool. In Chapter five, organisational themes in relation to officers' perceptions of the seriousness of PSM and the barriers to reporting are explored. In Chapters six and seven, PSM within the context of police training and recruitment is explored, alongside police trainers' perceptions of recruit standards. Chapter eight provides a timeline of events which directly led to the requirement for an evidence-based risk assessment tool, the proforma development and data collection and bivariate and multivariate analyses. Chapter nine concludes the thesis and discusses the findings of the research areas and makes recommendations for future research and to the police.

Therefore, this thesis begins by exploring and categorising the types of sexual misconduct reported within the UK police in order to establish the extent of the issue and which officers may be involved in which types of PSM (Chapter 2). The following two chapters (3 & 4) explore PSM cases in detail to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of: i) the personal characteristics and individual differences of officers involved in PSM and ii) the on and off duty behaviours they engaged in prior to being investigated. The findings of these opening chapters provided insight into the potential risk indicators of PSM. Prior to moving on to the risk assessment analysis, it was necessary to explore two further considerations. Firstly, the 'blue

wall of silence’, the non-reporting of police corruption by colleagues due to fear and/or loyalty. This concept is largely untested in cases of PSM as is an understanding of how seriously officers perceive PSM. Therefore, Chapter 5 addresses these issues as, for a risk assessment of PSM to be of use to the police, it is also critical to explore how PSM may go unreported and how this might be improved. Secondly, Chapters 6 & 7 seek to understand when in an officer’s career risk indicators of PSM and PSM itself might manifest by examining the behaviour of police recruits during their training. These chapters also provide a further exploration of the barriers which may inhibit reporting and potential improvements to the police recruitment process. The final chapter (8) draws on the findings from all the aforementioned research to provide an analysis of personal, police service related and behavioural characteristics which may assist the police to identify police officers and staff who are at risk of engaging in PSM. Table 1.6.1 provides an overview of the research papers with the methodology, analysis, and theoretical orientation of each alongside the key findings.

Table 1.6.1 Summary of research papers, methodology, analysis, and theoretical orientation

Chapter	Methods	N	Analytic method	Theoretical orientation	Key findings
2. Outcomes of PSM	Secondary data analysis	155	Bivariate	Bad apples, bad barrel makers	Higher ranking officers more likely to target colleagues than victims of crime
3. PC Just do enough	Case study	1	Narrative	Bad apples, Steep cliff	Descent into serious corruption and PSM can be rapid, extremely vulnerable victims may be targeted
4. The sharks and the fisherman	Secondary	10	Qualitative content analysis (Bengtsson, 2016)	Bad apples, Steep cliff, Slippery slope, noble cause	Two behavioural typologies of officer are proposed
5. Blue wall of silence	Survey/vignettes	382	FA, CLM, Qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2005)	Social desirability, bad barrel	APSP more likely to be reported than internal sexual misconduct.

6. PSM in police recruits	Focus group	25	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Slippery slope/steep cliff, bad barrel	PSM can occur during training. Recruits are resistant to reporting.
7. Police recruitment	Focus group	25	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Bad apples	Police trainers believe current recruitment does not do enough to prevent bad apples from joining
8. Risk analysis	Survey	598	Logistic regression	Bad apple, bad barrels, steep cliff, slippery slope	Support for the Sharks and Fisherman typologies

(FA – factor analysis, CLMM, cumulative link mixed model)

Chapter Two

Outcomes of Police Sexual Misconduct in the UK.

Published as: Sweeting, F., Hills, P., & Cole, T. (2020). Outcomes of Police Sexual Misconduct in the UK. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*.

Opening statement on the paper:

This section has been redacted as it contains confidential methodological information.

Abstract

Sexual misconduct in police officers and staff is a serious form of corruption with negative consequences for victims and the reputation of the police. It can include a variety of behaviours ranging from inappropriate sexual comments to colleagues, to sexual activity with vulnerable victims of crime. Analysis of publicly accessible data available from proven cases of sexual misconduct in 30 police forces in England and Wales, has identified eight categories of sexual misconduct, together with the subsequent disciplinary outcomes. The most frequently recorded type of sexual misconduct involved officers of Constable rank conducting sexual relationships with victims of crime. Conversely, officers of higher ranks were more frequently found to engage in sexual bullying towards junior officers. Consequential dismissal rates varied greatly across different regions of the country. This research focuses on sexual misconduct within English and Welsh police forces and provides the current picture behaviours across regions, ranks and gender.

Introduction

In 2011, PC Stephen Mitchell of Northumbria police was successfully prosecuted for multiple sexual assaults and rapes he had committed through abusing his position as a police officer. During the court case, it was established he had previously conducted a sexual relationship with a vulnerable female victim of crime yet had not been dismissed. This case was a watershed moment for UK policing and precipitated urgent reviews to investigate the extent, and investigation quality, of such cases (HMICFRS, 2017a). This resulted in changes to police regulations, for example requiring forces to make public the results of misconduct hearings (Home Office, 2015a).

The National Police Chiefs Council of England and Wales (NPCC, 2017a, p6) defines abuse of position for sexual gain as “any behaviour by a police officer or police staff member, whether on or off duty, that takes advantage of their position as a member of the police service to misuse their position, authority or powers in order to pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with any member of the public”. Prior to this definition, but using similar terms, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC, 2017) identified 436 such cases over a two-year period. More recently, 1491 cases of sexual misconduct (including abuse of position) have been reported across 33 police forces in England and Wales over the past 6 years (Jayanetti, 2019).

Considering there are currently 199,753 serving police officers and staff (Home Office, 2019b), these figures reflect that sexual misconduct is relatively rare in England and Wales. Based on an average of 218 cases a year, this equates to 0.001 cases per person or one case in every 1000 staff. Most officers comply with the high standards of ethics and professional behaviour expected (College of Policing, 2014a). However, when such behaviours do occur, such actions

not only further victimise some already vulnerable people, but due to media interest, additionally can cause severe damage to the reputation of the police. Potentially, it may also impact the likelihood of other victims of sexual abuse reporting.

Previous research into sexual misconduct in the police is sparse. Maher (2003 - adapted from Sapp, 1994), identified eight types of sexual misconduct in North American police: Non-sexual contacts (e.g., where the victim is unaware the contact is sexually motivated), voyeuristic contacts, sexual contacts with crime victims, offenders, or juveniles, "sexual shakedown" (sexual favours in return for police leniency), citizen initiated sexual contacts, and officer initiated sexual contacts. In this under-researched area of police corruption creation of such a typology is a useful start in exploring the behaviours involved.

To date, there has been no similar attempt at categorisation of police sexual misconduct in the UK, yet such findings are often incorporated into UK policy (Kautt, 2011). However, there are many differences between the US and UK, for example, police in the UK are more accountable to central government and employ more female officers than the US police (30% vs 12.6%), (Hargreaves et al, 2018; Statista, 2018). In terms of corrupt behaviour, US research presents it as more endemic and intertwined with higher governmental levels, than within the UK (Punch 2009).

This research is an exploratory attempt using publicly accessible data to establish the current picture of police sexual misconduct in England and Wales. It will attempt to identify whether there are different categories of sexual misconduct and the frequencies of these. It will also examine if there are patterns seen between different groups of perpetrators such as between ranks and genders. The final outcome of cases will also be assessed to understand which

behaviours result in dismissal from the Police and if this is even across offence types, rank and gender.

Methodology

Data Collection

This research involved quantitative analysis of secondary data held on the public websites of police forces in England and Wales. Websites of all 48 police forces within the UK (including the British Transport Police and Civil Nuclear Constabulary) were accessed in November 2018 and again in April 2019 to ensure inclusivity of cases. By April 2019, many forces also had begun to specify that the outcomes of hearings would only be published for a period of 28 days before being permanently deleted.

All misconduct hearings featuring a clear sexual element or behaviour were recorded. There was a total of 155 cases from 30 forces. Some other forces included misconduct outcomes, but it was impossible to ascertain if the behaviour was sexual and therefore, these cases were excluded.

Analysis

Explanation of outcomes

The type of sexual misconduct was coded into categories. Two cases involved a perpetrator found guilty of more than one type of sexual misconduct. In these, the most serious offence was recorded.

The coding was initially based on the eight types of police sexual misconduct identified by Maher (2003), as similarities were noted in the current sample. These included examples of voyeuristic activity (category 2); contact with victims (category 3) or juveniles (category 5). However, some of Maher’s categories were better suited to US data with no equivalent behaviour observed during this sample, for example sexual shakedowns (demands by a police officer for a sexual service in return for not making an arrest) were not observed (category 6) and sexual contact with offenders all occurred (in this sample) in apparently consensual relationships (category 4). Table i provides the original Maher coding scheme and the final coding in this study for comparison.

Table i: Comparison of US and UK sexual misconduct categories – unless stated otherwise, “officer” is inclusive of police staff, Police Community Support Officers and Special Constables.

Maher (2003) Police Sexual Misconduct Categories:	Final coding scheme in this study:	Notable differences:
Non-sexual contacts that are sexually motivated: For example, an unnecessary traffic stop to get a better look at car occupants	No equivalent behaviour recorded	
Voyeuristic contacts: An officer seeks opportunities to view victim in a state of undress e.g., looking into windows	Voyeurism: misuse of authority/police equipment to view members of the public for a sexual motivate e.g., using the police helicopter to view women sunbathing	
Contacts with crime victims: An officer takes advantage of contacting a victim for the purpose of initiating sexual	Sexual and attempted sexual relationships with victims, witnesses and vulnerable persons: Often involving	Inclusion of witnesses and vulnerable persons

contact e.g., unnecessary home visits

female victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual assault

Contacts with offenders:

Taking advantage of suspected offenders e.g., unnecessary body searches

Sexual relationships with

offenders: Developing a sexual relationship with a suspect

No examples of sexually motivated harassment such as unnecessary body searches, however sexual relationships were recorded

Contacts with juveniles: An officer accepting or instigating sexual contact with a juvenile

Sexual contact/behaviour involving juveniles or children:

Making inappropriate contact with juveniles met during the course of their duties in person or by text message/social media. Includes making or possessing pornographic images of juveniles

Inclusion of making and/or possessing pornographic images of juveniles

Sexual shakedowns: Demand of a sexual service in return for police leniency e.g., requesting sex from a citizen in return for not arresting them

No equivalent behaviour recorded

Citizen initiated sexual contact: Accepting sexual contact initiated by a citizen

No equivalent behaviour recorded

Officer initiated sexual contact: Initiating contact with a citizen who willingly participates

Sex on duty: Having sex during work hours with a colleague or partner

In this sample, officers were on duty at the time and participants knew them

No equivalent behaviour

Unwanted attempts to establish sexual contact with members of the public: Who were not victims, witnesses or otherwise vulnerable people. This often involved misuse of police systems by officers to

obtain addresses, phone numbers and social media accounts

No equivalent behaviour

Pornography (adult): Using police equipment to make pornographic videos (with consent) or posting intimate images of former partners on “revenge porn” websites

Explanation of outcomes

Five different outcomes were identified from the misconduct hearings.

- 1) **None** – where the incident was “not proven”.
- 2) **Management advice** – As per Home Office (2017c) guidance, the officer is advised of the reason however no formal disciplinary record was created.
- 3) **Written warning** – The officer was informed that the written warning will be held on file for 12 months and any further incidents of misconduct within this would likely result in a final warning.
- 4) **Final warning** – The officer was informed that the warning will be held on file for 18 months and any further misconduct resulting in more than management advice is likely to result in dismissal.
- 5) **Dismissal** - either with or without a 28-day notice period. The officer will be placed on a “barred” list – preventing them from re-joining any other force. In some cases, within this study, officers resigned from their posts prior to their misconduct hearings. In these

cases, the agreed outcome had they not resigned was recorded - this was dismissal in 100% of such cases.

Results

Descriptive statistics

TYPES OF CASE: As seen in table ii, of the 155 police sexual misconduct cases in this study the most common type of incident, nearly 1/3 cases, involved sexual relationships with victims, witnesses and vulnerable people. Victims of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault were frequently recorded. Victims who were vulnerable due to mental health issues, substance abuse or in one case, the recent death of her spouse, were less common. In a quarter of cases, the officer involved was in relationships with more than one victim.

The second largest category was incidents involving sexual behaviour towards colleagues. In addition, it is concerning to note sexual contact and behaviour involving juveniles accounted for 13% of all cases – higher than sex on duty for example. Regional variation has also been noted in the prevalence for different types of case as shown in tables iii and v. The most common sexual misconduct type across all but two regions being sex with victims with exception of London (juveniles) and the Southeast (behaviour towards colleagues).

Table ii – Category of incident by gender and rank. Data in parentheses indicate percentage

Category	Total cases	Gender		Rank					
		Male	Female	Staff	Special	PC	DC	Sgt	Inspector
1 Voyeurism	4 (2.6)	4 (100)	-	-	-	4 (100)	-	-	-
2 Sex with victims	51 (32.9)	49 (96)	2 (4)	2 (4)	1 (2)	40 (78)	4 (8)	3 (6)	1 (2)
3 Juveniles	20 (13)	20 (100)	-	1 (5)	4 (20)	13 (65)	1 (5)	1 (5)	-
4 Sex with offenders	10 (6.5)	5 (50)	5 (50)	-	2 (20)	4 (40)	3 (30)	1 (10)	-
5 Behaviour towards staff	34 (21.9)	33 (97.1)	1 (2.9)	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	18 (52.9)	-	10 (28.6)	2 (5.7)
6 Sex on duty	10 (6.5)	10 (100)	-	2 (20)	-	7 (70)	-	1 (10)	-
7 Contact with MOP	22 (14.2)	22 (100)	-	3 (13.6)	2 (9.1)	15 (68.2)	-	1 (4.5)	1 (4.5)
8 Pornography	4 (2.6)	4 (100)	-	-	-	3 (75)	-	1 (25)	-
Totals	155 (100)	147 (94.8)	8 (5.2)	9 (5.8)	12 (7.7)	104 (67.1)	8 (5.2)	18 (11.6)	4 (2.6)

Table iii – Most frequently recorded misconduct type by region.

Region	Category
South West	2 – Sex with victims/witnesses
South East	5 – Behaviour towards colleagues
Greater London	7 - Juveniles
West Midlands	2 – Sex with victims/witnesses
East Midlands	2 – Sex with victims/witnesses
East Anglia	5 – Behaviour towards colleagues
North East	2 – Sex with victims/witnesses
Yorkshire and The Humber	2 – Sex with victims/witnesses

PERPETRATORS:

Of the 155 cases in this study, 94.8% police sexual misconduct cases involved male officers and 5.2% involved female officers. In terms of rank, the majority of officers were Police Constables (67.1%) followed by Sergeants and Detective Sergeants (11.6%). Police staff, Special Constable and higher-ranking officers - those holding the rank of Inspector or above accounted for 5.8%, 7.7% and 2.6% respectively. The higher-ranking officers comprised of two Chief Inspectors, one Inspector and one Chief Superintendent. The police staff comprised of two Police Community Support Officers and seven civilian police employees whose roles were unspecified.

A significant association was found between perpetrators of constable rank (Police Constable and Detective Constable) and victim type $\chi^2(1) = 5.815, p=0.045$. Detective constables were 1.8 times more likely to target offenders than Police Constables. The most commonly observed

misconduct types in the Police Constable group were sex with victims and attempting to establish a sexual relationship with members of the public.

There was a significant association between higher perpetrator rank and type of sexual misconduct, $\chi^2(1) = 11.354$, $p = 0.001$. Officers holding the rank of Sergeant or above were 7.44 times more likely to be involved in sexual misconduct towards colleagues than those of Constable rank. In nine out of twelve cases, the behaviour involved direct comments and/or non-consensual touching and was directed towards female colleagues, of a lower rank. A third of cases involving Special Constables involved in sexual/contact and behaviour towards juveniles.

Outcomes:

Of note is the differences in outcomes in many of the misconduct categories. Offences related to voyeurism and sex with offenders were found to have a 100% dismissal rate. Conversely, sexual relationships with victims of crime or making unwanted sexually motivated contact with members of the public did not always result in dismissal. The lowest outcome given for having a proven sexual relationship with a vulnerable victim of crime (two cases involving constables) was a final warning.

Similar apparently inconsistent outcomes were observed in the sex on duty category. The lowest level of discipline for having sex on duty was a verbal warning given in two cases to a member of police staff and a sergeant. Two police constables from the same force were given final warnings for having sex on duty in two unconnected incidents, however the majority of police

constables who did this were dismissed. One police constable who sent sexual text messages to a juvenile was given a final warning where 100% of other officers who did this were dismissed.

Table iv below highlights disparities in case outcome.

Table iv – Outcomes across misconduct category. Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

Category	Outcomes				
	None	Management advice	Written warning	Final warning	Dismissal
1. Voyeurism	-	-	-	-	4 (100)
2. Sex with victims	2 (4)	-	2 (4)	7 (14)	39 (78)
3. Juveniles	-	-	-	1 (5)	19 (95)
4. Sex with offenders	-	-	-	-	10 (100)
5. Behaviour towards staff	2 (5.7)	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	13 (37.1)	15 (44.1)
6. Sex on duty	-	2 (20)	-	3 (30)	5 (50)
7. Contact with MOP	2 (9.1)	-	1 (4.5)	6 (27.3)	13 (59.1)
8. Pornography	-	-	-	2 (50)	2 (50)
Totals	6 (3.9)	3 (1.9)	6 (3.9)	32 (20.6)	107 (69)

To explore the differences in outcomes, cases were categorised into regions as shown in Table v. There appear to be regional differences in misconduct outcomes – for example the dismissal rate for sex with a victim of crime (category 2) in the South is recorded at 94.4%, 72.7% in the Midlands and 66.7% in the North. Other differences are in dismissal rates appear in relation to behaviour towards staff, sex on duty, contact with members of the public and pornography.

Table v – Regional differences in outcomes

	Regions - number of cases and percentage dismissed		
	South	Midlands	North
1. Voyeurism	No cases	No cases	4 100% dismissed
2. Sex with victims	18 94.4% dismissed	11 72.7% dismissed	21 66.7% dismissed
3. Juveniles	13 92.3% dismissed	2 100% dismissed	5 100% dismissed
4. Sex with offenders	4 100% dismissed	4 100% dismissed	2 100% dismissed
5. Behaviour towards staff	17 64.7% dismissed	5 0% dismissed	12 25% dismissed
6. Sex on duty	5 80% dismissed	2 100% dismissed	2 50% dismissed
7. Contact with MOP	10 70% dismissed	1 100% dismissed	10 40% dismissed
8. Pornography	3 33.3% dismissed	No cases	1 100% dismissed

No significant difference was found in dismissal rates between officers of lower and higher ranks. There were too few female officers in the sample to test for differences in outcome and gender however, all eight female officers included in this research were dismissed. Five of the eight had relationships with offenders - a category with a 100% dismissal rate. Of the remaining three, two had relationships with victims of crime and one was found to have demonstrated a

protracted pattern of inappropriate sexual behaviour at work where many colleagues provided evidence against her.

Discussion

Akin to previous findings, this research found there were different categories of sexual misconduct and considered the frequencies of these. The most common type of sexual misconduct committed by police officers was having sexual relationships with victims, witnesses and vulnerable people. There were also some potential patterns between different groups of perpetrators, although the sample sizes were too small to make any firm conclusions. However, the majority of female officers involved in sexual misconduct were found to be having relationships with offenders. Special Constables were mainly involved in sexual misconduct with juveniles, and officers of higher rank were most frequently found to be engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards colleagues. Regional differences were also observed between types of misconduct and the outcomes of cases, ranging from no action to dismissal.

Categories of sexual misconduct

Sexual relationships with victims of crime accounted for just over a third of the total cases in the current research. However, it is likely this is under-reported, as it is known victims are reluctant to come forward fearing they will not be believed (Stinson et al, 2014). The targeting of vulnerable victims is akin to what we know about the types of individuals' sex offenders target in general (Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard 2010; Rebocho & Silva 2014;). Factors such as a criminal history, stressful life events and mental illness appear to increase the risk of being

targeted (Cottler et al, 2014) and the findings of this research support this. It is of note many of the victims targeted in this sample were already highly vulnerable, coming into contact with police for reasons of domestic violence or sexual assault and then being re-victimised again by those in a position of trust. When considering victim selection in other areas involving abuse of position, it is thought teachers select pupils who are both easily controlled and likely to keep the secret (Knoll, 2017). The same has been found in prison-based abuse of position (Beck, 2015). It is therefore possible that vulnerability may be a factor in victim selection for police officers. However, it should be considered that some victims may not consider themselves as vulnerable, particularly if they came into contact with the police as witnesses rather than victims. To fulfil the NPCC's definition of abuse of position, the victim does not have to be vulnerable – the imbalance of power between officer and victim is considered sufficient (NPCC, 2017a).

Research into why police officers engage in corrupt behaviour, including having sex with victims of crimes centres on the concept of the bad apple and the bad barrel. An officer who joins the police with intention of abusing their role is a bad apple and officers who have no such intent may be gradually become “bad” from the morally corrupt and unethical police environment – the bad barrel (Melig, 2012). In addition to this, policing provides many opportunities for lone working, management efficacy is variable, and colleagues may be reluctant to report wrongdoing (Lopez, 2017, Cottler, 2014). However, the bad apple/bad barrel theory oversimplifies the complex issue of sexual misconduct and suggests that all police officers either are or have the potential to become corrupt. More recent research finds that corrupt behaviour is likely to be combination of organisational and ecological factors, with less importance placed on individual factors (Lim & Sloan, 2016; Rosenbaum, 2016).

Regional differences in type of misconduct

For the majority of regions, the most common type of sexual misconduct was sex with vulnerable victims/witnesses of crime. However, the most frequently recorded type in Greater and Central London involved juveniles. Sexually inappropriate behaviour towards staff was the most frequently recorded type in the Southeast and East Anglia. It is unclear why there should be regional differences, however similar regional disparity has been found in the United States, with the majority of sexual misconduct occurring in Southern States (Stinson et al, 2015). This is a matter of interest and will be fed back and further considered at pertinent levels of National Policing in order to develop potential hypotheses about why this may be the case – if vetting procedures are different in London; or if there are more male officers in senior ranks in Southeast and East Anglia, for example.

Perpetrators

Sex of perpetrator

The majority of research into abuse of position for sexual gain finds perpetrators are usually male. For example, Stinson et al's (2014) study of 548 police sexual misconduct cases found 99.1% involved male officers and Cole, Summers, Sweeting & Hills (in preparation) recorded 98.7% of 89 UK cases involved male officers. Again, this is akin to what is known about sex offenders in general, the majority of whom are believed to be male (Sorrentino et al, 2016; Turchik et al, 2016; Manchak & Fisher, 2019).

Of the eight female officers in this sample, five had engaged in relationships with offenders. Without knowing more about the specific circumstances, power differentials are difficult to determine. A male offender may view a relationship with a female officer as a source of protection or might exploit this for tip-offs or police intelligence. Female perpetrators may commence relationships as a means of steering the offender away from crime (Cockroft, 2015) or in order to evade their partner's arrest (Lamy, 2019). Interestingly, both mainstream and local media reporting in both of the latter cases minimised the seriousness of misconduct by reporting the officer's behaviour as protective and loving, emphasising their good careers.

Rank of perpetrator

The second largest category of cases was sexually inappropriate behaviour towards colleagues including words, gestures, and physical contact. This category also contained the largest concentration of officers who work in a supervisory role. It is possible such differences may reflect difference in opportunity between lower police ranks who are likely to have more contact with members of the public and victims of crime, whereas supervisors may have more opportunity to commit offences against staff, and less opportunity for unsupervised interaction with members of the public. This is akin with opportunistic theories of crime stating the availability of suitable victims is through everyday activities – in this case the working environment (Cockbain & Wortley, 2015).

The majority of such cases involved a higher-ranking officer's behaviour towards a lower ranking female. Given the power imbalance created by rank, this behaviour fits into the accepted definitions of workplace bullying - negative verbal and physical behaviour – and the sexual

element means it is equally appropriate to term this behaviour as sexual harassment (Johnson et al, 2018).

Research into sexual misconduct between police officers in North America finds – in contrast to this research - that the typical perpetrator will be a colleague of the same rank rather than a higher-ranking officer (Lonsway et al, 2013). In Japan, higher ranking officers more likely to target those of lower ranks (Kobayshi, 2018). Kobayshi theorised this may be due to the lack of higher-ranking female officers in Japan as compared to the US. However, the proportion of higher-ranking females the UK and US is proportionally comparable which suggests there are other reasons for higher ranking officers targeting lower ranks (NPA, 2013, Allen & Zayed, 2019).

In support of the current findings, research into sexual misconduct in other UK public services shows a tendency for higher ranks to target lower ones, from the National Health Service to politics and Universities (Lindquist & McKay, 2018; Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018; Bull & Rye, 2018). Research into the National Health Service has found that doctors are more likely to target vulnerable patients but when the behaviour is directed towards colleagues, the target is commonly junior ranking females (Searle et al, 2017). Reaching the higher ranks of organisations such as the police indicates increased job security and potentially, the ability to deal more successfully with allegations of inappropriate behaviour (Rabe-Hemp & Braithwaite, 2013).

There was also an interesting finding in that of the special constables committing sexual misconduct, the most frequent category was for this towards juveniles and children (40%). In addition, this was the most frequently recorded type in Greater and Central London, the area with the largest number of police officers in England. Again, whilst sample sizes are small, this finding is worthy of further consideration. It is possible that a small minority of officers may join

the police in order to access vulnerable children, as has been found in research into other types of “professional perpetrators” such as teachers and the clergy (Sullivan & Beech, 2002; Christensen & Jansen, 2019). One example is PC Naude who was found guilty of the rape of a 13-year-old girl and an additional 31 grooming offences. Naude admitted he joined the police in part so that he could access vulnerable children (Everett, 2018). However, this is only one case study, and child sexual abuse committed by a person in a position of trust appears to be relatively rare in the UK at just 6% of total offences for both rape and other types of sexual assault (Kelly & Karsna, 2018). Yet, there is no data available for child sexual abuse committed by police officers, but what is known is that child sexual abuse victims usually know or are related to the offender, as such, these individuals are in a position of trust (Jackson, Kuha, Bradford, Hohl & Hough, 2015; Reitsema & Grietens, 2016). In addition, whereas this accounted for 13% of our sample, American research has found that 73% of victims of police sexual misconduct were under the age of 18 (Stinson et al, 2014). Police officers who offend against children were also found to be statistically more likely to reoffend (Rabe, Hemp & Braithwaite, 2013) usually involving multiple offences and victims (Britton, 2017; Taylor, 2018 & Wienfuss, 2017). As such further research, giving specific consideration, to recruitment and supervision practices for all volunteers and police staff/officers may be worthwhile in light of these findings (Sweeting & Cole, in preparation)

Detective constables were found to be more likely to engage in sexual relationships with offenders rather than victims of crime. This novel finding may be explained by two possible factors. Firstly, officers working in Offender Management Units for serious offenders are usually required to have trained as detectives, although less serious offenders maybe managed by PCs and civilians. Secondly, working with offenders is very different from “regular” police work as officers are expected to build a professional working relationship with criminals and to “befriend” them (Nash, 2016). This environment may afford greater opportunities for officers to

abuse their positions, however there were only a total of ten such cases in this sample and further research is recommended.

Outcomes of cases

Overall, the data from this research suggests the police service are taking allegations of officer to officer sexual misconduct seriously, with the majority of cases resulting in some form of formal discipline. However, an unexpected finding were differences in dismissal rates across England. For officers involved in sexual relationships with vulnerable victims, the percentage dismissed appeared to gradually fall from the South to the North of the country – 94% to 66.7%. Other categories with notable differences were attempting to establish relationships with members of the public where 70% of officers were dismissed in the South compared with only 40% in the North. Sex on duty also had varying dismissal rates but with a reversed effect with only 20% of officers in the South, 100% in the Midlands and 50% in the North losing their jobs due to such activity.

Guidance on what discipline outcome to apply to any officer found guilty of misconduct, including sexual misconduct is provided to all police forces in England and Wales by the College of Policing (2017b). This advises the seriousness of misconduct must be assessed through the officer's culpability, harm caused plus aggravating and mitigating factors. Where there has been "a desire to establish a sexual or inappropriate emotional relationship with a colleague or a member of the public" and/or where the victim is vulnerable, the misconduct should be treated very seriously (College of Policing, 2017b, p18). Despite this clear guidance, there are differences in dismissal outcomes with the lowest recorded outcome level for this behaviour found in this research as a written warning, and fewer officers being dismissed in the North of England than

in the South. The reasons for this are unclear but highlight potential differences in management practice.

Also, of interest, it may be that sexually inappropriate behaviour is assessed with greater seriousness when the officer is of rank. In relation to sexual misconduct directed towards colleagues, 50% of officers in this sample who were above the rank of Sergeant were dismissed compared with 41% of constables. In contrast, in the NHS, nurses were more likely to be struck off for the same behaviour than Doctors who were retained in post (Searle et al, 2017).

It is important to note that there was a 100% dismissal rate for officers who had sexual relationships with offenders but not for those who had relationships with victims and witnesses. This may give the impression of a difference in perceived seriousness by the police yet both behaviours are abuse of position for a sexual purpose and arguably, should have the same outcome. Another explanation to account for this are the known differences in how female officers are treated within policing generally: they are subjected to greater levels of sexual harassment and are less likely to reach higher ranking positions than male officers (de Haas et al, 2009; Morabito & Shelly, 2018). Given the higher proportion of female officers in the sex with offenders category, differences in outcome may be another example of gender bias within the police.

Limitations

A limitation of this research was that not all police forces share the outcomes of their misconduct hearings online, and for those who do, there were variations on the amount of information provided. A minority of forces posted comprehensive summaries of the misconduct and even gave the full name of the officer. Others posted minimal information, merely stating the area of police regulations breached. Subsequent research is currently obtaining more detailed case information, directly from police forces.

Conclusion

This research used publicly available data found on Welsh and English police force websites to understand the current picture of police sexual misconduct. Eight categories of sexual misconduct were identified and the most frequently occurring type involved officers having sexual relationships with vulnerable victims of crime. However, for this type of misconduct, dismissal rates were lower in the North than in the South of the country. Sexual misconduct directed towards colleagues was also prevalent and almost always involved a male officer of rank as perpetrator, and a female of a lower rank as the victim. Instances of police sexual misconduct involving juveniles appear much lower in the UK than in the US. However, the number of volunteer police officers (Specials) was high in this category, and this should raise concern as they are subject to less training and supervision than regular police officers. This research has implications for standardisation of police practice, and consideration of which victims may be most at risk, from which officers.

Chapter Three

**PC “Just-do-enough” – A retrospective case study of a police officer who abused his position
for a sexual purpose.**

In preparation: Sweeting & Cole (2021)

This chapter has been redacted. The document and/or data contains information about research in progress where there is an intention to publish later.

See <https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/37460/>

Chapter Four

The Sharks and the Fishermen - an exploratory content analysis of police officers who abused their positions for a sexual purpose

In preparation (Sweeting & Cole, 2021)

This chapter has been redacted. The document and/or data contains information about research in progress where there is an intention to publish later.

See <https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/37461/>

Chapter Five

Is the blue wall of silence a fallacy in cases of police sexual misconduct?

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Opening statement on the paper:

This section has been redacted as it contains confidential methodological information.

Abstract

Police sexual misconduct encompasses a range of behaviours; from sexually inappropriate language directed towards colleagues or members of the public to engaging in sexual relationships with vulnerable members of the public. All types of police misconduct are thought to be under-reported, in part due to the “blue wall of silence” where police officers fail to report colleagues’ wrongdoing due to reasons of loyalty and fear of retribution. A sample of 382 English police officers were invited to assess eight fictional police sexual misconduct scenarios to ascertain if the scenario was a breach of the Code of Ethics, the expected level of discipline, and if they would report the officer. Reporting likelihood was increased when officers perceived the scenario to be a breach of the Code of Ethics and worthy of a higher level of discipline. Female officers were more likely to report sexual misconduct than male officers and scenarios involving direct colleagues were less likely to be reported. Non-reporting was greatest for sexual harassment between colleagues and the seriousness of this behaviour was minimised as justification for non-reporting. Use of confidential reporting was minimal with direct reporting to a line manager to be the preferred option.

Introduction

In 2018, a misconduct hearing within the small, and largely rural, force of Dorset Police heard that Sgt Stephen Hughes had made sexually inappropriate and offensive remarks to female police constables. Sgt Hughes admitted telling a female officer that he wished he could breast feed from her; and to another, to make him tea because “you’ve got the tits.” A further 31 allegations against Hughes involving four additional female officers were dismissed by the misconduct panel. Hughes was found guilty of misconduct and was issued with a final written warning (Dorset Echo, 2018). The Chief Constable of Dorset thanked the officers who had spoken up against Hughes for their courage in reporting him.

The behaviour of Sgt Hughes fell below the standards of conduct defined by the police Code of Ethics, which states officers must “ensure behaviour and language could not reasonably be perceived to be abusive, oppressive, harassing, bullying, victimising or offensive by the public or your policing colleagues” (College of Policing, 2014a, p6). The sexualised nature of his comments could also constitute sexual misconduct and sexual harassment (Maher, 2003; Zhu, Lyu & Ye, 2019). This type of colleague-on-colleague sexual misconduct was found to account for 34% of a recent sample of police sexual misconduct cases (Sweeting, Hills & Cole, 2020). Another type of sexual misconduct, termed abuse of position for a sexual purpose; where officers engage in sexual or improper emotional relationships with vulnerable members of the public is currently a national priority for research (NPCC, 2017a). As with non-sexual police corruption, incidents of sexual misconduct are extremely damaging to the morale and wellbeing of staff, mental health of victims and the reputation of the police (Brown et al, 2018).

Policing provides a unique working environment; one where members of the public are granted powers of entry, use of lethal force if necessary, combined with lone working and sometimes, minimal supervision (Hickman et al, 2016, Punch 2009). The frequent danger of policing can give

officers an aggressive outlook in their working lives which may increase the chance for abuses of power and authority to occur (Paoline et al, 2000). Stinson et al (2014, p4) state that the powers afforded by a policing role combined with unsupervised access to vulnerable people results in a working environment which is conducive to sexual misconduct.

Reporting corruption in the police – including sexual misconduct – may be frustrated by the blue wall of silence. The blue wall of silence, otherwise referred to as the blue code or blue line, is the idea that police officers will not report corrupt behaviour due to fear of reprisals from colleagues or supervisors and/or feelings of loyalty towards the perpetrator (Wieslander, 2019). Perpetrators may also be so confident of their colleagues' loyalty that they feel shielded from scrutiny (Lee et al, 2013). Reasons for non-reporting may be more complex than loyalty and fear. In testing the blue wall of silence in the UK, Westmarland & Rowe (2018), found that the seriousness of the corrupt behaviour was also a factor, with officers seemingly more willing to overlook less serious corruption but more likely to report criminal behaviour. In addition to this, confusion regarding which behaviours are unacceptable, and uneven responses to corruption by the police as an organisation, may also contribute to non-reporting (Lee et al, 2013; Westmarland & Rowe, 2018)

In much of the previous research, testing the "blue wall" is intrinsically linked to testing police integrity. Klockars, Ivkovic, Harver & Haberfield (2000) devised a scenario-based approach where officers are invited to read short vignettes, each covering a different misconduct type such as accepting gratuities or allowing a colleague to evade arrest. Officers are then invited to assess how serious they believe the behaviour in the scenario to be; the level of discipline they would expect to see and if they would report the behaviour. This method has been replicated in many studies and consistently finds that officers are more inclined to report behaviour they perceive to be the most serious (Hickman et al, 2016; Klockars, Ivkovic & Haberfield 2006; Westmarland & Rowe, 2018). Police sexual misconduct has yet to be explored using this

methodology and, as it is known to be unreported both by victims and by police officers, it is vital to understand how officers define, perceive and report it (Maher, 2010; Stinson et al, 2014).

A feature missing from the previous scenario-based testing is to further understand how relationships between colleagues' influence reporting. In previous research, participants have been asked to evaluate the behaviour of "an officer" without directly specifying the relationship between the participant and the fictional officer. This current pilot research aims to explore if there is a "blue wall of silence" in the context of reporting police sexual misconduct; how seriously officers perceive different typologies of sexually inappropriate behaviour and if reporting is influenced by the participant/officer-in-scenario relationship.

Method

Sample

Senior officers from each counter-corruption unit in England were approached via the National Police Chief's Council and were asked to share an anonymous online survey to all serving police officers. A total of 382 police officers across six regions (comprising eight police forces): South West, South East, East Anglia, North West, North East and Yorkshire & Humberside completed the survey in full. Table 1 presents the demographic data for the participating officers as compared to that of England & Wales, (Government, 2019).

Table 1 – demographics of survey sample and comparison to national police data. Percentages shown in parentheses.

	Survey sample (n=382)	National police data (n= 123,162)
Male	215 (56.3%)	85,734 (70.6%)
Female	167 (43.7%)	37,428 (30.4%)
0-10 years' service	94 (24.6%)	42397 (34.4%)
11-20 years' service	179 (46.9%)	54,221 (44%)
21-30 years' service	109 (28.5%)	26544 (21.6%)

Scenarios

The survey comprised of eight scenarios; written to include a range of sexual misconduct types demonstrated by UK police officers as found by Sweeting, Hills & Cole, (2020). To ensure the scenarios were realistic, each one was loosely based on a real-life incident of sexual misconduct encountered by the first author during her service as a police officer. In addition to this, the scenarios were to take into account whether or not the behaviour was witnessed directly by the participant; in comparable studies, vignettes are written in the third person e.g., "a police officer routinely accepts free meals, cigarettes, and other items of small value from merchants on his beat" (Hickman et al, 2016 p 9). The first author felt that by writing the scenarios in the second person, it would encourage participants to think more about their responses and visualise the behaviour before responding (Hills, Pleva, Seib & Cole, 2020).

Finally, four of the scenarios included behaviour perpetrated by a colleague of the participant e.g., someone on the same squad or team and the remaining four included behaviour perpetrated by a police officer from a different force, squad, or team.

The eight scenarios were as follows:

Scenario 1 - Sex on duty (public place, colleague)

You are single crewed on duty at night and patrolling a quiet industrial estate on the edge of town. Your attention is drawn to a vehicle in a far corner. As you get nearer, you see that the vehicle is a police car, and two members of your squad are having what appears to be consensual sex inside.

Scenario 2 – Sex on duty (police station, non-colleague)

You are on duty and are asked to travel to another area of your force to collect something. When you arrive, the station seems deserted. You look around trying to find someone to help you. On opening a door at the far end of the station, you see what you perceive to be two police officers having consensual sex.

Scenario 3 – Sex with domestic violence victim (colleague)

You are double-crewed with a member of your squad when you are called to attend a domestic assault. The offender has already been arrested by other colleagues. You and your colleague are tasked with securing a statement from the victim. You do this and return to your station. Your colleague returns to the victim's address telling you they've forgotten something. When they return, they tell you that they've had consensual sex with the victim and plan to do so again.

Scenario 4 – Sex with rape victim (non-colleague)

You hear from several trusted colleagues that an officer from a different department is having a consensual sexual relationship with a recent victim of rape. You are told that this officer is in charge of the victim's case and the relationship has been going on for some time. As far you are aware, no one has reported this officer yet.

Scenario 5 – Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague (colleague)

You are at a pre-shift meeting with your squad. Everyone is getting settled down before the meeting starts and are talking with each other. A colleague points at the newest member of your squad and whispers “I wouldn’t mind a ride on that”. They then make sexual hand gestures towards this squad member. This is the third time you’ve heard them directly make sexual comments towards this squad member. The squad member does not appear to have heard the sexual comments or seen the hand gesture.

Scenario 6 – Approach to MOP (colleague)

You are asked to attend a fight involving several people. By the time you reach the scene, the fight is over, but you are asked to take details of any witnesses. You approach a member of your squad who is talking to a member of the public. You hear them ask for this person’s phone number even though they are repeatedly saying that they were not a witness. Your colleague continues to ask them for their phone number until they reluctantly give in. Your colleague later tells you that they have sent this person explicitly sexual messages.

Scenario 7 - Distribution of private images (non-colleague)

You are doing some paperwork when an officer from another team approaches you and thrusts their phone in front of your face. You find yourself looking at an image of a naked person who you recognise to be a fellow police officer. The officer tells you that they’d gone through the pictures on a colleague’s phone without their knowledge and found this image. The officer tells you that they’ve sent it to several colleagues and ask if you’d like to be sent the image too. You decline.

Scenario 8 - Showing pornography (non-colleague)

You are finishing a shift and head to the locker room to get your things. When you enter, you see an officer from another squad sitting on the floor. They are very upset and tell you that the person they are regularly crewed with shows them pornographic images when they work together. The officer has asked them to stop but they have not. The officer has not reported the behaviour.

Variables

For each scenario, participants were asked three questions: Would this behaviour be regarded as a breach of your force's Code of Ethics? Do you think you would report these officer(s)? Assuming this/these officer(s) have clean disciplinary records, what level of discipline, if any, do you think would follow? For the first two questions, officers were able to respond with "yes", "no" or "not sure". The third question relating to discipline was designed to test the participant's perceived seriousness of the misconduct, without influencing their responses by use of the word "serious". Therefore, participants could choose from the five misconduct outcomes used by police forces in England and Wales: none, verbal warning, written warning, final written warning and dismissal. Participants were also invited to include a short free text response to explain their choices. Table 2 provides an overview of participant responses by gender and table 3 provides a breakdown of participants expected disciplinary outcomes for each scenario.

Table 2 – Participant responses by gender when asked “is this a breach of your force’s code of ethics” and “would you report this behaviour?”

	% Yes responses to “Is this a breach of the Code of Ethics?”			% Yes responses to “Would you report this behaviour?”		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Sex on duty – car	99.5%	99.4%	98.9%	71.2%	75.4%	73.0%
2. Sex on duty - police station	96.7%	96.4%	96.6%	71.2%	76.0%	73.3%
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	98.6%	100%	99.2%	96.3%	97.6%	96.9%
4. Sex with rape victim	99.5%	99.4%	99.5%	93.0%	91.6%	92.9%
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	86.5%	85.6%	86.1%	37.7%	43.1%	40.1%
6. Approach to MOP	99.1%	98.8%	98.9%	92.1%	94.6%	93.2%
7. Distribution of private images	99.5%	100%	99.7%	94.4%	96.4%	95.3%
8. Showing pornography	93.0%	95.8%	94.2%	70.7%	77.8%	73.8%

Table 3 – expected outcomes by participants -highest percentage for each scenario shown in bold.

Expected outcome	None	Verbal warning	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal	Mean score
1. Sex on duty - car	3.9%	16.0%	24.1%	28.3%	27.7%	2.6
2. Sex on duty - police station	4.8%	18.8%	27.5%	29.3%	19.6%	2.4
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	0.5%	0.3%	3.4%	8.4%	87.4%	3.8
4. Sex with rape victim	1.6%	0%	1.8%	4.2%	92.4%	3.8
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	13.4%	53.9%	22.3%	8.6%	1.8%	1.3
6. Approach to MOP	2.1%	6.8%	19.4%	23.8%	47.9%	3.1
7. Distribution of private images	2.8%	3.4%	11.3%	17.8%	64.7%	3.4
8. Showing pornography	4.9%	28.0%	29.1%	25.4%	12.6%	2.1

Chi squared tests to understand if there was any difference between gender and perceiving the behaviour as a breach of the code of ethics and gender and assigning a higher level of disciplinary action did not yield significant results.

Analysis – Cumulative Link Mixed Model

The data was analysed using a cumulative link mixed model (CLMM), selected due to the ordinal nature of the survey responses. The CLMM allows for the analysis of ordinal data with the inclusion of random effects across participant responses (Chen, Chen Gao & Yang, 2020). For the first model, the dependant variable was the participant's intention to report the behaviour based on perceived seriousness; if it was a breach of the Code of Ethics; involved a direct colleague or not; and participant's gender and length of service. The random term for the model was participant region, due to the potential differences in sexual misconduct training across forces in the UK. Each of the 382 participants assessed eight scenarios, resulting in a total of 3056 responses.

The first model was fitted initially with using the Laplace approximation to calculate the maximum likelihood function. This was then repeated using the Gaussian-Hermite quadrature method, using seven quadrature nodes to achieve a more accurate approximation (Christensen, 2015). Table 4 provides the results of the first model. The results of the first model suggest that the likelihood of reporting significantly increases when the behaviour is considered to be a breach of the code of ethics, when the behaviour is perceived as serious and when the misconduct involves an officer who is not a colleague. Additionally, male officers appear to be less likely to report sexual misconduct than female officers. To further explore this, table 5 shows

the likelihood ratios of reporting for each significant variable. Of note is the increasing likelihood of reporting as perceived seriousness increases.

Table 4 – Model estimates for reporting with inclusion of “Region” as the random term.

	Estimate	Standard Error	Z value	Pr(> Z)
Gender - Male	-0.2673	0.1042	-2.565	0.0103
Length of service 0-5 years	-0.0042	0.1312	-0.033	0.9732
Length of service 6-10 years	-0.0027	0.2441	-0.0110	0.9911
Length of service 11-15 years	-0.1888	0.1592	-1.1858	0.2357
Length of service 16-20 years	0.2061	0.1535	1.3428	0.1793
Length of service 21-25 years	0.3491	0.2011	1.7359	0.0826
Length of service 26-30 years	-0.2117	0.1936	-1.0935	0.2742
Over 30 years' service	0.0346	0.2294	0.1507	0.8802
Unsure if breach of Code of Ethics	1.2138	0.5133	2.3649	0.0180
Breach Code of Ethics	2.5982	0.4670	5.5637	>0.000
Outcome – verbal warning	0.1837	0.1960	0.9373	0.3485
Outcome – written warning	1.3.021	0.2049	6.3554	>0.000
Outcome – final written warning	2.2081	0.2207	10.0030	>0.000
Outcome – dismissal	3.3043	0.2236	14.775	>0.000
Scenario involves non-colleague	0.3714	0.1026	3.6209	>0.000

Table 5 – Odds ratios of significant coefficients being rated positive for reporting sexual misconduct, relative to not reporting

	Odds ratio
Gender (Male)	0.77
Unsure if breach of Code of Ethics	3.37
Breach of code of ethics	13.44
Outcome – verbal warning	1.20
Outcome – written warning	3.68
Outcome – final written warning	9.09
Outcome – dismissal	27.23
Scenario involves non-colleague	1.45

To test the effect of the random term of “region”, the model was repeated omitting the random term and the results compared using ANOVA [$F(3039,3040) = 3095.209, p < .001$], indicating that there was no significant difference in reporting likelihood across regions. Finally, likelihood ratio tests were performed on the explanatory variables to ensure the model did not violate the proportional odds assumption; all results were non-significant with only slight variations in log-likelihoods indicating no violation of the proportional odds assumption.

A second cumulative link mixed model was conducted, with the same dependant variable of reporting, but this time using the eight misconduct scenarios as predictor variables. The results of this model are shown in table 6. Scenarios 3,4,6,7 were rated as the most likely to be reported, with no significant effect observed for scenarios 1,2 and 8. Scenario 5 was the only scenario found to have a negative estimate, suggesting that participants were less likely to report the behaviour in this scenario. The odds ratios of reporting the significant results for this model support these results and are shown in table 7.

Table 6 – Model estimates for reporting by each scenario

	Estimate	Standard Error	Z value	Pr(> Z)
1. Sex on duty - car	0.0221	0.1613	0.1370	0.8910
2. Sex on duty - police station	0.0070	0.1611	0.0434	0.9654
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	2.5316	0.3265	7.7538	>0.000
4. Sex with rape victim	1.5110	0.2242	6.7391	>0.000
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	-1.4642	0.1501	-9.7575	>0.000
6. Approach to MOP	1.6284	0.2329	6.9922	>0.000
7. Distribution of private images	2.0104	0.2670	7.5285	>0.000
8. Showing pornography	0.0560	0.1619	0.3457	0.7296

Table 7– Odds ratios of significant scenarios being reported

	Odds ratio
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	12.58
4. Sex with rape victim	4.53
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	0.23
6. Approach to MOP	5.10
7. Distribution of private images	7.47

A multidimensional exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the eight sexual misconduct scenarios and the perceived seriousness scores of the participants with orthogonal rotation (table 8). A correlation matrix between scores for each scenario was generated and

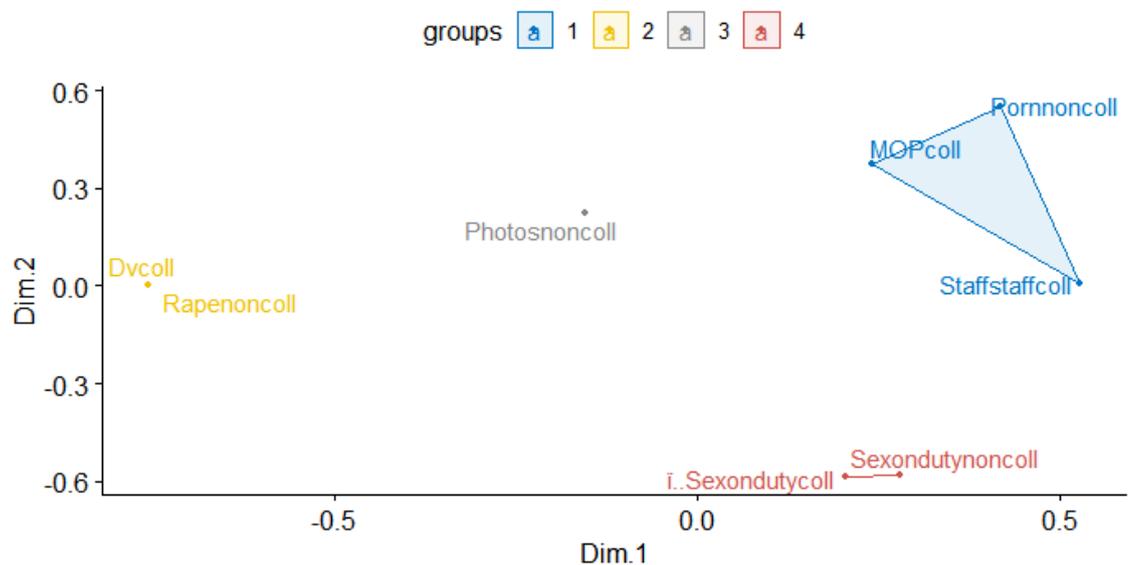
demonstrated that there were sufficient correlations between the scenarios to run a factor analysis. Results of a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test found no violations of Bartlett's test of sphericity as all values were in excess of 0.5. Eigenvalues were calculated, with four components in excess of Kaiser's criteria of 1. A scree plot of the Eigenvalues suggested inflexions of four factors. The factor analysis was then performed using four factors; the root mean square error of approximation was 0.045 (should be less than 0.06) and the Tucker Lewis Index score was 0.916 (should be greater than 0.90). The combined variance of these four factors explained 73% of the model's variance. The factor loadings after rotation suggest that factor 1 is police officers having consensual sexual contact with other police officers. Factor 2 involves vulnerable victims of serious crime and, although the sexual contact was consensual, the highest score in factor 3 involves only the use of inappropriate language used by a colleague which was not heard by the target. Factor 4 is non-consensual, sexually motivated actions by police officers. Factor cut off for inclusion was set at 0.4.

Table 8 - multidimensional exploratory factor analysis

Scenario	Sex between police officers	Victim is vulnerable	Victim unaware	Non-consensual behaviour
Sex on duty – colleague of participant	0.833			
Sex on duty – non colleague of participant	1.014			
Sex with domestic abuse victim – colleague of participant		0.998		
- Sex with rape victim – colleague of participant		0.998		
Sex with rape victim – colleague of participant				
Sexual comments by a colleague			0.992	
Harassment for MOP phone number by colleague				0.764
Explicit images of police officer shown by non-colleague		0.161		0.518
Porn shown by officer to non-colleague			0.268	0.429

The correlation matrix generated by the exploratory factor analysis was then used to create a multidimensional scaled plot, shown in figure 1. This plot indicates the most seriously perceived sexual misconduct types involve vulnerable victims of crime, followed by the distribution of private images. At the far end of perceived seriousness are both sex on duty scenarios and the behaviours involving officers making non-consensual sexual approaches to other colleagues or members of the public.

Figure 1 – Multi-dimensional scaling of participants perceived seriousness scores. Group 1 maps the exploratory factor values of non-consensual behaviour (see table 8), group 2; victim is vulnerable, group 3; victim unaware and group 4; sex between police officers.



Analysis – reporting pathways

Participants were given the opportunity via a free text box to provide a short explanation of how they would report the misconduct in each scenario. Table 9 provides the results of this.

Table 9 – Reporting pathways for each scenario (total response number shown in parentheses)

Reporting pathway	Challenge behaviour directly	Confidential line*	PSD direct**	Direct to Supervisor	Arrest	Human resources	Police Federation	Total responses
1. Sex on duty - car	0.8% (2)	1.6% (4)	10.2% (25)	87.4% (215)	0	0	0	246
2. Sex on duty - police station	1.8% (5)	5.8% (16)	14.1% (39)	77.9% (215)	0	0.4% (1)	0	276
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	0	2.9% (10)	19.9% (69)	76.0% (263)	0.6% (2)	0.3 (1)	0.3% (1)	346
4. Sex with rape victim	0	8.6% (29)	32.2% (109)	58.6% (198)	0	0.3% (1)	0.3% (1)	338
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	7.4% (11)	2.0% (3)	6.8% (10)	83.8% (124)	0	0	0	148
6. Approach to MOP	0	5% (16)	22.5% (72)	71.9% (230)	0.3% (1)	0	0.3% (1)	320
7. Distribution of private images	0.8% (3)	4.3% (15)	21.6% (76)	69.6% (245)	3.7% (13)	0	0	352
8. Showing pornography	1.1% (3)	2.9% (8)	17.1% (47)	78.9% (217)	0	0	0	275
Total for each reporting pathway	1.0% (24)	4.4% (101)	19.4% (447)	74.2% (1707)	0.7% (16)	0.1% (3)	0.1% (3)	2301

*Anonymous phone line or email address to report any type of misconduct

** Professional Standards Unit also known as a Counter Corruption Unit depending on the force.

Analysis – reasons for non-reporting

Participants who selected “no” or “not sure” when asked if they would report the behaviour in each scenario were invited to provide a short text reason to explain why. These text responses were analysed using a conceptual content approach. This method was chosen as ideal for uncovering the presence and frequency of the main non-reporting reasons from the short text responses of the participants (Indulska, Hovorka & Recker, 2012). Following the methodology of Elo & Kyngas (2008), the free text responses were open-coded based on comment similarities e.g., “I wouldn’t know how to report” would have the same meaning as “I wouldn’t know who to report this to”. Following the open coding stage, the identified codes were placed into themes with the intention of reducing similar categories into broader categories. The purpose of this was to identify codes which belong to a particular theme and to create “comparison between these data and other observations that do not belong to the same category to provide a means of describing the phenomenon” (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p111).

Table 10 provides an explanation of each main theme with examples from the participant responses. The most frequently recorded theme were comments which served to minimise the severity of the behaviour in the scenarios as justification for not reporting it. However, the exception to this was scenario 4 where the most common non-reporting reason was due to participant concerns that they had not witnessed the behaviour personally and, therefore, it may not be true. Table 11 shows the percentage of non-reporting reasons by scenario.

Table 10– Explanation of the main themes with examples from participant responses.

Theme:	Example 1	Example 2	Total no. of comments in theme
Unsure how to report - participant uncertain of what to do	<i>"Honestly not sure what I'd do or how I'd report"</i>	<i>"Would not initially know who to report this to"</i>	3
Minimisation – comments which mitigate or downplay the behaviour	<i>"Just doing what comes natural when you are crewed up together for 10 hours a day on a crap shift pattern. You never get time to be with home partners."</i>	<i>"It is just banter!"</i>	349
Loyalty – reluctance to "snitch" on colleagues	<i>"Because even though it is an unprofessional act, I wouldn't want it to cost these officers everything they have worked for over the years, including their mortgages/homes/families/professional reputation"</i>	<i>"Fear of being labelled a grass and that the perpetrator would not be removed from the team"</i>	73
Force won't protect me - participants feel reporting will have an adverse outcome on them personally	<i>"Having reported people for far worse and it all going horribly wrong with consequences for me"</i>	<i>"Pressure from peers and being known for telling tales may hinder future promotion/opportunities in Police"</i>	11
May not be true – participants uncertain there is sufficient evidence to report	<i>"As Police Officers, we gossip a lot and a lot of it is untrue so I would have to do some research to confirm or deny the gossip"</i>	<i>"I have only heard this as hearsay from colleagues, it might just be gossip"</i>	16
Not my responsibility* - participants believe the target of the behaviour must report	<i>"Police officers should be able to sort this themselves."</i>	<i>"I have heard this information 3rd hand and would expect the other officers to report them."</i>	41

*Although the participants were not willing to personally report the behaviour, nearly all of the comments suggested they would offer emotional support to the victim of the misconduct.

Table 11 – Non reporting reasons for all 8 scenarios. The most common reason for non-reporting for each scenario is shown in bold (total response number shown in parentheses).

Non-reporting reason	Unsure how to report	Minimisation	Loyalty	Force won't protect me	May not be true	Not my responsibility
1. Sex on duty – car	1.1% (1)	52.5% (50)	41.1% (39)	5.3% (5)	0	0
2. Sex on duty - police station	2.9% (2)	70.6% (48)	23.6% (16)	2.9% (2)	0	0
3. Sex with domestic violence victim	0	75% (6)	25% (2)	0	0	0
4. Sex with rape victim	0	11.5% (3)	7.7% (2)	0	61.5% (16)	19.3% (5)
5. Colleague makes sexual comments about colleague	0	96.8% (211)	2.3% (5)	0.9% (2)	0	0
6. Approach to MOP	0	83.3% (15)	16.7% (3)	0	0	0
7. Distribution of private images	0	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	16.7% (2)	0
8. Showing pornography	0	27.1% (13)	2.1% (1)	0	0	70.8% (34)

A greater percentage of male officers used minimisation as a reason not to report sexual misconduct than female officers; however, there was no statistically significant difference found. Similarly, 18.3% of female officers did not report due to loyalty, slightly higher than 12.5% of male officers, but again, there was no statistically significant difference. Table 12 provides the percentage of non-reporting reasons by gender.

Table 12 - Non-reporting reasons by gender

Non-reporting reason	Unsure how to report	Minimisation	Loyalty	Force won't protect me	May not be true	Not my responsibility
Male	0.7% (2)	73.9% (218)	12.5% (37)	2.7% (8)	2.4% (7)	7.8% (23)
Female	0.5% (1)	66.5% (131)	18.3% (36)	1.5% (3)	4.6% (9)	8.6% (17)

Discussion

Sexual misconduct is a serious type of police corruption with the potential to cause serious harm to vulnerable victims of crime and damage the reputation of the police. There is a body of research of into how police officers perceive and report non-sexual types of corruption such as theft, acceptance of gratuities and interference in investigations but less light shone onto sexual misconduct. Using anonymous, scenario-based testing, we have demonstrated that male officers are less likely to report sexual misconduct than female officers; reporting likelihood is increased if the behaviour is considered to be a breach of the Code of Ethics and if the behaviour is considered serious enough to necessitate formal discipline. Officers may perceive certain scenarios as more serious if the behaviour is covered by criminal law as well as internal regulations e.g., sex with a vulnerable victim or rape is gross misconduct but also may be

misconduct in a public office. We also find that police officers prefer to report sexual misconduct directly to their line managers, with only a very small usage of confidential lines. Although reporting was high across all scenarios, with the exception of scenario 5, the small numbers of officers who decided they would not report the misconduct tended to minimise the seriousness of the behaviour as a means to justify their actions.

Gender differences in reporting likelihood

The results of this study suggest that male officers are significantly less likely to report sexual misconduct than female officers. Across the eight scenarios, the percentage of male officers who would report the misconduct was only slightly higher than that of female officers in scenario 4 (sex with rape victim). In a previous US study examining police integrity and likelihood to report misconduct using nonsexual scenarios, no significant difference between genders was found (Hickman et al, 2016). However, in a similar Slovenian study, female officers were found to be statistically less likely to report nonsexual misconduct than male officers (Lobnikar, Prisljan, Cuvan & Mesko, 2016). The researchers suggested this was due to Slovenian police culture, where female officers are less likely to reach the higher ranks, which in turn promotes cynicism and distrust, ultimately reducing the likelihood of reporting. Different again were the results of similar Australian research, where male officers were less likely to report scenarios involving inappropriate acceptance of gratuities and excessive force (Porter & Prenzler, 2016).

In this research, the gender difference may be explained by the nature of the scenarios. Although each was written to be gender neutral, police sexual misconduct research consistently identifies the majority of perpetrators to be male and the victims, female (Lopez et al, 2017; Stinson et al, 2014). In support of this, a number of participants assigned genders to the

scenarios in their free text responses – “she” was used for the victim and “he” for the perpetrator for example: “If he continued, I would then report him to my supervisor.” Furthermore, in the scenario involving an officer abusing their power with a recent victim of rape, the victim is even more likely to be perceived as female as the legal definition of rape in England and Wales specifies that the offender must have a penis (Waterhouse, Reynolds & Egan, 2016).

Another potential reason for this difference may lie in how women experience and perceive such behaviour. Research into workplace sexual harassment and misconduct suggests that women perceive a wider range of sexually inappropriate behaviours as unacceptable than men do, and men are more likely to provide mitigating reasons and rationalisations for such behaviour (Benabou, Falk & Tirole, 2018; Cheng & Hsiaw, 2009). However, no significant differences were found between gender and believing the behaviour to be a breach of the code of ethics or gender and assigning a higher level of discipline; suggesting that the female officers in this research did not view the behaviour in the scenarios any differently to the male officers. Previous research into police ethical standards suggests that female police officers are more ethical than male officers and this may provide some explanation for this increased likelihood of reporting (Adebayo, 2005). It is possible that the female officers in this research were more likely to report the behaviour due to unconsciously assigning female victim/male perpetrator roles to the scenarios and therefore empathise more with the victim in the fictional scenario. Such an effect has been found in rape myth acceptance research with female participants demonstrating higher levels of empathy with rape victims in scenario-based testing (Nason, Rineheart, Yeater, Newlands & Crawford, 2019).

Research into gender perceptions of different types of sexual misconduct provides some support for this. Studies into the non-consensual distribution of intimate images (as in scenario 7), finds that female participants demonstrated greater empathy for the female victim than the male participants. Additionally, male participants were more likely to blame the victim for the image distribution (Zvi & Britton, 2020). This is a similar theme across much research into sexual offences where females identify more closely with female victims of rape, sexual harassment etc. than males (Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Sleath & Bull, 2017). To examine this further, scenarios covering a range of sexual misconduct scenarios which specifically assign genders to both the victim and the perpetrator are recommended. Furthermore, testing the creditability of the victim and any perceptions of blame should also be included. Such research is more akin to scenario-based testing in sexual assault and rape research rather than previous sexual misconduct research but would be an effective method to further understand this finding.

Perceived seriousness and reporting likelihood

As in previous scenario-based testing of police corruption, participants were asked if the behaviour of the officer(s) was a breach of their force's code of ethics; and also, to assign the disciplinary outcome expected on the proviso that this was the officer's first offence. In this research the majority of officers believed the behaviour in each scenario was a breach of the code of ethics and this belief strongly predicted that they would report it. Being unsure if the behaviour was a breach of the code of ethics did not reduce the likelihood of reporting and was still a significant predictor.

The Code of Ethics for police officers in England and Wales contains specific advice on matters of police sexual misconduct namely: "you must ensure that any relationship at work does not

create an actual or apparent conflict of interest, not engage in sexual conduct or other inappropriate behaviour when on duty, not establish or pursue an improper sexual or emotional relationship with a person with whom you come into contact in the course of work who may be vulnerable to an abuse of trust or power” (College of Policing, 2014a, p6). This, by definition, identifies all the scenarios in this research as Code of Ethics breaches and additionally, the Code requires officers to report colleagues’ wrongdoing.

Westmarland & Rowe (2018) drawing on data collected in 2011, and therefore preceding the roll out of the Code of Ethics, questioned whether this “new code” would be strong enough to counter “the blue code” - the unwillingness to report misconduct or corrupt behaviours in colleagues. The findings of this research suggest that an understanding, or even partial understanding, of the Code of Ethics generally has a positive impact on reporting likelihood for sexual misconduct.

The perceived seriousness of each scenario - measured using the expected disciplinary outcome – found that officers who believed the perpetrator(s) in each scenario would be dismissed, were more likely to report the behaviour. Lower levels of discipline such as final written warnings or written warnings also predicted reporting. To summarise, officers are increasingly likely to report sexual misconduct in line with the increasing severity of the expected discipline. Both of these findings are replicated in many non-sexual police corruption studies (Klockars, 2000, 2006; Hickman et al, 2016; Vito, Wolfe, Higgens & Walsh, 2011).

In addition to this, officers appeared to perceive certain sexual misconduct types as being more serious and were therefore more likely to report them. The likelihood of reporting ratios for the sex with rape victim and domestic abuse were the highest out of the eight scenarios and

multidimensional scaling identified these as being the most seriously perceived behaviours. The behaviour of the officer in both of these scenarios potentially falls under the definition of misconduct in a public office which may be dealt with under criminal law and carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment (CPS, 2018a). It would also be considered an abuse of position for a sexual purpose (NPCC, 2017a). The scenario with the next highest reporting likelihood and perceived seriousness was the non-consensual distribution of a colleague's intimate photos – again, this is potentially a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act (CPS, 2020b) and there is also potential for the behaviour in the next highest reported scenario (6) to be considered as harassment. This suggests that officers are more likely to report sexual misconduct which they understand is serious enough to be treated as a criminal offence.

The seventeen non-sexual misconduct scenarios as devised by Klockars 2000; 2006 also include some potentially criminal behaviour. For example, a scenario where an officer pockets a watch from a burglary at a jeweller (theft/theft by finding) and another where an officer transports a drunken colleague home instead of arresting them for drink driving (perverting the course of justice/misconduct in a public office). In a study of UK based police officers using eleven of Klockars scenarios (Westmorland & Rowe, 2018), the most seriously perceived offences were also those which had a criminal element; two theft related scenarios and two including deliberate actions to pervert the course of justice and these were more likely to be reported. In contrast, similar studies using the Klockars scenarios and US police officers did not find potentially criminal behaviours to be viewed as more serious (Hickman et al, 2016; Lim & Sloan, 2016).

It is possible that in the UK at least, police officers evaluate the behaviour in the scenarios using their own understanding of criminal law, and as suggested by Westmorland & Rowe (2018),

assign seriousness based on their experience of outcomes of similar cases. For example, the offence of misconduct in a public office carries a higher criminal sentence than that of harassment. For sexual misconduct, a criminal aspect might therefore override the blue wall of silence: when a police officer behaves like a criminal, are they not considered to be true police officers in the eyes of their colleagues any longer? This is an aspect of police misconduct and integrity which would benefit from further research.

The effect of colleague

Four of the eight scenarios in this research were designed to explore any impact to reporting of perceived seriousness if the officer in the scenario was a direct colleague. The results of the cumulative link mixed model find that officers are less likely to report sexual misconduct if the behaviour involved a direct colleague.

In previous misconduct and corruption research using, or based on Klockars', the scenarios do not explicitly identify the relationship between the participant and the officer in the scenario. This is important to explore, as collegial loyalty is one of the cornerstones of the blue wall of silence (Demirkol & Nalla, 2020; Paoline et al, 2000). However, it may not be correct to assume that police officers feel the same loyalties to a colleague within a different force area whom they have never met, and a colleague with whom they are regularly crewed. The results of this research suggest that there may well be a difference and officers appear to feel a greater sense of loyalty to their teammates. In wider research, testing of how willing individuals are to report wrongdoing consistently finds a greater reluctance to report friends, even if they are not considered to be close friends (Clampet-Lundquist, Carr & Kefalas, 2015; Willard & Burger, 2016). It is worth considering that teams or squads of officers may have greater social cohesion

and bonds. This may be positive, insofar as it can increase motivation and productivity, but the negative side to this can be a reluctance to report misconduct (Kleinewiese, 2020; Graeff & Kleinewiese, 2020).

An additional factor which is noted in much of the research into the blue wall of silence is non-reporting due to the fear of retribution from colleagues (Wieslander, 2020, Holgersson, 2019). If the sexual misconduct is perpetrated and witnessed by an officer(s) within the same team and a complaint is made, it is potentially more likely that the complainant will be identified and, possibly, retaliated against.

Non-reporting reasons

As mentioned above, the main reasons for the non-reporting of police corruption and misconduct, including sexual misconduct, are loyalty to colleagues and /or fear of retribution (Maher, 2003; Westmorland & Conway, 2020). The results of the analysis on non-reporting reasons in this study finds very limited support for loyalty and retribution; however, the largest non-reporting reason was the theme of minimisation.

In the two sex on duty scenarios, comments relating to minimisation often included a justification for the officer's behaviour, for example, suggesting that it is no different to taking a meal break or that the behaviour was consensual. A warning (from the participant, not a supervisor) would be enough to resolve the issues. This was similar in scenario five – the least reported and least seriously perceived behaviour – where despite the fictional officer having engaged in this type of behaviour on two previous occasions, a gentle warning at most was

considered sufficient. Many participants pointed out that if everyone in their force got disciplined for making comments of this nature, there would be no officers left. As in other misconduct research, behaviour perceived as less serious is less likely to be reported (Westmoreland & Rowe, 2018, Hickman et al, 2016, Klockars et al, 2004) but it is interesting to consider some officers' apparent need to minimise the seriousness of this behaviour.

This finding therefore suggests that the blue wall of silence is less evident when applied to sexual misconduct and that there may be an alternative explanation for non-reporting. A potential reason for this could be due to the culture of the police. Enduringly described as aggressive, competitive, and still predominantly masculine, it promotes an environment where inappropriate sexual behaviour may be minimised (Brown et al, 2018). This minimisation has also been evidenced in other male-dominated fields such as medicine, higher education, and politics (Bull & Rye, 2018; Krook, 2018; Hinze 2004; Mathews & Bismark, 2015). Explanations for sexual misconduct in these other fields is accounted for by the ingrained cultural and societal equality towards women, which normalises it and, in turn, exacerbates its prevalence in male-dominated working environments (Sundaram & Jackson, 2018). Therefore, the caution in using police culture as an explanation is that it will always, to some extent, assume that all police officers think and act in the same way; when it is far more likely that officers' individual backgrounds, personalities and experiences both prior to, and after joining the police, shape their beliefs (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019). It is possible that the non-reporting officers who minimised the behaviour in the scenarios did so due to the combined effects of the societal norms e.g., sexually inappropriate language is really only banter; and their own beliefs, e.g., sex on duty is no more serious than taking a meal break because "what I do in my break time is my own business".

In the scenario involving a non-colleague having sex with a recent victim of rape, the largest reason for non-reporting was due to participants' concerns over the veracity of the allegation. Although the scenario states that the information comes directly from a trusted colleague, the small percentage of officers who did not report it felt this there was not enough evidence for them to act. This may be accounted for by the participants' understanding of hearsay; unverifiable information, with a few exceptions, is to be avoided in police work as it is not admissible evidence (CPS, 2019c). This suggests that some officers need more than third party information before reporting serious sexual misconduct.

Reporting mechanisms

An unexpected finding of this research was the low reported use of confidential reporting of sexual misconduct (4.4%) with the majority of officers preferring to report directly to their line managers. A confidential telephone line or email address protected by legislation allows officers the option of making a report directly to their Professional Standards Unit without providing any identifiable information about themselves (North Yorkshire Police, 2016). Wright (2010) also reported police officers' preference to report general misconduct to line managers with 50% of police officers believing that the confidential line/email method was not ultimately anonymous. The results of this research suggest that there is no difference in reporting processes when the misconduct is sexual.

The 78.4% of officers who would report directly to their supervisor is a positive finding, as this indicates high levels of trust and confidence in line management. Reporting misconduct to a line manager is also the recommended course of action in the Code of Ethics (College of Policing,

2014a). However, it is worth considering the potential impact of social desirability bias (SDB) to this finding. SDB is the tendency of individuals to over-estimate how likely they are to carry out a desirable action, in this case reporting to a supervisor (Chung, 2003). SDB has been evidenced when testing rape myth acceptance in police officers with scenario based testing, with recommendations for including SDB scales in police research to quantify its effect (Venema, 2018).

Positive officer/line manager relationships promote organisational trust which, in turn, increases the likelihood that officers will report misconduct (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). In many cases, reporting direct to a line manager would remove anonymity and, therefore, it is possible that in cases of sexual misconduct, officers perceive it to be so serious that they do not feel a need for the report to be confidential. It is possible that officers report to their supervisors rather than to the Professional Standards Units as they place greater trust in them. Westmorland & Rowe (2018) found that supervisors consistently take positive action on reports of corruption and misconduct. When supervisors are seen to have no tolerance for corruption and take it seriously, officers tend to follow suit (Lee et al, 2013).

Limitations

In comparison to many non-sexual corruption based studies; this research did not require officers to provide their ranks. The rationale behind this was to encourage as many participants to respond to the survey as possible. The first author, after serving in the police for some time, was aware of the suspicion many police officers place on anonymous surveys – especially those shared via the force intranet system. It was decided that demographic information regarding

the participants should therefore be limited to gender, length of service and region of service which would not be sufficient information to identify any individual respondent. It would have been beneficial to analyse the potential effects of rank and also include police staff as well as warranted officers.

The scenarios in this pilot research were designed to reflect realistic examples of police sexual misconduct and to explore the likelihood of reporting. Unlike the police integrity scenarios which have been in use for 20 years, testing sexual misconduct in this way is a new approach. Potentially, the addition of colleague vs non-colleague within the scenarios could be omitted for future exploration given the exploratory nature of this research.

Future research

In addition to exploring the effects of rank on reporting likelihood and seriousness perception, there are many areas for future enquiry. Further understanding of why a minority of officers considered sex with a victim of rape or domestic violence not to be a breach of the Code of Ethics would be beneficial and could be incorporated into future police training. A study to examine the level of evidence officers require before making a report of sexual misconduct to supervision across different misconduct types is also recommended. Furthermore, the sexually inappropriate language scenario was perceived as both the least serious and therefore least likely to be reported scenario, further work is planned to explore the incidence and impact of sexual bullying in the police.

As highlighted in the discussion, SDB might have influenced how participants responded to the scenarios and including a measure to assess this, such as the Marlowe-Crowne scale is recommended for future research.

Chapter Six

Sexual Misconduct in Police Recruits as identified by Police Trainers

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Opening statement on the paper:

This section has been redacted as it contains confidential methodological information.

Abstract

Police sexual misconduct is an under-researched type of police corruption. Although rare, it has serious negative ramifications for both the victims and the reputation of the police. When officers join, there is an extended period of training during which potential warning signs of sexual misconduct may be displayed. This research explored how police trainers identify and deal with sexual misconduct in new recruits. Six focus groups across four police forces in the

South of England were conducted - a total of 25 police training staff. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Sexually inappropriate language and sexual touching was witnessed during training, with both recruits and trainers as victims. Police trainers are confident in dealing with such incidents, however more serious allegations did not result in disciplinary action. Victims and witnesses were reluctant to report incidents, and this may hinder the early identification of recruits who require more discipline or who are potentially unsuitable for police work.

Introduction

Sexual misconduct in police officers is a serious form of police corruption which encompasses a broad range of behaviours. The definition of US researcher Maher (2003, p357) defines police sexual misconduct (PSM) as “any behaviour by a police officer whereby an officer takes advantage of his or her unique position in law enforcement to misuse his or her authority and power to commit a sexually violent act, or to initiate or respond to some sexually motivated cue for the purpose of personal gratification”. PSM may include non-consensual behaviours such as rape, sexual assault, and voyeurism in addition to activities such as consensual sex on duty, initiating sexual relationships with vulnerable victims/witnesses and sexually inappropriate language and gestures which may be directed to the public and/or colleagues (Lopez et al, 2017; Maher, 2003; Stinson et al, 2015).

In England and Wales, police sexual misconduct is considered to be a breach of the police Code of Ethics; the standard of conduct and behaviour expected from every serving officer (College of Policing, 2014a). The Code of Ethics states that officers must: “not engage in sexual conduct or other inappropriate behaviour when on duty’ and to ‘ensure behaviour and language could not reasonably be perceived to be abusive, oppressive, harassing, bullying, victimising or offensive by the public or policing colleagues” (College of Policing, 2014a p6,).

Police Sexual Misconduct

Police sexual misconduct is an under-researched form of police corruption - especially within England and Wales. It is also relatively uncommon with approximately 220 proven cases per year

as compared to 837 proven cases of other types of corruption (HMIC, 2017; IOPC, 2012a). However, the impact it has to the lives of victims, and importantly the reputation and trust in the police, is immeasurable. Often, victims of PSM are highly vulnerable members of society with histories of drug abuse, sexual abuse, and mental health issues (Cottler et al, 2014; Sweeting et al, 2020). Adverse outcomes for victims who are external to the police include depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Stringer et al, 2020). PSM can also occur between colleagues in the form of inappropriate sexualised language and overfamiliar touching (Brown, Flemming, Silvestri, Linton & Gouseti, 2019). Police officers and staff who experience or witness this behaviour have been found to have lower productivity levels and higher levels of stress (Brown et al, 2018). Finally, some consensual sexual activity between officers is also considered to be PSM, for example sex on duty. Sweeting et al (2020), recorded 6.5% of a total sample of 155 cases of PSM in England and Wales involved officers engaged in sexual contact when on duty. Officers who engage in sexual relationships with colleagues are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest to their supervisors e.g., if the officers work on the same team or if one or both parties are married to other people (NPCC, 2019b). As with other types of PSM, the impact of this behaviour can be severe. For example, a Sussex police officer missed an urgent call to attend a fatal road crash because she was on a phone call to her married police officer lover (The Independent, 2019).

Policing is unique in many ways due to its associated dangers, unpredictability, and opportunities for lone working - sometimes with poor supervision (Demirkol & Nalla, 2009; Stinson et al, 2015). The working and organisational culture of the police can therefore be aggressive, assertive and, despite drives to promote greater workplace diversity, predominantly masculine (Brown et al, 2018; Loftus, 2010). In addition, feelings of loyalty to colleagues and/or fear of retribution or ostracisation may prevent officers from reporting misconduct (Holgersson, 2019; Westmarland & Rowe, 2018; Wieslander, 2019). Whilst police culture may provide a

partial explanation for the occurrence of police sexual misconduct, it is likely that individual factors are also involved (Maher, 2003). The concept of the 'bad apple' – an individual who has joined the police pre-disposed to abuse the power the role affords, may account for some instances of PSM (Melig, 2012). However, bad apple theory implies PSM is an isolated issue which can be easily resolved by simply dismissing bad apple officers. It is far more likely that the working environment, the organisational culture, and individual factors combine together to account for PSM (Lee et al, 2013; Lopez et al, 2017).

Outcomes for police officers involved in PSM can be variable. In the US, many officers involved in PSM are simply moved to another station rather than face disciplinary action (Rabe-Hemp & Braithwaite, 2013). Countrywide variations in both the frequency and outcomes of PSM have also been recorded in the US. States such as Texas have been found to have a greater frequency of PSM than Eastern states, and similar offences have been dealt with by imprisonment in one state and by an apology letter in another (Stinson et al, 2015). Such variations have also been recorded in England & Wales where 94% of officers in the south of the country were dismissed for abuse of position for a sexual purpose compared with 66.7% in the north (Sweeting et al, 2020).

Police training

New police officers who are suddenly immersed into the policing environment are believed to undergo a strong socialisation process (Oberfield, 2019). A component of this is the impact of learning what it means to be a police officer; the potential dangers of the role and the potential scrutiny faced from the public, media, and the organisation (Branch, 2020). Recruits may therefore form strong personal bonds with their colleagues and see themselves as set apart

from the rest of society (Boivin, Faubert, Gendron & Poulin, 2017). New recruits are generally at their most principled with high levels of integrity on joining and they remain this way during training (Blumberg, Giromini & Jacobson, 2016). An effective training environment must therefore bring the positive elements of socialisation such as team working and cohesion, together with problem solving and decision making skills (Belur, Agnew-Pauley, McGinley & Tompson, 2019).

Police training in England and Wales consists of several phases which vary slightly in length across different forces. Generally, recruits can expect to spend the first 18-22 weeks of training within a classroom environment where they are taught and are tested in criminal law and police procedures (Essex Police, 2020; North Wales Police, 2020). Police trainers are serving police officers or civilians who have successfully completed an extensive learning programme (College of Policing, 2013c). Trainers closely supervise new recruits in a way which can be lost once a recruit is sent out into the real world of policing. The aim is to foster an environment of guidance, structure and social support which results in increased feelings of internalised commitment to the police (Chevalier, Huart, Coillot, Odry, Mokoukolo, Gillet & Fouquereau 2019).

There is little previous research into sexual misconduct in police recruits, but there is some cross-over with the use of psychometric testing during recruitment. Arrigo and Clausen, (2003) identified a lack of conscientiousness as a notable predictor of future misconduct in police recruits. Detrick et al (2004), also linked this trait to non-graduates from police training - some of whom were dismissed for sexual misconduct – in addition to arrogance and emotional vulnerability. Reingle-Gonzalez, Bishopp & Jetelina (2016) found intensive recruitment of police officers in North America – requiring larger class sizes and increased yearly intakes – resulted in higher relative frequency of police sexual misconduct during the training phase. Given that the

Government have promised an extra 20,000 new police officers by 2023, it is important to ensure that police forces are able to recruit without compromising on standards of trainee officers (Home Office, 2019b; Full Fact, 2019).

Sexual misconduct by police has serious consequences for victims who are often highly vulnerable. In addition, it also damages the reputation of the police, potentially leading to mistrust by the general public and a lack of reporting or general support. The early identification of officers who engage in this behaviour is therefore critical, and a current priority of the National Police Chiefs Council of England and Wales (NPCC, 2017a). It is therefore important to understand how early in an officer's career sexual misconduct may occur and even if PSM can occur as early as the first weeks and months of service.

The current research seeks to:

- Identify if sexual misconduct occurs within the initial training phase of police recruits and if so:
 - What behaviours occur?
 - The seriousness of such behaviours?
 - How do police trainers identify PSM during training?
 - How do police trainers deal with allegations?
 - And are there any potential barriers to the identification of PSM within the training environment?

Method

A total of ten police forces in England were contacted to see if police trainers would be willing to take part in a focus group about sexual misconduct in police recruits. Of these, six agreed to take part. Due to restrictions on time for staff, two of these forces withdrew, leaving four forces - all of which were located in the south of England. A total of six focus groups were conducted: two in forces one and two and one each in forces three and four. In total, 25 police trainers were involved: comprising of a total of 11 female and 14 male participants. Twenty two of the trainers were either serving or retired police officers and three were civilians. Trainers ranged in experience in their current roles from six weeks to 30 years ($M=5.86$ years, $SD= 6.92$). Table i provides demographic information for the participants.

Table i: Participant demographic information

Participant/Force	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Rank and role	Training experience
1/1	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	5 years
2/1	Male	White British	PC - police trainer	12 years
3/1	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	5 years
4/1	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	5 years
5/1	Male	White British	PC- Special constable trainer	6 weeks
6/1	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	5 years
7/1	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	30 years
8/1	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	17 years
9/1	Female	White British	Civilian - PCSO trainer	10 years
10/2	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	18 years
11/2	Female	White British	PC - police trainer	6 weeks
12/2	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	6 weeks
13/2	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	6 weeks
14/2	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	18 months
15/2	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	7 years
16/2	Male	White British	PC- police trainer	3 years
17/2	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	2 years
18/3	Male	White British	Civilian (former Inspector) – police training manager	5 years
19/3	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	10 years
20/4	Female	White British	Civilian – support to training	6 years
21/4	Male	White British	PC – police trainer	4 years
22/4	Male	White British	PC – Special constable trainer	7 years
23/4	Male	White British	PCSO – PCSO trainer	2.5 years
24/4	Male	White British	Sergeant – Police trainer/manager	3 years
25/4	Female	White British	PC – police trainer	6 months

The focus group approach was selected as an effective method to explore the fairly novel topic of PSM in recruits, and to understand the trainers' opinions and perspectives; both as individuals and within their teams (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At a surface level, police trainers are a homogeneous group and work together on a daily basis: however, they would also have had different career paths prior to training and diverse individual experiences. Striking this balance between homogeneity and heterogeneity of participants is an effective way to elicit vigorous discussion within focus groups (Acocella, 2012).

Procedure

The training Sergeant or in one case, Inspector, from each force's training unit arranged a suitable time for the focus groups. The first author requested that each group include around five trainers to both maximise data collection, yet also ensure that each participant would have the opportunity to fully engage in the discussion. Braun & Clarke (2006), suggest groups of between three to eight are an ideal size to manage and encourage in depth discussions. The training Sergeant/Inspector was sent the participant information form in advance of the focus groups and was asked to share this with interested police training staff, advising them participation was optional. The trainers were given a copy of this and the opportunity to ask any questions when the author attended to run the groups. The consent forms were provided prior to commencing the groups. The first author also outlined the ground rules for the sessions, namely allowing each participant the chance to speak, to avoid speaking over each other and to involve one another in the conversation.

Focus Groups

For five out of the six groups, the author travelled to the participating forces and ran the focus groups in a quiet room within the training block of police premises. Due to issues with room availability, focus group three was conducted over Skype. The atmosphere of the group conducted over Skype was noticeably different to the groups conducted in person in that the conversation felt somewhat stilted at the beginning and the author was less able to observe the body language and reactions of the participants. Fortunately, the Skype group consisted of only two participants, as conducting a larger group in this way would have possibly amplified these issues. The focus groups each lasted for approximately one hour. At the beginning of the focus groups, trainers were asked to introduce themselves by their first names only and provide a brief history of their police careers, including the approximate date of their move into the training department. Trainers were also asked to state which type of recruits they train e.g., police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) or Special Constables, their current rank and their ethnicity.

The participants were asked: do you have any experience in dealing with student officers who behave in a sexually inappropriate manner during training? If so, what behaviours have you observed? In which environments have any incidents occurred e.g., on or off duty? Where you have not directly witnessed something, how have recruits or colleagues made you aware of it? If you were made aware of a report of sexual misconduct by a recruit, how would you deal with it?

Analysis

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All personal details were anonymised, including geographical details relating to each force. An inductive thematic approach was selected for the data analysis. This method is ideal for research questions where there has been little previous research, as the analysis is driven by the current data and not by pre-existing theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The inductive thematic approach is also well suited to this research as it seeks to understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

This analysis was carried out in accordance with the six stage method recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006). The author familiarised herself with the transcripts before summarising lines and sections of text into initial codes which were relevant to the research questions. The initial codes were then reviewed and organised into broader themes which were then checked against the transcripts to ensure all related data had been identified. NVivo software was used throughout the coding process.

Reflexivity

The first author is a serving police officer. During her own training and during her career, she has worked with a small number of police officers who have been dismissed for sexual misconduct. There are advantages of police officers conducting such research, in that they have a pre-existing knowledge of police terminology, procedures, and experience of police training. However, there is also potential for the author to interpret the experiences of the trainers in accordance with

her own (Dodgson, 2019; Palaganas, Sanchez, Monlintas & Caricativo, 2017). The first author decided to disclose her status as a police officer to the participants but did not disclose her own experiences and emphasized her role as a researcher wishing to elicit and understand *their* experiences. The decision to disclose this was made to balance the need between understanding the issues of PSM during training as a researcher and being honest and open with the participants (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020). In an effort to avoid bias, the second author (who is not a police officer) was present for the first two focus groups and during the initial part of the coding process.

Findings and discussion

The participants provided in-depth and often highly detailed accounts of their experiences of identifying and dealing with sexual misconduct in police recruits. Three main themes were identified: types of sexually motivated behaviour during training; identifying and dealing with PSM and barriers to reporting. The main themes and subthemes are presented in figure i.

Figure i: Main themes and subthemes



Types of sexually motivated behaviour during training

Police trainers described a range of sexually inappropriate behaviours they had observed in recruits during training. These ranged from consensual relationships between recruits to inappropriate sexualised language to sexual assault. For the purpose of this research, the array of these behaviours is described as a continuum – at the lowest end of which is behaviour that created tensions within training and at the higher end, behaviour which falls under criminal law.

The “love triangle”

The consensual relationships engaged in by recruits were frequently described by the trainers as “the love triangle”. Recruits engaged in the love triangle were already in intimate partner relationships upon joining the police but would engage in sexual relationships with other recruits. The trainers were able to identify this behaviour fairly quickly and would notice changes within the group dynamics. Recruits engaged in this behaviour would often shield or assist their love interest during training exercises. This behaviour would also create tensions and disruptions within the classroom – one trainer referred to this as changing the “internal politics of the group”.

They have relationships amongst themselves, there is a lot of that. There’s been lots of internal politics around someone sleeping with someone else’s girlfriend.

P14 Male, Police Trainer

We call it the triangle - where you have a couple of students in the same class who were engaged - cue a third party - so that relationship wasn't going so well and probably was destined to end. Then you're talking about things like them protecting each other during class. P22, Male, Special Constable Trainer

Although disruptive, this behaviour as described by the trainers is unlikely to fall within the remit of internal disciplinary action. The College of Policing's Code of Ethics states officers must "ensure that any relationship at work does not create an actual or apparent conflict of interest" and therefore this could be considered unprofessional behaviour (College of Policing, 2014a, p6). Consensual sexual relationships between recruits are potentially inevitable but their occurrence did cause the trainers some frustrations as there was little they could do to prevent it from happening.

Inappropriate language

The next level of sexual misconduct involved sexual language towards other recruits or used more generally. In all but one case, it involved male perpetrators. This was less common than the 'love triangle' and was dealt with on a scale ranging from verbal advice - for example, when a female recruit made a comment that the Chief Constable was "fit", to dismissal when the behaviour was persistent or directed towards specific individuals. Recruits who had previously been Special Constables or PSCO's appeared to arrive with more confidence and trainers noted they had a greater tendency towards using inappropriate "banter" from an early stage.

The comments started really at the beginning of the course, but he lost his job when he - it wasn't just comments during sexual offences lessons - he didn't try to masturbate on girls, but he pretended to. He thought it was funny. P19, Female, Police Trainer

There was an incident with some ex-PCSOs where I ended up having to be part of the investigation...the language they were using was inappropriate here at HQ and ...their behaviour was being investigated. They lost their positions because of that. P2, Male, Police Trainer

Interestingly, the female trainers, especially in forces one and two reported comments which, although not sexually inappropriate, were perceived as sexist. This included expressing opinions that women were not capable of being police officers or more covert behaviours such as checking the advice given by a female trainer.

It is more over recruits talking about women belonging in the kitchen, things like that. Women should be at home having babies rather than working in a full-time career role as a police officer. P12, Female, Police Trainer

It is subtle things; It is about how they'll refer to somebody and who they go to ...they will approach the males to ask the question rather than myself as the female. P9, Civilian, PCSO Trainer

Incidents of inappropriate sexual language were typically initiated by male recruits who already had a police background and therefore were potentially more confident in this environment.

Labelled by the participants as “banter”, this has been described as rough words, insulting, but usually good natured and almost always manly (Kingshott, 2013). Banter is often believed to be an outlet for the stresses of police work and a way of strengthening bonds between colleagues (Atkinson, 2017). However, sexualised banter within the police has been found to increase stress and decrease productivity in both targets and bystanders (Brown et al, 2018).

Recent research into police culture finds that it is currently in a state of change: moving away from sexism and outdated attitudes towards a more progressive and inclusive culture (Brown et al, 2019, Metcalfe, 2017). It is therefore concerning to find that recruits who already have a police background are bringing elements of an old and outdated culture into the present training environment. The potential implication of this for the non-police recruits is a belief that sexism and sexually inappropriate language is an expected part of police life. Furthermore, workplace sexual harassment and sexist beliefs may be predictive of future involvement in physical sexual assault (Stander, Thomsen, Merrill & Milner, 2018; Tharp, DeGue, Valle, Brookmeyer, Massetti & Matjasko, 2013).

Sexual touching/assault

Finally, the most serious type of sexual misconduct during training related to sexually inappropriate touching or assault. In three cases, a recruit sexually touched another recruit without consent. Two were male perpetrators, and the third involved a female recruit touching the genitals of several male recruits. The trainers themselves had also been victimised - with one female trainer having been sexually assaulted twice by students whilst training. Another female trainer reported unwanted sexual contact by her line manager, and another told how a very senior officer sexually assaulted one of her students as she walked past. Finally, an incident of

one trainer sexually assaulting another during a training exercise in stop and search was also disclosed. Although each of the three forces reported incidents of sexual assaults during training, none resulted in the dismissal of the accused.

The senior officer had placed his hands over her breast; quite clearly grasping it in a sexual manner. P9 – Female, PCSO trainer

One student had inappropriately touched the other ... patting on the bum. P25, Female, Police Trainer

A male colleague who was quite fond of female probationers ...he was being a trainer, a teacher. He would do things, ask them for hugs, take them into the office for a hug, kissing them. P13, Police Trainer

In total, six incidents of sexual touching were reported across the five participating forces, and it was an unexpected finding that both recruits and trainers had been both victims and perpetrators. From the trainer's descriptions, there appear to be two types of sexual assault: unwanted/unwelcome touching and sexual assault in line with the criminal definition i.e., non-consensual touching of breasts/buttocks. There is little research regarding the frequency of such incidents within the police. Brown et al (2018), reported 18% of a total sample of 1776 police staff had experienced touching which made them feel uncomfortable and 12% had experienced unwanted hugs/kisses. A freedom of information request by The Guardian newspaper identified 829 incidents of internal sexual misconduct within a six year period; however, these included both sexual harassment and sexual assault (The Guardian, 2019).

The difficulties in successfully dealing with such incidents were twofold: recruits were reluctant to report and support allegations involving other recruits; and where the perpetrator was another trainer or police officer, the action taken appeared limited. For example, after one trainer complained about another, the accused was simply moved to another force area for a short period. Similarly, in another force when a recruit was allegedly sexually assaulted by a senior police officer, trainers reported this to the professional standards unit, but no further action was taken.

Previous US research raises the issue of 'officer shuffle' where officers involved in sexual misconduct and/or sexual violence do not face disciplinary action and are simply moved to another department or area - a course of action that does not protect victims (Rabe-Hemp & Braithwaite, 2013; Stinson et al, 2015). The findings of this research provide limited evidence of this: however, to effectively tackle sexual misconduct, the NPCC itself recognises that the police must be both consistent and fair in its response to such allegations (NPCC, 2017a).

Use of Social Media by recruits

Trainers across all forces brought up the subject of social media usage by the recruits and how this can pose difficulties with the groups. Many recruits set up class chat groups as a means of bonding outside of the classroom, however, this frequently caused problems as some 'banter' caused offence. Trainers often felt recruits behaved differently online than in class. Furthermore, this inappropriate online behaviour could persist for some time before being reported to trainers.

We have had incidents where inappropriate comments have been made on those WhatsApp groups. And fortunately, ... they have reported that and that has been dealt with. But otherwise, we wouldn't know about it...they think that doing WhatsApp is more secure and they're not gonna get caught out. P4, Female, Police Trainer

The behaviour that they tend to show to us is not the behaviour that they show to each other. I think it is difficult for us to realise how many in a group potentially could be a problem because you can have someone who is very polite and always punctual, does their work, doesn't cause any issues but on a WhatsApp group could be an absolute terror! P17, Male, Police Trainer

The increased social media usage by recruits was concerning to all trainers. Police guidelines state that any communication sent between work colleagues via social media should not breach the Code of Ethics or standards of professional behaviour (College of Policing, 2013c). As new recruits, the trainers would ensure that they are aware of this, but their understanding of what is acceptable may not be as well developed as that of longer serving police officers. It may also be related to their previous career: for example, two recruits from an ex-military background discussed making a bomb over a group chat – this might have been acceptable in the military but was not deemed to be so by the police. The use of social media groups in this way can merge the boundaries of work and professional life and create additional problems for both recruits and the trainers (Mainiero & Jones, 2013). Interactions between recruits which previously were only possible within the training environment now have the potential to continue outside of it and, as the trainers have found, they are often unaware of the inappropriate behaviour for some time.

Identifying and dealing with sexual misconduct

Identifying issues

Trainers described how in some cases they were able to identify issues of sexual misconduct during training especially for 'love triangle' behaviour. This would typically manifest as showing off in classes for their partners, losing concentration and using their mobile phones during teaching. A poor attitude to learning and disruptive behaviour in the classroom was also cited by trainers as the types of behaviour which had been a precursor to incidents of sexual misconduct. Trainers across all forces felt confident in their ability to identify sexual misconduct.

They are always on their phones Their attitudes change because they are conscious that their partner was in the room. They would start showing off or acting up or not concentrating. P1, Male, Police Trainer

I think we're very good - and I am going to blow our trumpet - we are very good in this department at identifying and dealing with anything along those lines. P24, Male, Police Trainer

In cases involving 'love triangles', trainers described changes in behaviour by the recruits which alerted them to potential issues. Trainers identified behaviours such as looks and glances between involved parties as well as loss of concentration in the classroom. For incidents

involving inappropriate language or sexual touching, this was more likely to be identified after they had been made aware of it by a victim or witness, suggesting this behaviour did not take place within sight or earshot of the trainers. Retrospectively, trainers recalled recruits who had previously been disciplined for sexual misconduct had demonstrated disruptive behaviour and a poor attitude to learning. This finding is in line with previous research into the behaviour of police recruits who had later been dismissed for misconduct (including sexual misconduct) which found they had lower levels of conscientiousness than successful recruits (Detrick et al, 2004).

Action taken

The trainers were asked how they would deal with incidents of sexual misconduct by recruits. Across every force, trainers were able to describe in great detail how they would go about this. Many trainers described the need to secure evidence from mobile devices for example. They also appeared to be both comfortable and confident in seeking advice and support from their line manager, if necessary. Several trainers cited their moral obligation as police officers to act and that if they did not, this could put their own job at risk.

I would challenge initially in terms of their behaviour if it wasn't serious. I'd be having that one-to-one discussion where I'd refer to our values and behaviours and what's expected. I would give them the details around what the escalation process was. . . . if that behaviour continued then I'd go straight to an action plan or development plan. P7, Female, Police Trainer

It's self-preservation as well. I'm not gonna get into trouble for anyone. If I witnessed and thought that anything was going on and if you don't say anything, you're almost just as guilty and I'm not losing my job for anyone. It should feel awkward for me to not report it. I'm also not losing my job for anybody. P2, Male, Police Trainer

Outcomes

The majority of incidents involving love triangles and inappropriate use of language were dealt with in the training department without the need for escalation to the professional standards units. Trainers described the flexibility within their procedures to deal with lower levels of sexual misconduct in ways directly tailored to the situation. Where there was a victim of sexual misconduct, trainers worked with them to ensure their wishes were taken into consideration where possible. The most serious incidents were referred straight to professional standards. In three cases, trainers felt professional standards took too long to investigate and the eventual outcomes were not as severe as the trainers expected them to be.

I feel confident that we ... and senior officers within this department would deal with it properly, but where it goes after that and whether they make the right decisions, sometimes I'm not sure. P18, Male, Police Trainer

We agreed that I would do a generic awareness of the types of language that we would use when referring to other people. And she was in agreement with that. I gave an input around professionalism, and behaviour. So, although it was specifically aimed at one

individual, it was a good exercise for the group, and it stopped. We resolved it and she was happy. So, I think it was a success. P24, Male, Police Trainer

Trainers were confident in the procedures they would follow if they were made aware of sexual misconduct by a recruit during training. Although the processes of reporting and dealing with misconduct are decided on by each police force (College of Policing, 2017b), the findings of this research highlighted little variation, with trainers describing recording the initial allegation, securing evidence (such as screen shots of messages), and then seeking advice of their line manager, who would either escalate it to their professional standards unit if serious, or deal with it locally. For more minor issues, there was flexibility in procedures to allow trainers to consult with the victim of the misconduct to ensure that their wishes were considered before acting on the allegation.

Less serious allegations tended to be dealt with inside the training department – to the self-reported success of the trainers who were satisfied that their intervention had a positive outcome and stopped the behaviour. More serious incidents were referred to professional standards units. Only one force expressed dissatisfaction with outcomes from professional standards and believed that they were both slow to act and did not involve them in the investigation. In relation to a specific example of sexual misconduct, the trainers of this force could not understand why the recruit was not criminally charged for their actions and was allowed to quietly leave.

The trainers' confidence in their force's misconduct procedures is slightly at odds with the earlier finding that more serious incidents of sexual misconduct did not result in disciplinary actions.

The only force who did not report current serious sexual misconduct issues was the only one which did not have a line manager taking part. It is possible that the trainers in focus groups with their managers felt unable to express any concerns fully.

Professional standards

All the trainers described their roles with pride and clarity; ensuring they got the best from their recruits and acted quickly when there were any issues. They recognised their importance to recruits but would always decline social event invitations so as not to blur the boundaries of their role. They also expressed personal feelings of disappointment and sadness when recruits engaged in inappropriate behaviour.

Regardless of what the public think, I think there is a lot of pride in this organisation and pride as individuals and what we do. P3, Male, Police Trainer

I don't socialise with students outside of work, ...some trainers in the past have and that is down to them I like to maintain that professional distance P21, Male, Police Trainer

In week one they are sat there saying, "I'm going to be well-behaved". We don't enjoy it you know, it's really sad when one of them misbehaves in that way. P19, Female, Police Trainer

Some trainers mentioned their preference not to attend any social events arranged by the recruits to avoid blurring their professional boundaries. Attending such events would allow trainers to observe the recruits' behaviour in a social setting and may potentially identify more

occurrences of sexual misconduct. However, it is understandable that trainers would not wish to give up their personal time to do this.

Barriers to reporting

Lack of confidence in reporting by victims

Trainers across all four forces noted recruits who were victims were reluctant to report sexual misconduct akin to the lack of reporting in sexual offending research more generally. When discussing this, trainers noted little had changed over time and the reluctance to 'grass' on colleagues is pervasive within policing.

I don't think it's an easy thing to do. As a probationer, I had to put in complaints about bullying ... and my life was made a misery. P10, Female, Police Trainer

I think with our generation, ...if something was said that was wrong, we would just challenge it and say it directly. Whereas this generation don't. P6, Male, Police Trainer

Witness guilt

Although they empathised, trainers were frustrated by the lack of support recruits sometimes gave to investigations of sexual misconduct. Witnesses were reluctant to come forward when

incidents had occurred in the classroom or during a night out with known witnesses; no amount of encouragement could persuade the recruits to support the investigation. The primary concern from witnesses appeared to be guilt, in that by coming forward, a colleague could lose their job. This was concerning as trainers felt a need to identify and deal with problem recruits before they left training.

Obviously, it was referred to PSD [Professional Standards Department] and it was surprising how many of the rest of the group decided to say that they hadn't heard or seen any of this going on. P19, Female, Police Trainer

You do have them in tears when they're making the statement worrying that someone is gonna lose their job and it's gonna be their fault. And we say, "well if it's happening now and to a police officer, what can happen when they are sitting in front of a vulnerable victim?" P20, Female, Police Trainer

It was reported by participants that both victims and witnesses of sexual misconduct during training appeared very reluctant to make formal complaints. Recruits often struggled emotionally, knowing their statement might result in a recruit losing their job or them being labelled a "whistle-blower". Interestingly, trainers described similar experiences when they were recruits, suggesting another potentially enduring issue within the police.

Previous research into police attitudes to sexual misconduct has described this as part of the 'blue wall of silence' (Kutnjak et al, 2019; Maher, 2003). This wall is reportedly strengthened by collegial loyalty, organisational resistance in encouraging reporting and supervisors turning a

blind eye (Lee et al, 2013). Though conducted in the US, this research suggests police officers may be shielded from detection by their colleagues. In the present study, the participants stated they actively encouraged reporting and acted quickly when made aware of incidents. As such, the only evidence of organisational resistance or turning a blind eye was a general reluctance in reporting and lack of consequences (in some instances), and subsequent reluctance to support allegations.

It should be considered that when faced with sexual misconduct, either as a victim or witness, there are three options available; leave the organisation, speak up, or choose silence – possibly due to organisational loyalty (Hanson, 1970, Hedin & Lane, 2020). Having only just committed their time and effort to join the police, recruits are unlikely to leave. Speaking up risks guilt of a fellow colleague's potential dismissal, ostracisation by the rest of their team or possibly, fear of gaining a reputation as a troublemaker. Such impacts have been seen in nurses who are whistleblowers (Peters, Luck, Hutchinson, Wilkes, Andrew & Jackson, 2011). However, the expectation on police officers is to report any form of misconduct and if recruits are unable to do so, there is a possibility that officers who are involved in sexual misconduct go undetected. As one trainer pointed out – if recruits are unable to report sexual misconduct directed at a colleague, how can they be expected to report the same behaviour directed to a vulnerable victim of crime? One possible solution is to address this during training – for example use of anonymous surveys may determine the specific reasons why recruits are reluctant to report, and these could be addressed in tailored teaching sessions. Workplace whistleblowing is more likely to occur when employees are encouraged to do so and feel confident that they will be supported (Dungan, Waytz & Young, 2015), therefore instilling this message from the first days of a recruit's service may be beneficial.

The "mask"

Despite trainers' perceived confidence in identifying and dealing with sexual misconduct issues during training there were concerns across all forces that some recruits are able to 'mask' their true personalities and motivations for joining the police. Trainers stated that it took some time for recruits to reveal their true personalities.

It's quite difficult I think for us because for 24 weeks, you can put a mask on. I believe that. Then they go on to the tutor unit and you're now in the culture of what it's like out there. It's not as sterile as it is here. You hear some of the students who were really well behaved are suddenly saying inappropriate things like "so-and-so is sexy". And the guards just go down. P25, Female, Police Trainer

It's not until you get to training school in about week three or four when you start to see people's true personalities You look great on paper but you're not. It looks like we have a class full of amazing people on paper but actually most of them are no good. P14, Male, Police Trainer

Trainers felt that some recruits were not displaying their "true" personality or belief system within the classroom environment and described this as the "mask". There were two ways that the mask might slip; through behaviour in online chat groups or further into the recruit's training. In using social media and online messaging, users are unable to see and gauge the reactions of those reading their comments. This provides an environment where users can express more extreme views and yet distance themselves from their comments because they were not made face-to-face (Suler, 2004). There is some research to suggest that there is little

difference between online and offline personalities and beliefs (Kosinski, Bachrach, Kohli, Stillwell & Graepel, 2014; Quercia, Kosinski, Stillwell & Crowcroft, 2011). The trainers' concern that some recruits can mask their true selves in the classroom but reveal them online may therefore be justified.

Similarly, some recruits who appeared to be model students in the classroom would begin to behave in a sexually inappropriate way later in their training. It is possible that, as with behaviour online, these recruits felt safer in expressing these views when not being monitored by trainers or once they felt more secure in their new roles as police officers. This finding is in line with the concept of the 'slippery slope' - in police corruption research, this denotes an officer taking gradual and initially tentative steps into wrongdoing (Dean, Bell & Lauchs, 2010; Punch, 2009,). Although this theory is more generally applied to a broader definition of police corruption, the findings of this research suggest it may also apply to sexual misconduct - this is further evidenced by the finding of a continuum of behaviours.

The effect of the 'mask' as a barrier to identification is important. Trainers can only identify and deal with inappropriate behaviour if they know it is occurring and, unless they witness it or are alerted to warning signs, it needs to be reported by the other students. Once out of classroom, recruits are under less scrutiny and there is the potential for the behaviour to persist and evolve.

Conclusion

Sexual misconduct in police officers can occur as early as the training phase. We find that there is a continuum of sexually inappropriate behaviours, ranging from sexual relationships between recruits, inappropriate language to sexual touching. Police trainers are alert to the signs of issues forming between recruits and feel confident in dealing with sexual misconduct once it has been reported. Recruits who are victims and witnesses of sexual misconduct are often reluctant to make a formal complaint or to support investigations. This reluctance to report is pervasive and may be compounded by the cohesion of recruits who form strong bonds during training. Measures to encourage reporting should be considered as this reluctance can enable unsuitable recruits to pass through training undetected.

Although police trainers were able to quickly deal with sexual misconduct between recruits, more serious incidents involving assault, which were dealt with outside of the training unit, did not result in disciplinary action. A review of case files to ascertain potential reasons for this could be the focus of future research. Recruits' usage of social media can also present issues and some may demonstrate unacceptable behaviours and beliefs which may not be revealed in the classroom.

Limitations

Although 10 forces were approached, only four forces were able to take part in this research and all were from the South of England. As such, the sample cannot purport to be representative, yet initially explores the concept and provide some useful information on how sexual misconduct may be present during police recruit training. Although the focus group method was successful in generating vigorous discussion, it was noted that the civilian trainers contributed less than the police officers. This may, in part, be due to the author's role as a police officer unintentionally encouraging a greater response from the other police officers. Furthermore, the police officers in the groups were generally very eager to speak and this may have drowned out the voices of the civilian trainers. It is also possible that some of the responses from the trainers were affected by the presence of their supervisor taking part in the group. Although the supervisors had knowledge of the incidents of sexual misconduct discussed in the group, their presence may have had an impact on certain areas of the discussion. For example, when trainers were asked about their confidence in the process of dealing with sexual misconduct, their opinions on this would reflect on the how the training departments are managed and supervised. Having their supervisor present may have hindered expression of their true opinions. In future, it may therefore be beneficial to conduct one to one interviews with trainers and/or utilise anonymous surveys.

Future Research

It would be beneficial to establish the full extent of sexual misconduct by recruits on a national level. If the issue is widespread, there may be a case for revision of the current recruitment process to ensure fewer problematic recruits are selected for training, by enhanced use of certain psychometric tests for example. Another consideration would be to analyse the recruitment application forms and interview documents of recruits who were later dismissed for sexual misconduct. This may uncover any differences in experience or background when compared to recruits who have displayed good conduct in their careers. Further research into the reasons why new recruits are so reluctant to report misconduct to trainers is also advised. This could improve reporting processes and tailor training inputs to further encourage early reporting.

Chapter Seven

***“We do employ some morons”*: Police trainers’ opinions on recruitment procedures**

In preparation (Sweeting & Cole, 2021)

This chapter has been redacted. The document and/or data contains information about research in progress where there is an intention to publish later.

See <https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/37462/>

Chapter Eight

Police sexual misconduct: development of a risk assessment tool for the early identification of officers and staff who abuse their position for a sexual purpose

In preparation: Sweeting, Cole, Hills & Angele (2021)

This chapter has been redacted for copyright reasons.

Chapter Nine

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has been redacted for confidentiality reasons.

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Appendices

Appendix i: Letter to police forces for participation in focus group research



P104 PGR Office
Talbot Campus
Bournemouth University
Fern Barrow
BH12 5BB

28th March 2019

Dear Sir/Ma'am

I am a first year PhD student at Bournemouth University and I am conducting research into sexual misconduct in Police Officers. I am also a serving Dorset Police Officer, and my research is being funded by Dorset Police and Bournemouth University. The project also has the support of the NPCC.

Part of my research is looking into if and how police trainers identify sexually inappropriate behaviour in police recruits. I would like to know if **** Police would be interested in allowing me to interview their police training staff as part of this research.

This would involve conducting two group interviews with a small number of police trainers (5-7 in each group). The interviews would last approximately 1 hour, and the trainers will be asked to describe any sexually inappropriate behaviour they have seen from recruits during their time training and how it was dealt with. In addition to this, I would like to hear the trainer's thoughts on the current police recruitment process.

The identities of the police trainers, recruits (and if required police force) will be concealed using pseudonyms and no cases of misconduct which are currently under investigation will be discussed.

My supervisor for the research - Dr Terri Cole – and I have both had management level police vetting clearance from the NPCC. I have also recently completed data protection training at Bournemouth University. This project has ethical approval from Bournemouth University's ethics panel under reference number 25490. Dr Cole and I have a draft legal agreement to cover data sharing between Bournemouth University and the police which has been co-drafted and signed off by a UK police force and the University in light of recent data protection legislation. If you would like to see this at this stage, please contact me at fsweeting@bournemouth.ac.uk .

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Fay Sweeting

Appendix ii: Participant information sheet for focus groups with police trainers

FGpolicetrainers & Version: FGPTv1

Ethics ID: 25490

Date: March 2019

**Participant Information Sheet****The title of the research project**

Police Sexual Misconduct: how do police trainers identify and deal with sexually inappropriate behaviour in police recruits?

Invitation to take part

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising/funding the research?

Dorset Police and Bournemouth University

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to understand how police training staff identify and deal with sexual misconduct amongst officers during their initial training. This will increase understanding of the types of sexual misconduct which occur at this level of an officer's service.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you currently work as a police trainer and have seen at least one intake of recruits through their initial 17-19-week classroom based training.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a participant agreement form. You can withdraw from participation during the focus group interview at any time and without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw, we will usually remove any data collected about you from the study. Once the group interviews have finished you may still be able to withdraw your data up to the point where the data is analysed and incorporated into the research findings or outputs. At this point your data will usually become anonymous, so your identity cannot be determined, and it may not be possible to identify your data within the anonymous dataset. Withdrawing your data at this point may also adversely affect the validity and integrity of the research. Deciding to take part or not will not impact upon your job as a police trainer in any way.

What would taking part involve?

I would like you to take part in a focus group interview with a small number of other police trainers of whom you already know. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be audio recorded by the researchers.

If you decide to take part, please **do not** give the names of any of police recruits under discussion during the focus groups. Additionally, if you know of any examples of misconduct by recruits which has not been investigated to conclusion whether this involved internal disciplinary action or criminal investigation, please do not discuss them during the focus groups.

What are the advantages and possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

There has been very limited research into sexual misconduct in police officers, particularly within the UK. As far I am aware, no researchers in the UK have asked to speak with police trainers about these issues before. I feel that your job role means you are well placed to identify such behaviours at an early opportunity. Hearing your experiences will help me and future researchers to understand the issue of sexual misconduct in police officers during the early stages of their careers.

During the focus group interviews, it is likely that sensitive information about the behaviour of police recruits will be discussed. Even if you personally do not have sensitive information to share in these groups, please be aware that others might. Some of this information might potentially be distressing to you. If you find this to be the case, please let me know at the earliest opportunity.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

I would like to know from your own personal experiences, how you have identified and dealt with inappropriate sexual behaviour during the training of police recruits. In particular, I am interested in knowing what first caused you to be concerned for example, body or verbal language or complaints from other recruits. I would also like to hear your views on the current police recruitment process

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and the transcription of the recording(s) for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

How will my information be kept?

All the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly in accordance with current data protection legislation. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest, as part of our core function as a university. Bournemouth University (BU) is a Data Controller of your information which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately. BU's Research Participant Privacy Notice sets out more information about how we fulfil our responsibilities as a data controller and about your rights as an individual under the data protection legislation. We ask you to read this [Notice](#) so that you can fully understand the basis on which we will process your information.

Publication

You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications about the research without your specific consent. Otherwise, your information will only be included in these materials in an anonymous form, i.e., you will not be identifiable.

Research results will potentially be published in peer reviewed academic journals.

Security and access controls

BU will hold the information we collect about you in hard copy in a secure location and on a BU password protected secure network where held electronically.

Except where it has been anonymised your personal information will be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals and when this is necessary for the purposes of the

research or another purpose identified in the Privacy Notice. This may include giving access to BU staff or others responsible for monitoring and/or audit of the study, who need to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations

Sharing and further use of your personal information

Only the researcher and the two BU staff members supervising this research project will have access to any personal data collected during the focus groups.

The information collected about you may be used in an anonymous form to support other research projects in the future and access to it in this form will not be restricted. It will not be possible for you to be identified from this data.

Retention of your data

All personal data collected for the purposes of this study will be held for five years. Although published research outputs are anonymised, we need to retain underlying data collected for the study in a non-anonymised form for a certain period to enable the research to be audited and/or to enable the research findings to be verified.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Fay Sweeting fsweeting@bournemouth.ac.uk

In case of complaints

Any concerns about the study should be directed to Dr Terri Cole. If you concerns have not been answered by Dr Cole, you should contact Professor Tiantian Zhang, Deputy Dean for Research and Professional Practise, Faculty of Science and Technology, Bournemouth University by email to researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk.

Finally

If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed participant agreement form to keep.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.

Appendix iii: Letter to police forces for participation in scenario testing

P104 PGR Office
Talbot Campus
Bournemouth University
Fern Barrow
BH12 5BB

2nd October 2019

Dear Sir

I am a second year PhD student at Bournemouth University, and I am conducting research into sexual misconduct in Police Officers. I am also a serving Dorset Police Officer, and my research is being funded by Dorset Police and Bournemouth University. The project also has the support of the NPCC.

Part of my research is looking into how police officers in the UK define and understand sexual misconduct and abuse of position for sexual gain. I have devised a short online survey for police officers to explore this. The survey is already live in two forces, and I would be very grateful if **** Police would consider making it available.

This project involves the completion of a short online questionnaire where officers are asked to provide their gender, length of service in increments and region in which they work. No other personal information is collected, and all responses are anonymous. The survey then provides eight short sexual misconduct scenarios followed by three questions:

- 1) Would this behaviour be regarded as violation of your force's code of ethics?

- 2) Do you think you would report these officers?
- 3) Assuming that the officers currently have clean disciplinary records, what level of discipline, if any, do you think would follow?

My supervisor for the research - Dr Terri Cole – and I have both had management level police vetting clearance from the NPCC. I have also recently completed data protection training at Bournemouth University. This project has ethical approval from Bournemouth University's ethics panel under reference number 26359.

Thank you for taking the time to read this enquiry and I hope to hear from you soon. If you would like to make this survey available, please email me at fsweeting@bournemouth.ac.uk and I will send the link.

Yours sincerely

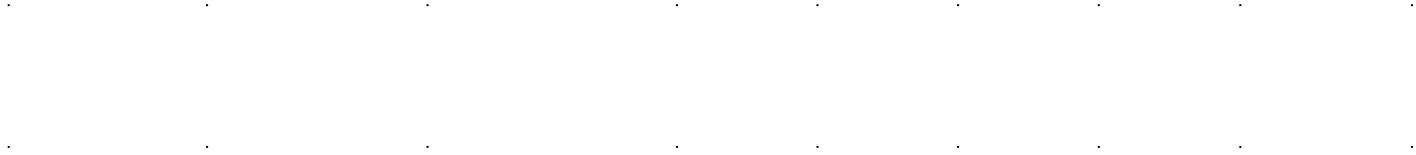
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Appendix iv: Summaries of case studies used in chapter 6

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Appendix v: Tables 2-8 data analysis from the proforma data of Chapter Eight (findings summarised in Chapter Eight results section)

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