A Multivariate model of police deviance: examining the nature of corruption, crime and misconduct

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Definitions of corruption

- Difficulties in assessing the extent of corruption
  - Differences in opinion as to how ‘corruption’ should be defined

2 perspectives:

- What is and is not corrupt? Defining what behaviour can be described by the term ‘corrupt’ (and how that may differ from other types of behaviour)

- What types of corruption are there? Distinguishing different types of behaviour under the term ‘corrupt’.
What is and is not corrupt?

Roebuck and Barker (1974) offer a loose definition, which involves any form of ‘deviant, dishonest, improper, unethical or criminal behaviour by a police officer’ (p.423).
What is and is not corrupt?

- Punch (2000) distinguishes between 3 categories of police deviance:
  - *corruption* is the conventional understanding of taking something (such as a bribe), against your duty, to do or not to do something, as an exchange from an external corruptor.
  - *misconduct* involves police breaking their own internal rules and procedures.
  - *police crime* describes behaviour such as using excessive violence, drug dealing, theft and burglary, sexual harassment, and violating a person’s rights.
What types of corruption are there?

- Skogan and Meares (2004):
  - Proactive vs reactive
  - Personal gain vs organisational gain (‘noble-cause’ corruption)

- Miller (2003):
  - Individual vs Organized, internally networked
Present Study Aims

- Empirically test these definitions of ‘corruption’
- Explore how features of cases relate to each other
- Uncover any consistent patterns in features that might suggest particular ‘types’ of corruption
- Offer a fuller descriptive model of corruption in terms of *who* and *what* is involved and for what gains (*why*).

Such a model may help not only in knowing what we’re dealing with but also inform tailored prevention methods.
Pros
- Narrative account of events
- Details of who was involved
- Multiple sources of information (eyewitness, offender interviews, forensic, etc)
- Scrutiny by judge, jury, legal representatives, police etc.
- Accepted in court as true
- Other social research methods impractical for study of corruption

Cons
- Select cases known to CJS
  A) prosecuting officers involved
  B) appealing a case on grounds of unsafe evidence (due to some form of inappropriate police behaviour)
Methodology

- Cases content analysed for descriptive features to cover previous categories, who is involved and for what purpose.
- Cases examined for these features using MSA
- Used to compare individuals/cases with respect to their similarities across a number of variables simultaneously.
Variables:

Each case coded as to whether it involves;

**Who**
- 1. Constable
- 2. High Rank
- 3. Both

in a

**When**
- 1. Single Offence
- 2. Series Offence

that is

**With**
- 1. Internal
- 2. External
- 3. Lone

and that is

**Why**
- 1. Reactive
- 2. Proactive
- 3. Situation response

for

**For**
- 1. Personal gain
- 2. Noble cause

determines

**Range**

Qualitative type of offence
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>TYPE A: Police Crime</th>
<th>N=21</th>
<th>TYPE B: Noble Cause Misconduct</th>
<th>N=16</th>
<th>TYPE C: Corruption</th>
<th>N=9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>Lone Constables</td>
<td></td>
<td>Internal High rank <em>(or both)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>External High rank <em>(or both)</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proactive Single acts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Situation response <em>Single or ongoing</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal gain</td>
<td></td>
<td>Noble cause</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing Personal gain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Causes</td>
<td>‘Bad apples’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor understanding of consequences</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Slippery slope’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor training or leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of job satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal associations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groupthink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential Strategies</td>
<td>Vetting, training, procedural controls and leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff support, culture, training, audit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal associations policies, EIS, training/personal development, celebrating success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4 cases unclassifiable
Conclusions

- MSA types support Punch’s (2000) 3 way typology of corruption, misconduct and crime
- Provide more detail on the nature of those incidents and who is involved
- Good for descriptive purposes (we can define what we are looking at)
- Themes may provide a useful framework for further exploring causal factors (personality, background, social dynamics) as well as tailoring prevention efforts
Thank You!

Louise Porter
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Type A ‘Police Crime’

- Includes excessive force, racism and harassment

**Individual officers**

- ‘bad apples’?
  - gained support from police departments (Lersch and Mieczkowsski, 2005)
  - removal of “problem” officers would decrease incidents
  - but even when individuals known to use excessive force are removed, further incidents still occur.

**Constables**

- Better leadership from higher ranks?
  - set a good example
  - communicate rules and procedures effectively

- **Transformational leadership**
  - personal transformation in followers
  - following leader’s principles and rules due to internalisation and belief, not expectation of reward or fear of consequences.
Type B, Noble Cause Misconduct

Situation Response:

- officers were faced with a situation and then decided to commit the corrupt act rather than actively seeking or responding to corruption

- frequently involves manipulating evidence as well as breaking interviewing procedure.

- Perhaps officers working in these areas should be made particularly aware of the temptations to break the rules and the consequences of doing so (e.g. the effect on the case & public)
Type B, Noble Cause Misconduct

Internal:

- **Officer influence?**
  - overt peer pressure
  - unchallenging; social support for each other’s actions

- ‘groupthink’ (Janis, 1972)?
  - *high stress*: under pressure to solve crimes
  - *belief in own morality*: monitoring society
  - *high cohesiveness*: strong cohesive police culture (Fleming & Lafferty, 2000; Sherman, 1985).
  - *absence of external audit*
Type B, Noble Cause Misconduct

- move to increasing external audit of Police behaviour
  - IPCC (UK); Citizen Oversight Panels (US)
  - Oversight bodies and ombudsman (AUS): investigate (or review evidence from internal investigations of) complaints or allegations of corruption and/or misconduct.

- systems are not faultless (such as strained relations and mistrust of each others’ procedures and intent), but
  - highlight Police accountability
  - if organised effectively, can help facilitate relations between the Police and the public (Finn, 2000).
Type C ‘Corruption’

- resembles Punch’s (2000) definition of Corruption: *doing something against the officer’s duty in exchange for money or gifts from an external corruptor.*

- typically high rank officers reacting to bribes from external sources over a period of time.

- Particularly dangerous as high ranks;
  - occupy a position of power that can affect the cases they are involved in
  - set the example to other officers that corrupt practices are acceptable
Type C ‘Corruption’

- Miller (2003): officers vulnerable to bribes when they feel let down by their job (constantly passed over for promotion, feeling dissatisfied with their work).

- Performance monitoring/personal development to motivate and reward staff in their work.

- Elements of transformational leadership
  - Individualised consideration/attention
  - Intellectual stimulation

- Recognition, rewards, celebrating success