



*ARC Centre of Excellence  
in Policing and Security*

# A Typology of Police 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

# Data – Law reports (50 UK cases)

## ■ 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)

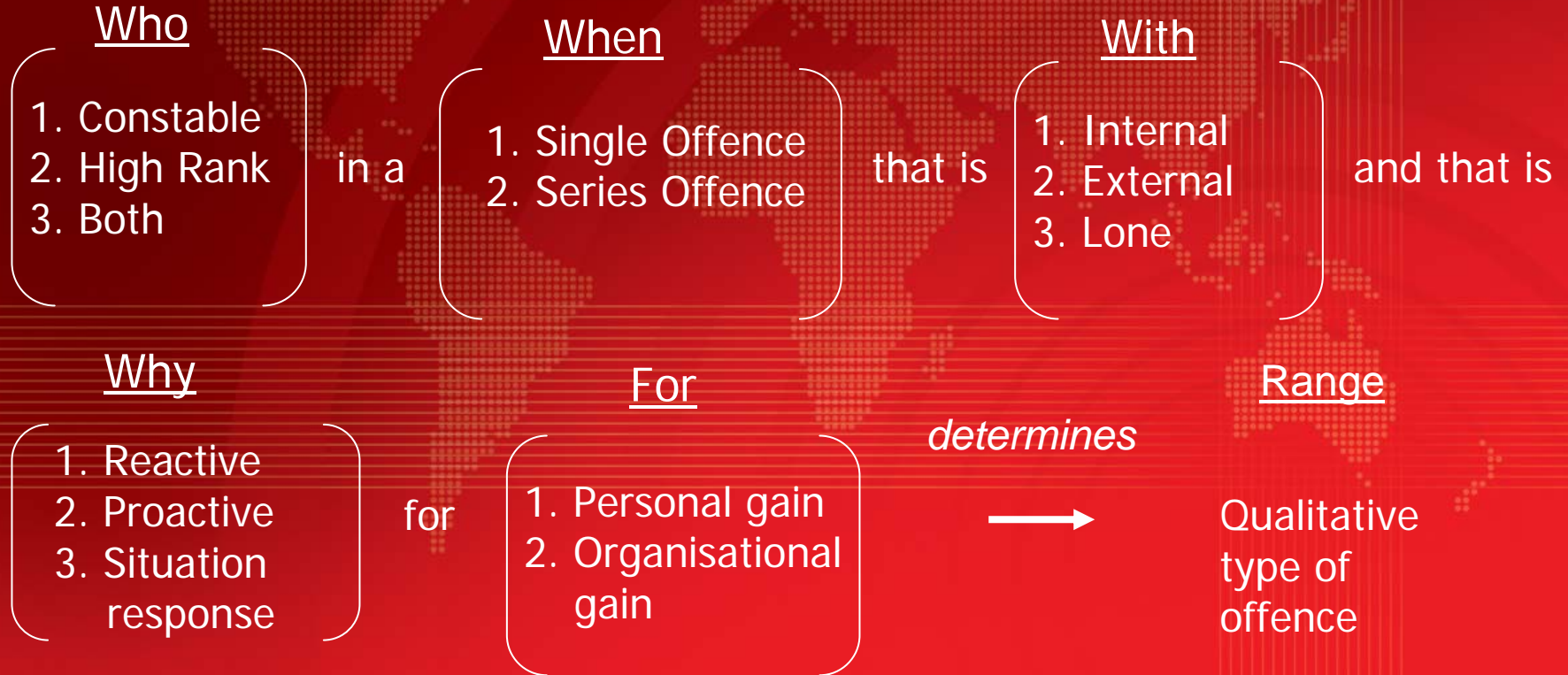
(representative?)

# 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;



\* 4 cases unclassifiable

# Results

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

# 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

# Future

- Replicate & Expand
  - Australia: re-contextualise (does it make sense?; are patterns the same?)
  - Refine some variables (e.g. on/off duty; rank)
  - More diverse data
  - Larger sample of cases
- Use model to explore successful strategies as well as further differences between “types”



# Thank You!

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