An examination of the impact of accountability and blame culture on police judgements and decisions in critical incident contexts

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By

Sara Waring

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis examines the impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions within critical incident contexts. Previous accountability research has often failed to balance experimental control with naturalistic context, thereby preventing the development of an integrated socio-cognitive model. Despite the increase in police accountability over the last few decades (Punch, 2009), there has also been a lack of systematic focus on the influence this evaluation mechanism has on policing. Level of risk posed to public safety in critical incidents and the potential for police actions to increase as well as decrease this risk heightens the importance of identifying and understanding factors that influence police judgments and decisions (Ask & Granhag, 2005).

Overall, the thesis seeks to both advance theoretic development and highlight practical implications for policing using a combination of experimental and naturalistic methods and theories from traditional, organisational and naturalistic decision paradigms. Research conducted therefore acknowledges the complexity of policing contexts whilst distinguishing the influence of accountability from other factors. In total, five data chapters are presented that comprise of both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data consists of transcripts from electronic focus groups, debriefs and questionnaires that are analysed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data consists of police responses to a vignette and a simulation.

Findings indicate that accountability may influence police judgments and decisions by altering emotions, motivational goals and attention focus. The influence of this social mechanism may depend on police perceptions of the organisational culture driving the form accountability takes. This thesis will highlight that accountability is most likely to encourage optimal performance when police view the organisation to provide a supportive environment with legitimate and fair appraisal mechanisms. This is in contrast to an unfair, illegitimate environment driven by a culture of blame. Within a supportive environment, police are more likely to be motivated by accuracy than self-preservation. A supportive environment also encourages attention to remain focussed on providing judgments and decisions suitable for the situation rather than becoming distracted by anxiety over the potential to be blamed and punished.
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1. INTRODUCTION: HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY RESEARCH IN POLICING CONTEXTS

The term ‘accountability’ refers to the real or perceived likelihood that an individual, group or organisation’s judgments, decisions and actions will be evaluated by an audience with the power to exact consequences based on appraisals (Hall et al., 2003). In this way, accountability may be viewed as a process that binds individuals to society, ensuring conformity to social expectations and regulating behaviour (Tetlock, 2002). The potential to be evaluated by others has long been noted as one of the most important factors to influence decision making by altering social, emotional and cognitive processes (Tetlock, 2002). Indeed, accountability is comprised of numerous factors that have each been found to influence decision making. These include: being appraised by external audiences (Klehe, Anderson, & Hoefnagels, 2007) with the power to instigate rewards or punishments (Baucus & Beck-Dudley, 2005); knowing that actions will be linked to oneself (Postmes & Lea, 2000); and being required to provide reasons for actions (de Kwaadsteniet, van Dijk, Wit, De Cremer, & Rooij, 2007). Overall, research indicates that accountability influences judgments and decisions by altering motivational goals such as accuracy and self-preservation (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999).

Although considerable advancements have been made to understanding the impact of accountability on judgments and decisions, research has often either failed to consider the context these cognitive processes are made in or to control aspects of the environment so that robust conclusions can be drawn. Consequently, some theories provide an oversimplified view which may be insufficient for understanding this mechanism in complex naturalistic environments. Conversely, other theories fail to provide a comprehensive explanation as the impact of accountability often cannot be distinguished from countless other factors. As discussions below will highlight, the main limitation for accountability research has been a failure to balance experimental control with environmental context to develop a comprehensive socio-cognitive model. This thesis seeks to utilise a more balanced approach in examining the impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions in complex critical incident contexts.

Within UK policing, a critical incident is defined as any incident “where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their
family and/or the community” (Metropolitan Police Service, 2006). Within these contexts, police decision making may be characterised by high pressure and risk as judgments and decisions made have the potential to further compromise public safety (Hall, Grieve, & Savage, 2009). Indeed, this thesis focuses on critical incidents because of the level of risk posed to public safety and the potential for these incidents to attract significant public and media attention which can leave officers open to scrutiny. Despite this public service being open to evaluation and scrutiny from multiple sources and evidence that accountability can influence judgments and decisions, systematic examination of accountability in policing has been limited.

The high stakes within critical incidents makes understanding psychological underpinnings of police judgments and decisions and factors that influence them an essential area of research for minimising error and ensuring overall effectiveness (Ask & Granhag, 2005). Good policing is ultimately determined and driven by judgments and decisions made during police activity which guide the direction of an incident (Dror, 2007). Judgment is the process of forming qualitative evaluations about options or courses of action (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). This forms an aspect of decision making, defined as a collection of cognitive processes that lead to the choice of an option or course of action (Hoffman & Yates, 2005). Judgments and decisions are conceptually alike as both involve similar underlying processes employed to solve problems; the key difference is that decisions require commitment to options whereas judgments can be valid end states (Montgomery, 2005). Within critical incidents, judgments and decisions are made under high accountability pressure and can have long-term impact on public perceptions of policing which further influences police performance.

A recent example of this relates to the death of Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper seller caught up in the 2009 London G20 protests on his way home from work. Camera footage of the incident revealed a public order police officer striking Tomlinson from behind and forcing him to the ground; moments later he was dead. Originally, the decision was made not to prosecute as it was felt there was no case to answer. However, the victim’s family, public, and media campaigned for a case review which resulted in further evidence coming to light. Subsequently, on the 24th of May 2011, an announcement was made that PC Harwood would face prosecution for the alleged manslaughter of Tomlinson. External audiences have been outraged at the officer’s conduct and how this was handled, perceiving the original decision not to prosecute as a failure to hold the officer to account. This is just one of many examples
highlighting the power external perceptions have over policing and the importance these audiences place on accountability in appraising police performance.

Overall, this thesis focuses on examining the impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions in critical incident contexts by integrating approaches and theories from different decision paradigms. The systematic evaluation of accountability in policing contexts is novel and this thesis uses a combination of subjective police perspectives and quantitative measures that acknowledge the importance of contextual factors. In particular, research examines the potential for accountability to impact on judgments and decisions by altering internal factors such as emotions and motivational goals, both of which are important to cognitive processing. For example, the desire to achieve positive and avoid negative emotional states allows emotions to influence decisions and actions (Craig, 2008). Motivations are a set of energetic forces that direct the amount of cognitive effort invested and where attention is focused (Pinder, 1998). The potential relevance of these factors to accountability will be discussed further in Chapter 3 in relation to analysis of police perspectives of accountability.

The remainder of this chapter will provide an overview of three areas central to the development of research. Firstly, a basic overview of the concept of accountability is provided to facilitate understanding of the intended purpose of this social mechanism. Secondly, the historical context of accountability within British policing is discussed to highlight its importance within this organisation, how current mechanisms have developed, and the unique contextual factors relevant to constructing research. Finally, an overview of accountability research conducted to date across decision paradigms is given to illustrate what is currently known and where advancements are required for addressing research goals.

1.1 A general overview of the concept of accountability

Accountability has become a popular area of research over the past few decades following changes in attitudes to high profile incidents (Green, 2003), such as the death of Victoria Climbié\(^1\) (Laming, 2003). These incidents are no longer viewed as meaningless and

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\(^1\) Victoria Climbié was an 8 year old child murdered on the 25\(^{th}\) of February 2000 after suffering prolonged abuse at the hands of her guardians. As a result of public outcry an inquiry was held, which concluded that a number of agencies (including the police, social services and National Health Service) failed to protect her. At least 12 occasions were identified whereby agencies could have prevented Victoria’s death. As a result of this inquiry, major changes were made to UK child protection policies, a programme entitled ‘Every Child Matters’ was formed, and in 2004 the Children Act was introduced.
uncontrollable, but as preventable events that occur as a result of mistakes made by individuals and organisations. Mayer and Cronin (2008) propose that “not only are we socially conditioned to the idea that an individual should be held accountable for his or her actions, but we are also cognitively predisposed to view the world in this way” (p. 428). Thus, when tragedies occur, people seek to hold individuals accountable to make sense of what transpired and obtain control over preventing repeat occurrences (Gephart, 2003).

Within the public administration literature, the concept of accountability has become increasingly complex due to expansion in meaning (Mulgan, 2000). Whilst the term was originally reserved for the process of being called to account by an authority figure, it now incorporates concepts of inner responsibility to one’s conscience (Friedrich, 1940); institutional control (Uhr, 1993); and responsiveness to demands of user groups (Romzek & Dubnick, 1994). Furthermore, the term responsibility is often used interchangeably with accountability despite the former referring to the power to initiate a course of action, and the latter the power to examine that course of action (Young, 2006). Uhr (1993) notes that for public administration to be effective, responsibility should be placed at the centre of decision and action formation, with accountability and responsiveness on either side. He concludes that where accountability or responsiveness is allowed to dominate, the end result becomes blind obedience to managerial authority or total compliance with the wishes of the user group; neither of which represents a robust decision strategy.

Decision research has not always acknowledged that social mechanisms such as accountability can influence judgment and decision processes. Originally, decision makers were either viewed as psychologists seeking to obtain cognitive mastery over the causal structure of their environment or economists maximising subjective expected utility (Tetlock, 1992). Both metaphors have been rejected over claims they fail to incorporate abstract processes and environmental settings in which decision makers operate (Tetlock, 2002). Instead, the Social Contingency Model (SCM) views individuals as information processors functioning in social systems governed by rules and responsibilities that serve to maintain stability (Tetlock, 2002). This model concludes that decision makers are intuitive politicians engaging in impression management strategies to seek approval from key audiences that bolster self-worth on dimensions of personal importance.

Accordingly, the intended purpose of accountability is to improve performance by instigating appraisals that identify when mistakes have been made and to punish those responsible to
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Discourage others from repeating them (Boin, t’Hart, Stern & Sundelius, 2005). In this way, accountability aims to encourage motivation for accuracy and greater investment of cognitive effort so that decisions are made carefully, thereby minimising errors. However, as will be discussed, findings are mixed as to whether accountability does in fact improve or degrade decision performance (Hall, Bowen, Ferris, Royle, & Fitzgibbons, 2007). What is generally agreed upon within contemporary accountability research is that decision makers act as intuitive politicians motivated to receive rewards and avoid punishments (Hall et al., 2007). But in doing so, they must strive to reach a ‘golden mean’ so that they are “sensitive to the views of important constituencies, but avoid appearing so chameleonic that one loses their trust and confidence. One should be self-critical, but not to the point of paralysis. And one should stick by one’s principles but not to the point of dogmatism and self-righteousness” (Tetlock, 1992, p. 360). Nevertheless, as the following section highlights, this balancing act may be difficult to achieve within policing, particularly when considering the complex environment in which accountability systems have developed.

1.2 A history of accountability within British policing

Punch (2009) notes that the “nature of the police organisation’s response to dealing with trouble and its repercussions is often as crucial as the nature of the original incident to determining the legitimacy and credibility of the police in the eyes of the public” (p. 198). Police are sanctioned in the use of specialist powers to assist with meeting role requirements of preventing crime, identifying and apprehending suspects, preserving public peace, and protecting life and property (Oppal Report, 1994). The service and its employees must ensure that such powers are used fairly or public trust and confidence will be lost (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007). This has consequences for the ability of the service to function effectively as public cooperation is an essential aspect of policing (Hough & Roberts, 2004).

Developing trust between the police and public requires the presence of accountability and transparency to ensure that police demonstrate effective performance, or that where performance failures arise they will be dealt with adequately to prevent reoccurrence (Gerber & Mendelson, 2008). However, there can sometimes be a difference between what the public wants and what they need, which means that police are accountable for what is in the public’s interest in addition to what the public are interested in (The Police Foundation, 2006). For example, the public and media may often demand that police reach a swift resolution to a high impact investigation. Yet police must ensure actions are guided by evidence and accuracy to
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build a robust case. Accountability within this service is further complicated because police are not only accountable to the public, but also the government and other audiences based on their responsibility to maintain the stability of the state and its political regime.

Since the formation of the new British police service in 1829, the government have continually played a central role in reforming police accountability mechanisms. For example, police forces were originally created and controlled within individual boroughs overseen by local Watch Committees comprised of council members with the power to give direct orders, promote, hire and fire. Across the latter half of the 19th century local governments became centralised in an attempt to unite the running of the country. Consequently, central government was worried that policing control would fall into the hands of radicals or working classes and took steps to prevent this. The government sought to homogenise the policing profession so that forces worked toward the same standards and were centrally inspected rather than allowing local variation to continue (Godfrey, Lawrence, & Williams, 2008). Between 1919 and 1964, central government tried a variety of arguments such as efficiency, economy, and national security to achieve this centralisation. However, after two scandals, one in 1957 involving the arrest of the Chief Constable of Brighton police on corruption charges, and the other in 1959 relating to the corrupt dropping of investigations into conduct of local Labour councillors, the argument of reducing corruption finally succeeded.

Influenced by media portrayals, the wide-spread belief at this time was that the police enjoyed too much freedom over personal conduct which allowed corruption and poor performance to go unchecked. The public had lost trust in their local service and supported centralisation to reduce corruption (Punch, 2009). Thus, under the 1964 Police Act, a tripartite system was introduced that formalised the centralisation of accountability structure through the police Chief, the Local Police Authority and the Home Office (apart from the Metropolitan Police Service which remained under the direct supervision of the Home Office). Yet despite these changes, the new system still allowed police considerable autonomy as the Chief Constable and his employees were answerable to courts rather than government and were thus immune from being given direct operational orders as only the law had power over them. The Chief remained responsible for disciplining employees and public complaints were still investigated internally by the service at his discretion. This allowed acts of corruption and misdemeanours to slip through the net, continuing to erode public trust in policing as a result of the lack of transparency in complaint management (Punch, 2009).
The political influence on policing continued throughout the latter half of the twentieth century with the Conservative government calling for greater focus on crime reduction and criminal justice reforms, leading to the propagation of a performance culture (Reiner, 2007). The increased politicisation of law and order at the hands of Thatcherism during the 1979 General Election saw industrialist unrest and public protests being rebranded as law and order problems rather than as emanating from the manner in which the country was being run (Downes & Morgan, 2007). This political party also sought to gain public support by reducing the cost of policing, making the service more efficient and effective. Part of this reform saw increases in accountability structures and procedures which were linked with performance targets to minimise errors and improve performance (Barton, 2003; Poister, 2003).

Many of these changes in accountability and performance measures grew out of new public management (NPM) strategies, designed to make public authorities and services “more efficient and more accountable” to reduce demand on taxpayers without jeopardising the volume and standard of services (Kloot, 2009, p. 128). This wave of change saw the introduction of targets and key performance indicators to which the service were held accountable, thereby increasing salience of outcomes in performance appraisals. Additionally, the Home Secretary was given responsibility for setting the National Policing Plan and the power of Chief Constables was restricted to ensuring that targets set by this plan were met (Williamson, 2006). During this era, the concept of accountability became synonymous with transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency and integrity as public organisations sought to demonstrate that their service provided value for money (Mulgan, 2000; Dubrick, 2002).

As a result of these changes in accountability, external audiences such as the public now have a legitimate right to question the performance of services their tax pounds are spent on (Brignall & Modell, 2000). This is because along with introducing NPM strategies, public organisations have been encouraged to treat the public as ‘customers’ or ‘stakeholders’. These stakeholders are not only concerned with purely financial appraisals, but want assurance over wider aspects of managerial accountability (Tilbury, 2006), particularly in services such as the police that are responsible for ensuring public safety and wellbeing. Public interest in the management of crime was reflected by the pursuit of the Labour administration to legislate on ‘corporate manslaughter’, making it easier for organisations to be convicted of this crime. This interest in changing legislation stemmed from disasters such as the Paddington rail crash which increased political focus on public safety. The ‘Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate
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Homicide Act’ was passed in 2007 and the police service was refused crown immunity. This essentially means that any death in police custody could result in the prosecution of a police force, in addition to individual officers, for the offence of corporate killing related to management failures (Gobert, 2008).

Despite these reforms, it was only in 2004, 175 years after the formation of the new police that an agency external to the service was given the power to investigate complaints made against it. This has long been a contentious issue as it flouts the basic tenet that no agency should be allowed to judge itself (Punch, 2009). Indeed, the introduction of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) stemmed from continued public dissatisfaction at the way complaints were handled and the perceived lack of justice, fairness and transparency within the complaints process (Smith, 2006). The setting up of the IPCC by the Home Office represents the first time in British policing history that an independent, impartial body has the power to investigate a force, even in the absence of complaints, and to make policy recommendations or refer cases to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). In addition to handling more serious public complaints, critical incidents, and overseeing police investigations of minor misconduct, the IPCC remit covers independent investigations into serious incidents involving death or severe injury and allegations of misconduct by people serving with the police (IPCC, 2006).

As this overview highlights, changes in accountability mechanisms have largely been driven by the concerns of external audiences such as the government, public and media, usually in response to high impact crises such as police failures during the investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence² (Macpherson, 1999). Incidents such as this serve to highlight police failings and provide a foundation for initiating changes. However, rather than replacing previous approaches, the majority of changes have been implemented as supplements that attempt to strengthen accountability following the maxim of ‘more is better’. This process of reform has served to make accountability an increasingly complex factor, both in terms of the numerous mechanisms in place and the many audiences internal and external to the service that officers are formally and informally accountable to (Neyroud, 2004). For example, within

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² Stephen Lawrence, was a black, British teenager from South East London, who was stabbed to death on the 22nd April 1993. Sir William Macpherson headed a public inquiry examining the original Metropolitan police investigation, which ruled that there had been collective failures within the investigation and that the force was institutionally racist. Report recommendations included a call for improved openness and accountability across the whole criminal justice system and placed emphasis on the need for law enforcement practitioners to tackle institutional racism.
the service alone officers are accountable to the organisation, senior officers, colleagues and subordinates through corporate governance systems such as “organisational policies; reporting systems; codes of ethical standards; the cultural ethos; appraisal mechanisms; disciplinary regulations, and an inspection regime” (McGlaughlin, 2005, p. 473). External audiences include victims and their families, public, media, government and steering groups holding police to account through “the law courts; the constitutional structure; police complaints system; pressure groups; and the news media representing civil society” (p. 474). The multitude of changes has made the service and its officers more accountable than ever in an endeavour to improve performance, creating greater evaluation pressure (Punch, 2009).

This overview demonstrates that within applied contexts such as policing, accountability can take various forms. This multifaceted social process varies along several dimensions such as agent (who is accountable), time (when they become aware of their accountability), formality (whether accounting systems are official or unofficial), audience (internal or external to the organisation), expectation (whether audience views are known or unknown), and orientation (whether audiences are interested in decision processes or outcomes). For example, officers/teams/the organisation may discover pre-/post-decision formation that they are formally/informally accountable to audiences internal/external to the service whose views are known/unknown, and that appraisals will be based on decision processes/outcomes.

However, as this thesis provides a novel step into examining the impact of accountability on judgments and decisions within policing contexts, research does not examine any particular form of accountability, but the various ways it emerges and the general impact this has on performance. The context in which accountability processes have developed is complex and it is therefore important to develop research that recognises the complexity of accountability within policing. Any explanation of the impact accountability has on performance should consider the highly politicised arena in which mechanisms have developed because this has served to intensify evaluation pressure, facilitating a blame culture and complicating these processes. Consequently, accountability pressures are driven by audiences internal and external to the service that are interested in ensuring performance conforms to expectations.

1.3 Accountability and decision paradigms

There are various approaches to investigating judgments and decisions including traditional decision theory (TDT; Savage, 1954), organisational decision making (ODM; Allwood &
Selart, 2001) and naturalistic decision making (NDM; Klein, Orasanu, Calderwood, & Zambok, 1993). Each paradigm views this process differently which influences conclusions drawn about the impact accountability has on decision making. Although each approach has its strengths, further work is required to provide a robust framework for examining accountability in complex environments such as critical incident policing that allows sufficient experimental control for drawing significant conclusions. This section gives an overview of each paradigm, the important contribution it makes to understanding the influence of accountability on judgments and decisions, and why it is unable to provide a complete explanation.

1.3.1 The traditional approach

TDT is one of the oldest theories of decision making having developed over more than three hundred years from a variety of disciplines including philosophy, economics and mathematics (Doyle & Thomason, 1999). This analytical approach views decisions as being made through a process of logical thinking, analysis of probabilities and statistical methods and has been characterised by four main concepts: (1) choice between simultaneously available alternatives (Dawes, 1996); (2) developing input-output orientation mechanisms for predicting which option should be selected given a decision maker’s preferences (Funder, 1987); (3) viewing decision making as a deliberate analytic process that requires comprehensive search of available information to reach optimal performance (Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999); and (4) developing context-free models that can be tested quantitatively (Coombs, Dawes, & Tversky, 1970).

In line with these four cornerstones is the rational choice assumption that individuals aim to do what is best for them by logically searching through information and selecting the option expected to provide the best outcome (Savage, 1954). Decision makers reach this goal by weighing and comparing relative values of all options available (referred to as the subjective expected utility or SEU), and selecting the option with the highest SEU. In the most general version of instrumental rationality, individuals assess logical connections that exist between alternative choices available and their background knowledge and beliefs (Betz, 2006). A decision is considered to be rational if the option selected is consistent with beliefs. Distinctions can thus be made between whether a decision is rational and whether it is based on justified beliefs. Although a decision maker may not be criticised for selecting an option
that is congruent with their beliefs, they can still be criticised if these beliefs are purely subjective and incorrect.

Despite the large body of research conducted within the TDT framework, findings that individuals often neglect important information such as base rates or fail to apply elementary statistical reasoning highlight that judgments and decisions are not always made following a rational choice approach (Meehl, 1954). Much of TDT is based on the notion that people frequently adopt analytic methods which presume “the decision maker’s knowledge of probabilities and values is thorough and precise”, whilst knowledge is actually “imperfect and approximate”, with analytic approaches rarely being used (Freeman, Cohen, & Wolf, 1996, p. 1). Consequently, during the 1970s, Tversky and Kahneman began a series of research examining limitations of rationality in human decision making. They discovered that individuals violated the rational choice assumption by making use of heuristics and biases (HB), mental shortcuts or rules of thumb used to rapidly identify a solution, particularly under conditions of uncertainty or incomplete information (Kahneman, Tversky, & Slovic, 1982).

It has been proposed that cognitive heuristics often work without conscious awareness using a process of attribute substitution, whereby complex calculations are substituted with more easily calculated heuristic attributes (Kahneman & Frederick, 2002). Difficult problems are thus simplified without requiring conscious awareness. Typically, HB has shared the TDT preference for well-controlled experiments over field-based research, but recent attempts have been made to redress this balance (Kahneman & Klein, 2009). Studies have investigated the presence of heuristics in naturalistic settings such as the legal domain (Guthrie, Rachlinski, & Wistrich, 2007), medical judgments (Croskerry & Norman, 2008), and political decision making (Kahneman & Renshon, 2007). The HB approach has therefore attempted to predict and explain departures from rational choice in some naturalistic contexts.

Overall, TDT and HB research has taken a microcognitive approach that identifies and examines the individual cognitive processes occurring within the human brain during decision making (Schraagen, Klein, & Hoffman, 2008). This has been achieved mainly through the use of experimental methodologies that control extraneous variables. Such methods possess high internal validity allowing firmer conclusions to be drawn about relationships between particular variables (McGrath & Johnson, 2003). The majority of accountability research to date has followed this traditional approach by creating decision environments that control extraneous variables such as time pressure and uncertainty allowing conclusions to be drawn
about the influence different forms of accountability have over particular cognitive processes. This accountability research has also treated decision making as a logical process resulting in optimal decisions when statistical methods are employed.

Following the experimental paradigm, Lerner and Tetlock (1999, 2003) developed a multifactorial framework to explain the mixed findings in accountability-performance relationships. Built on a seminal overview of accountability literature, their model focused on two key factors: type and timing of accountability; and source of bias. Research was split into four manipulation categories that represented variations found within most decision making environments: pre- vs. post-decisional accountability; known vs. unknown audience views; outcome vs. process accountability; and legitimate vs. illegitimate audience. This framework concludes that individuals will be motivated by accuracy and exerting effort to open-minded, self-critical and effortful thinking when aware prior to forming opinions “that they will be accountable to an audience (a) whose views are unknown, (b) who is interested in accuracy, (c) who is interested in processes rather than specific outcomes, (d) who is reasonably well informed, and (e) who has a legitimate reason for inquiring” into rationale behind judgments (p. 259). Other forms of accountability may lead to motivation for self-preservation and decision biases such as conformity, fundamental attribution error, dilution effect, ambiguity aversion, attraction effect, conjunction fallacy, overuse of individuating information, and the status quo effect in an attempt to avoid negative evaluations (Tetlock, 1992).

Based on these findings, Lerner and Tetlock (1999) propose a three-stage flexible contingency model. Firstly, this model highlights that pre-decisional accountability to an unknown audience attenuates biases by encouraging self-critical attention to judgment processes. Secondly, motivation alone is not enough to attenuate biases as decision makers must possess the ability to make such corrections (Wegener & Petty, 1995). Thirdly, decision goals are influenced by motivation to avoid appearing foolish before an audience and thus individuals select options that will be easy to justify (Shafir, Simonson, & Tversky, 1993). Overall, this approach proposes that accountability affects decision making by shifting motivational goals and focus of decision makers that influences information gathering and interpretation, decision defence and reinforced commitment to goals (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996).

One of the most important conclusions to be drawn from this body of research is that accountability is a multifaceted mechanism that should not be viewed as a panacea to
commonly observed decision biases. Rather, the form that accountability takes has a direct influence on motivational goals adopted which influences where cognitive effort and attention are directed. However, this research has predominantly been conducted using ‘slow-burn’ decision environments based on Bayesian, multi-attribute or heuristic approaches (Dougherty, Gronlund & Gettys, 2003). Such research ignores the context decisions are usually made in and so provides an oversimplified explanation of the impact accountability may have on cognitive processes. This is particularly evident when comparing experimental environments to the complexity of the police organisation and contexts in which critical incident policing occurs.

1.3.2 The organisational approach

In a move to develop research that embraces the context in which decisions are made, political scientists such as March and Simon (1958) began to study decision making in organisational settings that explored the influence of incentive structures and social norms on behaviour. They noted that decision makers’ rationality was bounded by factors such as information availability, cognitive limitations, and time constraints. Consequently, rather than viewing decision making as a rational process of selecting an optimal choice based on information available, decision makers were viewed as ‘satisficers’ only applying rationality once choices had been simplified (Simon, 1991). To this end, the field of ODM now studies the impact that environmental factors within an organisation have on performance (Shapira, 2002). In contrast to TDT’s proposition that decision making consists of choosing between courses of action, ODM hypothesises that decisions are made by matching situations with appropriate actions based on the logic of organisational obligations (Messick, 1999). In contrast to laboratory-based designs, ODM methodologies include observations, interviews, case studies and computer simulations (Militello, 2001). Similar methodologies are adopted within the research framework of this thesis and are discussed further in the following chapter.

The ODM approach proposes that accountability exists at multiple levels within an organisation, from the individual, interpersonal, and group levels to the organisation as a whole, forming a loosely coupled accountability web (Frink & Klimoski, 1998). This proposal parallels the structure within policing where officers are accountable for numerous decisions to several audiences, each with potentially different views (Cronin & Reicher, 2009). Within the complex settings of organisations, accountability may become an additional
workplace stressor that is associated with all the usual strain reactions of stressors (Ferris, Mitchel, Caravan, Frink, & Hopper, 1995). Higher levels of accountability can thus lead to increased job tension and emotional strain because of the need to compete with others for scarce resources (Ruscher & Fiske, 1990).

Building on the conclusions of Lerner and Tetlock (1999), Frink and Klimoski (2004) developed a model that considers the systematic characteristics present within most organisational settings. This model separates accountability into interpersonal context and activities conducted. The interpersonal context is comprised of two roles: the agent (individual being appraised) and the audience (evaluator). Activities conducted include: observation and evaluation of the agent by the audience; the agent’s resolve to defend, justify and take responsibility for actions; and expectations that the agent will fulfil this obligation based on agent-audience interactions. Expectations are created through explicit organisational policies and procedures, and implicit social norms and incentives that make up reward and punishment systems (Mitchell, 1993). This model therefore stresses the importance of including “formal and informal systems, objective and subjective evaluations and rewards, and internal and external audiences” in generating theories of organisational accountability (Frink & Klimoski, 2004, p. 3).

Based on Katz and Kahn’s (1986) role-theory, Frink and Klimoski’s model seeks to identify predictable behaviours that occur within interpersonal relationships. The basis of role-theory is that organisations are comprised of strong, independent individuals fulfilling different functions within a system and norms and expectations about agents’ roles and responsibilities are essential for cooperation (Ganbarro, 1987). This framework highlights the influence organisational structure can have on expectations of the agent and audience. For example, the audience can directly and indirectly impact on an agent’s behaviour through expectations, how these are communicated, and interpersonal factors. However, agents are not passive, but proactively shape duties and explore responsibilities. As such, “individual behaviour is determined by a complex of forces operating at several levels of analysis” comprised of the individual, organisation, system and interactions between the three (Frink & Klimoski, 2004, p. 8). Formal and informal mechanisms may influence behaviour, but this will depend on interpretations which can change over time as perspectives, conflicts, demands and other systemic features alter. Subsequently, compromise and effort is required to align expectations between agents and audiences. Failure to reach mutual expectations can result in numerous
negative responses such as conformity, stress, cynicism, and lack of motivation, which reduces behavioural predictability and performance (Frink & Klimoski, 2004).

Another specialised branch of research that examines performance in organisational settings is the human factors approach. This research focuses on the way humans interact with features of their environment and is driven by the goal of improving performance and the experiences of those working within a system (Carayon, 2006). Examining accountability may be considered as important to improving both performance and employees’ experiences of the workplace. Within the organisational literature, safety culture has been identified as one of the most important aspects of an organisation for facilitating a safe environment that minimises risk, errors and mistakes (Reason, 1997). Safety culture refers to the sharing of values within an organisation relating to psychological aspects (how people feel), behavioural aspects (what people do), and situational aspects (the organisation’s safety management systems) (Akselsson, Koornneef, Stewart, & Ward, 2009, p. 3). Reason (1997) notes to create safety culture, organisations must also promote learning, reporting and just cultures.

Learning culture refers to the organisational process of learning from various sources and experiences (Koornneef, Kingston, Beauchamp, Verburg, & Akselsson, 2008). This process is reliant on identifying when successes and failures occur, what contributed toward them, and implementing improvements (Akselsson et al., 2009). But optimal learning can only occur if employees are motivated to report errors and mistakes and the organisation demonstrates that reports are used to improve the organisation (Reason, 1997). Integral to encouraging reporting is the development of a just culture where employees are not punished or mistreated for decisions, actions, or omissions that were appropriate for their experience and training, taking into consideration the context they were made in (Dekker, 2009). This does not mean tolerating gross negligence, wilful violations and destructive acts (Akselsson et al., 2009, p. 4). However, Dekker (2008) argues that despite wanting to learn, many organisations adopt a blame culture that seeks to assign culpability and punish employees for mistakes to discourage others. But rather than preventing mistakes, blame culture increases motivation for self-preservation and decreases reporting of errors and mistakes (Sharpe, 2003). The disparity between the organisational goal of learning and the goal of assigning blame and punishment is referred to as an ‘accountability paradox’ (Dekker, 2008). As this body of research will highlight, inherent within the police service is a culture of blame that alters accountability mechanisms and police performance.
Overall, research conducted in organisational settings has higher ecological validity because judgments and decisions are made within the context that employees work, where judgments and decisions influence performance and reputation. Consequently, this approach provides a framework for examining the influence of organisational goals, norms and contexts on decision making. However, there is often too much complexity and not enough experimental control within organisational settings which makes it difficult to separate the impact of accountability from the myriad other environmental factors or to draw direct comparisons between individuals. It has further been suggested that the ODM approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of organisational decisions if there was greater overlap with NDM, generating detailed descriptions of how individuals and groups make sense of information and use experience to aid planning and decision making (Lipshitz, Klein & Carroll, 2006).

1.3.3 The naturalistic approach

Similar to ODM, NDM defines itself as “an attempt to understand how people make decisions in real-world contexts that are meaningful and familiar to them” (Lipshitz, Klein, Orasanu, & Salas, 2001, p. 332). Consequently, many methods used to examine decision making are similar to those used in ODM such as interviews and observations. However, there is a vast difference between NDM and ODM in terms of the decision processes they focus on. Whist ODM examines social processes and how they are constrained by organisational goals and norms; NDM investigates the collection of cognitive processes that are involved in decision making and how they operate under changing environmental constraints (Gore, Banks, Millward, & Kyriakidou, 2006). To this end, the NDM approach is defined by eight factors: ill-structured problems; uncertain dynamic environments; shifting, ill-defined or competing goals; multiple-event feedback loops; time constraints; high stakes; multiple players; and organisational norms and goals that require balancing against personal choice (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993).

The strength of NDM lies in its ability to utilise environmental factors in analysis of decisions based on five essential characteristics: “proficient decision makers, situation-action matching decision rules, context-bound informal modeling, process orientation and empirical-based prescription” (Lipshitz et al., 2001, p. 332). Overall, NDM examines interdependent dynamic decision problems made in real time, where the nature of problems alters as a result of both decision makers’ actions and outside factors. Within this framework decision making is
defined as “the ability to gather and integrate information, use sound judgment, identify alternatives, select the best solution, and evaluate the consequences” (Cannon-Bowers, Tannebaum, Salas, & Volpe, 1995, p. 346). Similar to ODM, decisions are viewed as commitment to action that aims to produce satisfying rather than optimal outcomes (Yates & Tschirhart, 2006). Decisions are not seen as the primary task, but as a means to achieving a desirable end-goal.

Based on observations of practitioners in working environments, numerous descriptive models have been developed that share typical elements such as situation assessment, situation awareness (SA; Endsley, 1995), and the ability to quickly formulate decisions based on recognition strategies (Klein, 1989). The process of gathering information relevant to decision problems, referred to as situation assessment, facilitates the development of mental constructs of problems (Elliott, 2005). Continued situation assessment enables individuals to develop SA, “the perception of the elements of the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning and the projection of their status into the near future” (Endsley, 1988, p. 97). In complex and dynamic environments, information overload, task complexity and multiple tasks all pose a threat to a person’s limited attention capacity (Endsley, 2000).

Most active information processing occurs in working memory where new information is combined with pre-existing knowledge to form a picture of the situation and to forecast the impact of a particular option on a situation. Limited experience or novel situations hinder an individual’s ability to know where to direct attention or mentally simulate future courses of action. This places working memory under increased pressure which can cause it to become a bottleneck for SA, constraining decision making (Endsley, 1997). Those with experience have developed mental models that allow the limited capacity of working memory to be circumvented and assist with knowing where to direct attention (Bolstad, Costello, & Endsley, 2006). Although TDT and HB research pay little attention to the role of experience and expertise in decision making, NDM sees these as vital in directing attention and interpreting information for forecasting future environmental states.

Experience is also viewed as invaluable to the rapid identification of suitable solutions to problems which is particularly advantageous under time constraint (Klein, 1989). Experienced decision makers are able to pattern-match the current situation to similar previous situations to identify courses of action that were effective in the past. Experience allows individuals to
mentally simulate future states and how different courses of action may influence these states. According to Klein, Calderwood and Clinton-Cirocco (1986), novices do not have the wealth of experience necessary for recognition primed decisions and so spend more time identifying and appraising options to select a viable action. Thus, where environmental and cognitive constraints exist, individuals possessing experience may be able to effectively utilise mental shortcuts to quickly select suitable options (Klein, 1989). Whereas HB research focuses on examining intuitions arising out of simplifying heuristics, NDM examines experience driven heuristics that aid with bridging gaps in inadequate information to improve decision performance (Kahneman & Klein, 2009).

At present there is a lack of systematic focus on the impact of accountability on decision making within the NDM paradigm. This is surprising given the NDM view that decisions are linked so that one error may lead to another until the situation reaches crisis point. The salience of accountability and potential for such pressures to effect not just one decision but a whole chain becomes heightened when considering policing context where officers are open to widespread scrutiny, particularly for decisions that may literally have life or death consequences. Within policing, chains of errors can have devastating consequences for investigation management and subsequently the level of scrutiny faced. Furthermore, as NDM provides a macrocognitive framework for examining the collection of cognitive processes that form decision making (Klein et al., 2003), this approach facilitates a broader view of the impact accountability has on collective processes rather than examining how single processes are influenced.

Despite the lack of direct accountability research, NDM provides some indications of how accountability may influence decision processes in naturalistic contexts. For example, when individuals are motivated by accuracy or to create a positive impression, they are more likely to use analytic strategies than simplifying or experience driven heuristics (Scholten, van Knippenberg, Nijstad, & De Dreu, 2006). However, experience driven heuristics can assist decision makers to manage time constraints, uncertainty and lack of information (Kahneman & Klein, 2009). Given the limited capacity of working memory, it is possible that under conditions where time is short and information lacking, experience driven heuristics would be more effective than analytic strategies as the latter may lead to a bottleneck in working memory that negatively impacts on decisions. Within some naturalistic contexts,
accountability pressures may encourage strategies to be implemented that are unsuitable due to environmental constraints.

In general, NDM research is based on naturalistic observations that highlight how decisions are made within complex environments rather than seeking to provide instructions for how decisions should be made. Focus is not on circulating the notion that individuals depart from rationality when decisions do not follow analytic approaches. Rather, NDM emphasises that under certain conditions, using processes other than rational choice, judgments and decisions can still be rational. However, as with ODM, NDM research lacks control and internal validity boasted by TDT and HB research, making it difficult to separate the impact of one factor from many others. In general, the strengths of one paradigm are the weaknesses of another.

Overall, traditional research provides a valuable contribution to identifying the influence different forms of accountability have on decision processes. This research shows that accountability should not be considered as a cure for decision deficiencies as only certain forms improve performance whilst others can hinder it. Organisational research emphasises the role organisational context has in framing formal and informal accountability mechanisms and that agents are active in relationships between accountability and performance. This approach provides a structure for understanding the influence of stable environmental factors such as organisational culture on motivational goals and performance. Naturalistic decision research provides a framework for understanding how dynamic situational factors can influence macrocognitive processes. Whilst all three approaches provide valuable contributions to understanding the impact of accountability on cognition, advancing development of a comprehensive socio-cognitive model will require a combined approach.

1.4 Research agenda

Overall, discussions within this chapter highlight that accountability has a central role within policing because allowing audiences to evaluate performance is necessary for facilitating trust. Policing reforms, usually implemented in the wake of failure, have made the service increasingly accountable in the belief that this will improve performance. The salience of accountability is evident in critical incident contexts which attract widespread attention from various audiences seeking to evaluate police effectiveness. These incidents are characterised by threat posed to public safety and although police are responsible for reducing threat, their
Involvement has the potential to increase it also. Mistakes can have devastating consequences for the resolution of an incident and impact on long-term public perceptions of policing. Identifying how judgments and decisions are made and factors that affect these cognitive processes is therefore vital for reducing risk within these complex, highly pressured environments and also for facilitating public trust.

This thesis therefore examines the impact accountability has on police judgments and decisions within critical incident contexts and how the presence of a blame culture within this public organisation may alter performance. Despite increases in accountability and the large body of research that indicates the influential role this mechanism has on performance, limited focus has been given to systematically examining accountability and police performance. Given that accountability is not a panacea for performance deficiencies, exploring its impact is a necessary step in achieving the overarching goal of improving public safety. This thesis begins by examining police perspectives of how accountability is manifested and how this may influence performance. These perspectives are central to the development of hypotheses tested in succeeding chapters examining the role of emotions and motivational goals on relationships between accountability and performance. Overall, this research produces a model for understanding the influence of accountability on police judgments and decisions made within critical incidents. The following chapter discusses the development of a methodological framework that attempts to balance experimental control and environmental context in advancing theoretical development.
2. THE EVOLUTION OF A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis took a novel approach to examining accountability in policing contexts by combining methods and theories from different decision paradigms. Consequently, research provides value in development rather than testing of theory and is also able to identify avenues for future investigation. The overarching goal of research was to examine the impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions in critical incidents through internal factors such as emotion and motivational goals. As with all naturalistic research, problems and challenges arose that led to compromises in data collection and so it was not always possible to follow an ideal standard of research design. Instead data collection has largely been opportunistic, sometimes requiring the use of secondary data. Yet despite challenges faced, this thesis raises some interesting considerations for both accountability and policing. To facilitate readers’ transition through the course of this thesis, this chapter provides a rationale for decisions made during development of the methodological framework. Furthermore, it details challenges faced in constructing research, how these challenges were overcome, and provides an overview of subsequent chapters. The following section begins by discussing the initial decision taken to develop a methodological framework that integrated features of naturalistic and experimental paradigms.

2.1 Bridging the naturalistic/experimental gap

Overall, there are two distinct and often conflicting approaches to examining cognitive processes involved in judgment and decision making: in vitro and in vivo. The term ‘in vitro’ refers to experimental research usually conducted within laboratory based settings using inexperienced decision makers to engage in controlled tasks. In contrast, ‘in vivo’ or naturalistic research examines how decisions are made within applied contexts by individuals possessing experience within that field. The strength of laboratory based research stems from the rigorous control that researchers have over manipulation of variables and ability to repeat studies. Consequently, the experimental approach has higher internal validity and reliability allowing firmer conclusions to be drawn about relationships between variables (McGrath & Johnson, 2003). Conversely, research conducted in naturalistic settings has been criticised for its inability to control variables which creates difficulties in separating the impact of one variable from another. Hoc and Amalberti (2005) sum up this position by stating that
naturalistic research meets “ecological criteria but jeopardizes the preconditions of any empirical proof of theories, even though the latter are neat and plausible” (p. 319).

It has been argued that the strength of naturalistic research lies in its ability to allow a more accurate view of cognition over laboratory settings (Kingstone, Smilek, & Eastwood, 2008). Naturalistic research is said to be more theoretically sound because conclusions drawn are relevant to real world performance as judgements and decisions are examined in context and in relation to applied problems (Dunbar & Blanchette, 2001). For example, NDM research is often conducted using more experienced decision makers to establish how decisions are made in familiar, complex, dynamic, uncertain and fast-paced contexts (Gore et al., 2006). ODM research is also often conducted within or in relation to the applied contexts that employees work. In contrast, laboratory based research lacks this level of ecological validity raising questions about generalising findings beyond the laboratory. This criticism is not new; in 1932 Bartlett noted that much of what was known about cognition had been based on arbitrary tasks bearing minimal relationships to naturalistic contexts. In contrast, Dunbar and Blanchett (2001) do not dismiss the findings of experimental research but proffer a warning that if this approach is used alone “important aspects of cognition can be ignored and cognitive models might be built around data that is not representative of cognition in naturalistic contexts” (p. 338).

In general, the strengths of the experimental paradigm are the weaknesses of naturalistic and vice versa (Lane & Meissner, 2008). Studying complex judgments and decisions made in naturalistic environments is very different to studying clearly presented, isolated decisions offered in traditional laboratory-based research structured to develop analytical event-decision models (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Consequently, experimental and naturalistic research produce two different views of man: the former as “rigidly controlled from the outside” and the latter as a “self-regulating system” (Berndt & Dorner, 1993, p. 172). The truth is likely to lie somewhere in between as individuals interact with environments to form judgments and decisions. Arriving at the truth will require a transition in research approach that integrates naturalistic and experimental factors; a key objective of this thesis.

Despite believing this integrated approach would produce more robust theoretical advancements, incorporating these diametrically opposed perspectives can be challenging. However, conflicts may be transcended by taking a pragmatic stance because within pragmatism focus is directed toward the importance of seeking truth through human
experience (Maxcy, 2003). Pragmatism argues that methods should be selected based on appropriateness for addressing research goals rather than the paradigm they originate from (Fishman, 1999). Obtaining knowledge is the priority and so irrespective of whether developed from naturalistic or experimental paradigms, methods should be selected based on suitability for obtaining knowledge and achieving particular goals (Dewey, Hickman, & Alexander, 1998).

Lipshitz (in press) supports this pragmatic approach, emphasising the need to ensure data are collected using methods that possess rigor. Accordingly, rigor is defined as “the disciplined application of reason to subjects related to knowledge and/or communication” which is not inherent within any method, but is an attribute of reasoning or argumentation (Allende, 2004). One method does not necessarily possess more or less rigor than another, but any method may be applied more or less rigorously. Lipshitz and Shulimovitz (in press) identify two forms of rigor, substantive and technical. The former refers to maximising “the probability of producing trustworthy answers to research questions under the constraints imposed by the study’s context” and the latter to the strong enforcement of rules. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to evaluating suitability of methods to encourage selection to be driven by research goals rather than paradigms.

Adopting a pragmatic approach within this framework allows strengths of naturalistic and experimental paradigms to be maximised and weaknesses minimised. Furthermore, the primary goal of pragmatism is to focus on specific problems within a particular context (Fishman, 1999), which is compatible with the research goal of examining accountability issues in policing contexts to develop theory and identify future research avenues. Pragmatism rejects the notion that truth will be found by isolating single factors because within the contexts people live and function, factors are often connected and can jointly influence one another. Seeking to develop discrete chains of cause and effect may thus be viewed as too simplistic for comprehensively understanding and evaluating a system. Given the complexity of the environment in which policing is conducted any attempt to explain relationships between accountability, performance, and environment using discrete chains would limit applicability of findings.

Although following a pragmatic approach compromises the ability to control individual factors, it allows the multifaceted nature of context to be explored which may facilitate a more complete understanding of the influence accountability has on police performance. Indeed,
given the novelty of this area, attempting to implement too much control at this stage may compromise theoretical advancement by causing important relationships to be missed. Pragmatism is complementary to NDM as both note the importance of focusing on practical requirements over theoretical development (Klein, 1997), and both are based on examination of experienced individuals within a domain (Hoffman, Shadbolt, Burton, & Klein, 1995). Pragmatism is similarly compatible with ODM, allowing the interplay between employee and organisational environment to be examined (Allwood & Selart, 2001; Jaffee, 2001). The pragmatic approach is therefore compatible with the research goal of studying accountability within unique policing contexts that seek to unite research from TDT, ODM, and NDM.

Much of the accountability research to date has lacked this balance between internal and ecological validity tending to favour experimental design. For example, the majority of research discussed in Lerner and Tetlock’s (1999) seminal overview of accountability research was conducted in laboratory settings. Whilst this body of research contributes significantly to understanding underlying cognitive processes that occur under accountability conditions, such research removes the social context accountability exists in because participants are aware that consequences do not extend outside contrived settings (Tetlock, 1985). Even research that has been conducted in naturalistic settings, as with ODM, has often lacked control and has not been conducted in the high risk, high impact context of critical incident policing.

One rare example of investigating accountability in policing comes from Cronin and Reicher (2006) who found that decisions made by senior officers during front-line policing of crowd events were influenced by external perspectives. They conducted a simulated crowd event exercise in real-time using eight senior police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and two senior members of the Scottish Prison Service. Participants were presented with a series of injects and asked to discuss how they would respond as a group. Recorded discussions were transcribed and analysed using a mixture of grounded theory and thematic content analysis. One theme to emerge was that police are accountable to numerous audiences (both internal and external to the service). The views of these audiences often conflicted which placed officers in the position of having to juggle views as part of their decision making process.

This research by Cronin and Reicher (2006) provides a first step into examining accountability in the context of policing by generating multiple problems of relevance to
officers within environmental conditions that contain a degree of uncertainty and time pressure. However, decisions generated using group based discussions with other commanders did not reflect the manner in which they would be made in reality as only one senior commander would be assigned responsibility for overseeing the incident. Furthermore, participant numbers were limited, mainly comprising police officers from the MPS, raising questions about generalizability of themes to other services. Finally, whilst officers raised accountability as a theme, there was no discussion about what this concept meant to them. On balance, the purpose of this research had not been to explore impact of accountability on underlying cognitive processes, but rather to identify factors that influenced public order decisions. From a pragmatic perspective, the use of focus groups to address this goal may be considered appropriate for allowing experiences to be recalled in discussions with colleagues working in similar contexts.

Given the previous lack of integration between paradigms within the field of accountability, and indeed decision research in general, the next task was to identify ways of practically achieving integration. Overall, three methods were identified: 1) ensure research designs contain features of the intended ecological context under examination; 2) develop problems or tasks that are ecologically relevant; or 3) use a combination of experimental and naturalistic techniques. Lane and Meissner (2008) advocated the use of the latter approach for researching eyewitness identification in policing contexts stating the two can complement one another. Within this thesis, a combination of all three approaches was adopted when possible to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn from analysis by striking a balance between control and context.

For example, in line with NDM and ODM perspectives that domain experience is integral to understanding how decisions are made in naturalistic contexts (Eyre & Alison, 2007), only experienced police practitioners participated in all aspects of research. Indeed, where focus was directed toward particular policing specialisms, only those possessing experience within these specialisms were selected to participate. Problems and tasks presented were relevant to those encountered within policing which allowed practitioners to apply specialist knowledge and experience to solving them. Additionally, where possible the design was constructed to contain environmental features present within policing such as risk and uncertainty. Experimental control was sought by presenting information in a standardised format allowing direct comparisons to be made within and between officers. Furthermore, the presentation of
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Information was driven by particular goals and objectives such as manipulating situational risk, which were tested by conducting pilot studies with experienced officers. Finally, participant recruitment was conducted across UK forces so that servicewide trends could be identified rather than generalisations being limited to any particular force.

2.2 Assimilating qualitative and quantitative approaches

A further consideration for developing research was whether research goals would be more appropriately met using qualitative or quantitative methods. Historically, cognitive psychology has favoured an information processing approach to developing research based mainly on quantitative analysis which has led to concerns that the meaning and experience of individuals has been ignored (Bruner, 1990). From a constructivist perspective, interpretation of an object or event is mediated by prior knowledge and experience (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Smith, 2007), which influences what people think, say and do (Moran, 2000; Smith, 1996). Therefore, ignoring prior experience and perspectives prevents researchers from fully understanding cognitive processes and the influence environmental factors have on these.

The qualitative approach, developed from constructivist and interpretive schools of naturalistic research, proposes that an individual’s awareness of the world is based on unique subjective and socio-cultural values and assumptions making it impossible to obtain objective knowledge. Conversely, the quantitative approach, developed from positivist and experimental paradigms, proposes that objective knowledge can be obtained using manipulation and removal of multiple sources of variability. But as cognitions and behaviours are driven by a combination of individual and environmental factors, understanding “all aspects of human existence, from our brain processes to our moral agendas” requires a combination of approaches (Yardley & Bishop, 2007, p. 358).

The framework used throughout this thesis therefore sought to construct research using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for examining subjective police perspectives of the impact accountability has on performance and quantitatively measuring this impact. As the subject area is novel, obtaining perspectives from those with policing experience provides a valuable stage in research development by facilitating an overview of the accountability context in which policing is conducted. From an NDM approach, experience is integral to making sense of a situation (Klein, 1999; Lipshitz et al., 2001), and from a pragmatic approach, practitioner experiences can be valuable in identifying key issues.
Identifying accountability issues in policing contexts

for furthering research development (Hoffman et al., 1995). Accordingly, obtaining police perspectives was an integral aspect of developing subsequent quantitative research.

A further reason for initially adopting a qualitative approach was that these methods do not require factors of relevance to be identified prior to data collection, and so do not need to be hypothesis driven. This approach allows detailed data to be gathered that can be beneficial in developing hypotheses and theories for subsequent research (Yardley & Bishop, 2008). Analysis of police perspectives therefore provided a background against which subsequent hypotheses were generated for analysing relationships between accountability and internal factors such as emotions and motivational goals. Qualitative analysis is better suited to theory testing than development because factors of relevance must be identified prior to data collection so that manipulations and controls can be designed. As this approach measures relationships between factors, it provided an ideal continuation from qualitative research by testing hypotheses generated (Ormerod & Ball, 2008). Overall, the intention of the methodology framework used throughout this thesis was to construct qualitative analysis that would facilitate hypothesis development and to subsequently test hypotheses using quantitative analysis.

2.3 Challenges faced during framework implementation

The dynamic nature of conducting naturalistic research requires flexibility as researchers must be prepared to evaluate and alter strategies when required (Robson, 2002). Within this thesis, despite careful consideration and thorough planning of the methodological framework, problems still arose during participant recruitment stages that consequently altered the course of research development. Whilst participant recruitment can be challenging across all types of research, use of practitioners such as police officers can raise additional recruitment difficulties. Firstly, these individuals work long hours and are already inundated by requests to complete research conducted within the organisation which can create reluctance to engage in research developed by external agencies. Secondly, officers may be mistrustful of research objectives and be unwilling to participate for fear of potential negative consequences for career prospects. Thirdly, obtaining access often requires force approval which they may be reluctant to give to non-police personnel, particularly if data are viewed to be sensitive (Barrett, 2008).
It is possible to manage each of these issues by developing mutual trust and professional relationships between researchers, practitioners, and forces; and by conducting research that has value for policing (Rynes, Bartunek, & Daft, 2001). Gaining force approval and endorsement encourages participation by alleviating mistrust and showing support for the practical value of research. The Centre for Critical and Major Incident Psychology (CAMI) at the University of Liverpool is uniquely placed for conducting policing research due to its long-standing history of working with UK and international police forces that spans over more than a decade. During this period, CAMI have built key relationships with various forces by creating research that is mutually beneficial to policing and academia. The centre also provides practical psychological advice and conducts post-incident focus group debriefs which facilitate organisational learning. Furthermore, this department runs courses that are tailored toward specific needs of police practitioners and highlights the important contribution psychology can make to policing. These pre-established relationships assisted with obtaining force approval and endorsements, and facilitated access to experienced officers that provided practical advice for research development. Yet, despite force support, participant recruitment still posed challenges.

Overall, the initial phase of research development took a qualitative approach to examining police perspectives of accountability issues present within policing, providing a background for subsequent research. For generalisations to be made across the service it was important to obtain a large number of views from practitioners of various ranks working in forces across the UK. However, gaining access to a large group of varied officers within the limited timeframe available presented difficulties. Furthermore, developing questions to elicit discussions about accountability issues without biasing responses at this initial stage represented another challenge. Consequently, secondary data were used to overcome these issues. CAMI have unique access to a database of focus group debriefs conducted in relation to a variety of critical incidents with practitioners from across the service. The purpose of conducting these debriefs is to identify successes and limitations of policing practices to assist with improving service performance. Questions are structured to be open and to facilitate a range of responses based on practitioners perspectives of how incidents were managed. Therefore, any discussions relating to accountability arose of practitioners’ own volition rather than being steered by questions specifically directed toward accountability. Secondary data was also used to identify the relative difficulty of managing performance evaluations.
within a critical incident. The data were identified from a questionnaire created by CAMI and completed by 71 senior investigating officers.

The next stage of research involved developing quantitative methods for measuring relationships between accountability and performance. As will be discussed in depth within Chapter 5, simulations were selected as the optimal method for balancing naturalistic and experimental paradigms. The simulation used within this research was designed for use with hostage negotiation advisors in relation to a suicide intervention. The simulation was developed based on advice from police officers with Negotiation Coordination experience. Support and endorsements were sought from a variety of forces by highlighting the value of participation in allowing officers to practice decision making skills in a safe learning environment (Crichton & Flin, 2001). In particular, the negotiation simulation was developed in conjunction with a senior officer studying on a CAMI run course, and formed part of his course requirement. As head of the Hostage Negotiation Unit at the MPS, this police practitioner was advantageously placed for assisting with participant recruitment and providing practical advice. He was able to personally endorse research to forces across the UK and arrange access to negotiation events such as conferences that attracted large numbers of trained police negotiators in one location. This approach to data collection was successful as officers attending negotiation events were not on duty and so could not be called away to incidents. Additionally, the practitioner had a vested interest in ensuring that recruitment was successful as research was part of his course requirement. Indeed, Barrett (2008) advocates the collaboration of academic researchers and police practitioners enrolled as students because researchers are able to provide theoretic and methodological knowledge to practitioners, whilst practitioners provide participant access and practical research implications.

2.4 A brief overview of research focus across chapters

Overall, this thesis argues that despite the importance of accountability for improving police legitimacy to key stakeholders, the myriad accountability pressures and the form accountability takes may negatively impact on performance and wellbeing by influencing emotions and motivational goals. Both subjective perceptions of police practitioners and influence of accountability on these factors are examined, drawing on literature from TDT, ODM and NDM to support arguments made. The following summary serves to demonstrate links between these distinct areas of research that form a general overview of the various ways accountability emerges and impacts on policing.
Chapter 3 examines 22 archival debriefs of critical incidents and large scale policing initiatives to identify police perspectives of accountability issues present within policing and how these issues influence performance. Analysis uncovers a variety of interrelated pressures that create a complex web of accountabilities. Most notably, although police practitioners understand the importance of accountability, they believe evaluations are driven by blame and lack of support, placing them under increasing pressure. Police face pressure to juggle competing perspectives from different audiences and worry they will be blamed if outcomes are unsatisfactory. This chapter highlights that although practitioners note the importance of accountability for developing and maintaining trust between key stakeholders, there is general dissatisfaction with current structures as these can compromise performance by stifling creativity, decreasing morale, and increasing risk aversion. Conclusions drawn within this chapter are used to develop hypotheses in subsequent research chapters.

Chapter 4 narrows focus to the investigation of serial murder, examining senior officers’ perspectives of capability for managing perceptions and evaluations of external audiences in comparison to various other problems that arise in major investigation. These large-scale investigations attract focus from various audiences and police management can have long-term impact on community perceptions of policing. External perceptions form a key aspect of accountability, determining whether rewards or punishments ensue. This chapter therefore provides an indication of the relative difficulty of managing performance evaluations in the context of major incidents. Analysis of 71 senior officers’ capability ratings indicate a tendency for them to perceive they are less capable of managing external perceptions from audiences such as the public and media compared with investigative tasks such as prioritising information. These findings highlight that in addition to fear of appraisal and punishment, feeling less capable of managing external perceptions may also increase pressure, posing potential consequences for performance.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of methodologies adopted to collect data for the case study presented across Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. Using a simulated suicide intervention conducted on 75 negotiation advisors, these final three data chapters examine the impact of accountability on emotions, motivational goals and performance. Police negotiation is the least lethal method available for handling crisis situations and understanding the influence of accountability on advice quality has consequences for policing of public safety in high risk
incidents. The role of risk is therefore examined within relationships as direct and imminent threat to lives is a central component of these contexts.

Chapter 6 takes a qualitative approach to examining negotiation advisors’ beliefs about the impact accountability and policy have on judgments and decisions within crisis negotiation. This analysis provides additional clarification to conclusions drawn in Chapter 3 by examining beliefs in relation to this policing specialism and discussing the potential impact such beliefs may have on relationships between accountability and performance. Differences in beliefs arose among officers as some viewed performance to be improved whilst others felt restricted and under increased pressure that could encourage risk aversion. These differences suggest the influence of accountability on performance is not uniform across individuals and expectations may influence strategies adopted to formulate judgments and decisions.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 take a quantitative approach to examine the impact of accountability on emotion, importance appraisals, motivational goals and performance across the course of a suicide intervention, and the influence of risk on relationships. Overall, findings indicate that increasing risk leads negotiation advisors to feel more accountable and regretful, and to believe advice is more important to the incident. Furthermore, as risk increases, motivation to save lives and preserve the self also increases, whilst performance decreases. Findings indicate that accountability is influenced by the extent officers perceive their unique experience driven advice may influence a situation. The influence of accountability on motivation and performance is inconsistent, altering in line with situational changes such as risk. For example, findings show that when risk is low, higher levels of accountability are linked with motivation for saving lives and improved performance. However, when risk is high, accountability is linked with motivation for self-preservation and poorer performance. Overall, it is argued that accountability is one of the many stressors present within critical incidents and it may be the amalgamation of pressures that affects performance rather than individual sources. In this way, accountability may act as an additional stressor tipping the balance between whether psychological stress improves or hinders performance.

The following chapter now provides an overview of police perspectives of the various ways accountability emerges in policing and how these may influence performance.
3. IDENTIFYING ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES IN POLICING CONTEXTS

This chapter analyses police practitioners’ perspectives of the various ways accountability manifests itself in policing and how this influences performance. As limited focus has been given to systematically examining accountability in policing contexts, this overview provides an important stage for understanding this social mechanism. Views of police officers and staff\(^3\) (collectively referred to as police practitioners) from various ranks and roles are used to identify accountability issues that emerge across policing contexts to facilitate a general overview of this environment. As practitioners are employed within the service, they are able to formulate perspectives based on experience which provide valuable indications of how accountability affects judgments and decisions. Perspectives are discussed in relation to relevant literature to facilitate interpretation. Analysis therefore forms a framework for development of hypotheses in succeeding chapters. As discussed in Chapter 1, accountability within policing has three goals: improving performance by encouraging investment of cognitive effort (Boin et al., 2005); identifying mistakes to prevent repetition (Boin et al., 2005); and securing public trust through performance transparency (Gerber & Mendelson, 2008). But as the subsequent discussions of police perspectives highlight, whether these goals are achieved depends on two interrelated factors: the form accountability mechanisms take and whether they are present within a just or blame culture. The following three sections therefore present literature relevant to the interpretation of these perspectives.

3.1.1 Accountability form

As discussed in Chapter 1, traditionally accountability research has focussed on the influence that different forms of accountability have on performance, with manipulations being based on two factors: type and timing (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). For example, manipulation categories include pre- versus post-decisional accountability, known versus unknown audience views, outcome versus process accountability, and legitimate versus illegitimate audience views. Lerner and Tetlock’s (1999) seminal overview of accountability research over the previous 30 years concludes that accountability is not a panacea for all decision

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\(^3\) Police officers are responsible for frontline policing of communities and have full police powers including powers of arrest. Police staff work behind the scenes providing the organisational capacity for police officers to perform their duties, including preparation of case files for prosecution, media liaison, recruitment and training, and running and maintaining technology.
deficiencies. They note that only certain forms facilitate the motivational goal of accuracy which encourages use of cognitively complex and critical thinking whereas others encourage use of simplifying heuristics and biases motivated by the goal of self-preservation.

For example, differentiations have been identified between strategies adopted when the views of the audience to whom an agent is accountable are known versus unknown. When audience views are known (Tetlock, Skitka, & Boettger, 1989) or can be guessed (Weigold & Schlenker, 1991) prior to opinion formation, conformity becomes the most likely coping strategy. This notion develops from the idea that people are cognitive misers who try to minimise the amount of effort expended whilst still maintaining an acceptable outcome (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). According to Fiske and Taylor, people adopt simple and time efficient strategies to minimise effort, not out of laziness, but necessity so that they may function within the complex environment they inhabit. Making decisions that are congruent with audience’ views therefore allows individuals to both minimise cognitive effort required to formulate justifiable decisions and can reduce risk of negative appraisal (Tetlock, 1983).

Accordingly, individuals are more likely to adopt conformity strategies when motivated by self-preservation than accuracy (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). But when views are unknown prior to opinion formation conformity is no longer an option and so pre-emptive self-criticism becomes the likely strategy (Tetlock, 1983). This involves being more self-critical, considering multiple perspectives on the issue to anticipate and prepare for objections that any (reasonable) other may pose to decisions and actions taken. Self-critical thinking tends to be more robust than conformity because audience views are open to hindsight bias and are not necessarily synonymous with optimality (Henriksen & Kaplan, 2003). Furthermore, audiences may lack domain knowledge, be influenced by other agendas, and views may fail to consider all pertinent information. As self-critical thinking is based on scrutiny of information and options available within a situation, judgments and decisions made should be based on stronger arguments than conformity (Freeley & Steinberg, 2009). Lerner and Tetlock (1999) conclude that decision strategies adopted will be more effective when audience views are unknown.

Furthermore, decision making strategies also tend to alter depending on whether agents are accountable for processes used to formulate judgments and decisions or quality of outcome. Findings indicate that holding agents accountable for processes rather than outcomes can lead to better judgments and decisions by encouraging greater complexity of thought, analytic
information processing (Chaiken, 1980), and use of available information (Tetlock & Boettger, 1989). It is argued that process accountability increases self-critical thinking because decision makers pay greater attention to strategies used in formulating judgments and decisions which means they are better able to identify when strategies require alteration (Siegel-Jacobs & Yates, 1996). Outcome accountability leads to greater perceived difficulty for improving performance by failing to consider that good decisions do not guarantee good outcomes. As research within the field of NDM highlights, factors beyond an individual’s control such as time pressure and uncertainty also influence outcomes (Lipshitz et al., 2001). Siegel-Jacobs and Yates (1996) suggest that outcome accountability leads to greater psychological stress, partly because outcomes are beyond an individual’s direct control. Accountability for outcomes over processes may also lead to escalated commitment to prior courses of action heightening the need to defend previous decisions (Simonson & Staw, 1992).

However, it is important to note that process accountability does not guarantee self-critical, flexible thinking and improved decision performance as conformity to organisational guidelines and procedures may occur if motivated by the goal of self-preservation instead of accuracy (Lerner & Tetlock, 2003; Wallis & Gregory, 2009). For example, within organisational settings, risk-averse public managers have often preferred to be process- rather than outcome-oriented, adopting the mind-set that failing to achieve a positive outcome matters less than failing correctly by following procedural guidelines (Gregory, 1995). Following guidelines irrespective of situation may serve as a method for justifying decisions and protecting oneself, but as noted above, conformity does not guarantee accuracy.

The extent to which agents perceive audiences that appraise their performance to be legitimate also affects whether accountability increases or decreases decision performance. When accountability demands originate from audiences perceived to have a legitimate right to evaluate performance, individuals tend to respond positively by investing greater cognitive effort into judgments and decisions in an attempt to receive favourable evaluations (Tyler, 1997). However, when audiences are viewed to be illegitimate, intrusive and insulting, these positive effects are not achieved and performance may even be negatively affected by reducing motivation and increasing stress (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). It is important to note that whilst legitimacy can increase investment of cognitive effort, performance is more likely to be improved if this effort is directed toward accuracy rather than self-preservation (Lerner
& Tetlock, 1999). Although the form accountability takes plays an influential role in determining level of cognitive effort invested, motivational goals (i.e. accuracy versus self-preservation) are influential in determining whether cognitive effort is directed toward self-critical thinking or biases such as conformity (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996).

3.1.2 Organisational culture

Within organisational settings, stable factors such as the culture that performance evaluations exist in can influence motivational goals and performance (Reason, 1997). Dekker (2009) distinguishes between blame culture and just culture, proposing that the former encourages self-preservation whereas the latter encourages accuracy and improved organisational learning. The term ‘blame’ refers to the process of assigning culpability for a negative outcome (Besharat, Eisler, & Dare, 2001) and organisations that adopt this type of culture focus on identifying culpable agents, assigning punishment to prevent repetition of errors (Akselsson et al., 2009). But despite organisations wanting to learn from mistakes, attempts to draw clear distinctions between acceptability and unacceptability based on the “assumption that inherently culpable acts exist and should be dealt with as such” may prevent this goal being achieved (Dekker, 2009, p. 177).

Blame culture has been attributed to person-centred explanations of error which see individuals as free agents capable of choosing between acts that are right or wrong. Consequently, error is viewed as stemming from abnormal mental processes such as carelessness, forgetfulness, lack of knowledge or motivation, negligence, and recklessness (Lee & Harrison, 2000). Accordingly, strategies for reducing error include training to improve knowledge and disciplinary measures to encourage greater investment of effort and deter others making mistakes (North, 2000). Blame culture organisations tend to be outcome-focussed, attributing negative outcomes to error and positive outcomes to absence of error (Dekker, 2011). Accordingly, judging and assigning culpability results from a process of interpretation after the act based on perceptions of whether it was preventable, knowingly performed in violation of operating procedures, or the negative outcome was intentionally caused (Alicke, 2000). Interpretation is biased by hindsight as audiences believe the worse an outcome was, the more there must be to account for, failing to consider factors beyond an individual’s control. As Hidden (1989) warns, “there is almost no human action or decision that cannot be made to look flawed and less sensible in the misleading light of hindsight” (p. 147).
Overall, Dekker (2011) argues that rather than preventing mistakes, anxiety and burden arising from blame culture can distract decision makers’ attention from the task onto considering potential to be punished. Consequently, fear of punishment may increase motivation for self-preservation which could compromise accuracy. Fear of blame and punishment may also prevent employees from voluntarily reporting mistakes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Sharpe, 2003), as Ruitenberg (2002) found with his study of air traffic controllers. In this respect, accountability mechanisms that are driven by blame are counterproductive to the organisational goal of learning because they foster mistrust; referred to as the accountability paradox (Dekker, 2008). Accordingly, blame and accountability should not be synonymised because blame can make individuals reluctant to provide an account (Dekker, 2009).

Nevertheless, blame culture does serve the function of protecting organisations from internal and public apprehensions about functionality of the organisation (Galison, 2000) and expense of overhauling procedures (Byrne, 2002). Whilst accountability procedures instigated by external audiences seek to achieve improvement, they can sometimes have a pervasive impact. For example, past public inquiries have led questions to be raised about the ability of the police service to maintain public safety (Nash, 2006), which on a few occasions has caused moral panic and public disorder (Bowling & Foster, 2002). Blame culture organisations can therefore view the sacrifice of individual employees as being for the greater ‘good’ of protecting the organisation (Galison, 2000). Furthermore, assigning culpability for negative outcomes can provide some satisfaction to audiences experiencing loss because although negative events challenge “the norms and values of the community, the public ritual of investigation, discussion, and punishment ultimately serve to reinforce the primacy of those shared norms and values” (Markovitz & Silverstein, 1988, p. 2). This process can increase an audience’s sense of control by allowing them to perceive that the cause of error has been prevented from reoccurring (Gephart, 2003). However, the misconception that error arises solely from the failings of individuals only provides a partial explanation based on proximate examination of negative events and so may not prevent reoccurrence (Sharpe, 2003).

Counter to the person centred approach is the system approach which looks beyond local error to the context employees work in and the recurrent error traps present within organisations (Reason, 2000). Accordingly, employees are not labelled as instigators of negative events, but as inheritors of latent conditions facilitating errors (Reason, 1997). When negative events
occur, focus is not on assigning blame, but how systemic features allowed error to occur. From this perspective, identifying error is only the first stage for improving performance by highlighting faults in the system. This approach is prospective in terms of focussing on setting goals and developing preventative measures against future errors rather than retrospectively assigning culpability. Stemming from this approach, the notion of just culture seeks to strike a balance between learning and accountability for error consequences (Akselsson et al., 2009). Accordingly, within a just culture decisions and actions are appraised in relation to knowledge, goals, attention demands and environmental context present at the time of being made rather than severity of outcome (Dekker, 2011).

Fundamental to the creation of just culture is organisational support which promotes learning over punishment (Dekker, 2009). Learning environments improve performance of employees motivated to increase knowledge (Taber, 2008). Organisations promoting a supportive culture of learning “tend to assume that mistakes will be made or shortcomings found and welcome the uncovering of weak points, which they promptly seek to improve” (Lee, Trim, Upton & Upton, 2009, p. 744). It is vital that employees trust the organisation to support them and evaluate performance fairly rather than questioning its integrity as this can lead to scepticism or hostility toward an organisation’s initiatives (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007, p. 650). Lack of organisational support reduces employees’ trust in the fairness of evaluation appraisals and reduces legitimacy of these mechanisms (Dobbinz, Platz & Houston, 1993).

It is important to note that adopting a just culture does not mean removing all aspects of culpability; the ability to punish wilful negligence is vital for maintaining fairness within organisations. However, distinctions should be made between ‘honest mistakes’ and ‘illegitimate behaviour’ because the former derive from good intentions and the latter from intentional misbehaviour (Dekker, 2011). Treating these two types of mistakes differently still serves the purpose of discouraging intentional misbehaviour but also reduces fear of punishment for honest mistakes. Providing a supportive environment requires understanding that errors will occur and that not all of these errors arise from intentionally illegitimate acts. Accountability should be forward-looking so that in addition to noting mistakes and harm that arose from them, opportunities are identified for preventing reoccurrence. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) note that adopting a just culture does not only affect performance in the future but also in the present by increasing morale, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and willingness to exert additional effort.
3.1.3 Morale, motivational goals and emotion

In general, literature from traditional and organisational paradigms demonstrates that accountability has the potential to influence judgments and decisions by altering three factors: morale; motivational goals; and emotion. Firstly, morale is defined as a psychological state emanating from the desire for the group to succeed which influences organisational performance and productivity by altering cognitive effort invested in task completion (Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006). Consequently, aspects of an accountability environment that lower morale, such as illegitimacy and unfairness, has the potential to negatively impact on judgments and decisions by decreasing cognitive effort invested. Conversely, factors that increase morale, such as organisational support and fairness, may improve performance by increasing cognitive effort.

Secondly, motivation is defined as “a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behaviour, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration” (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). Consequently, motivational goals influence where effort and attention are directed. Attention is the cognitive process of selectively concentrating on a particular subset of factors whilst ignoring others. This process is limited and serves an important role in selectively attending to information to reduce confusion (Arami, Lucas, & Nili-Ahmadabadi, 2010). Both collecting and processing information are vital for making sense of a situation which is important for effective decision making (Klein et al., 2006). Consequently, if attention is directed toward insignificant factors, important information and cues may be missed which can negatively impact on decision making. For example, if agents are motivated by self-preservation rather than accuracy, attention may be divided between completing the task and protecting self.

Thirdly, regret is defined as a cognitively-laden retrospective emotion characterised by feelings of sorrow for losses or transgressions (Zeelenberg, van Dijk, & Manstead, 2000). It is experienced as a result of counterfactual thinking when realising the situation would have been better had they decided differently (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). Within blame culture environments, not only may individuals feel sorry for the negative situation and its influence on others but also themselves in terms of blame and punishment. The prospective version of this emotion, anticipated regret, involves forecasting the level of regret that would be experienced in the future based on decisions and actions in the present (Wong & Kwong, 2007). People are motivated to avoid or reduce this unpleasant state and so it can direct
decisions and actions in the present (Craig, 2008; Hardy-Vallée, 2007). In this respect, anticipated regret serves as a predictive threat encouraging careful planning (Mandel, 2003).

However, in addition to carefully considering decisions to ensure accuracy and suitability for the situation, regret can also induce avoidance of risky options even though they may potentially improve the situation. There is a tendency for individuals to associate more regret and responsibility with action over inaction, referred to as the action effect, encouraging selection of options that avoid risk and action (Zeelenberg, van den Bos, van Dijk, & Pieters, 2002). Anderson’s (2003) rational emotional model identifies four strategies for minimising regret: status quo bias (preference for options that cause no change); omission bias (preference for options that require no action); inaction inertia (tendency to omit action when a similar, more attractive offer was previously passed up); and choice deferral (choosing not to make a choice for the time being). Within policing contexts the balance between reducing and increasing risk to public safety is fragile as delays to reduce risk can actually increase it (Cook & Tattersall, 2008). Consequently, failing to be decisive can negatively influence the situation. If motivated by accuracy and the desire to reduce risk to public safety, anticipated regret may encourage careful planning and critical thinking. Conversely, if motivated by self-preservation, risk adverse strategies may be adopted to minimise regret and responsibility.

This overview highlights that the impact accountability has on performance depends on the form accountability takes and the organisational culture driving mechanisms. Accordingly, judgments and decisions should be most effective when agents are motivated by accuracy rather than self-preservation and are encouraged to invest higher levels of cognitive effort. Organisations that adopt a fair and just culture are more likely to be seen as legitimate and supportive which should promote accuracy. Conversely, blame culture is likely to lead to perceptions of illegitimacy, unsupportiveness, unfairness and to be focussed and influenced by decision outcomes, thereby encouraging self-preservation. The following analysis of police practitioners’ perspectives identifies the various ways accountability mechanisms manifest themselves and whether these are more indicative of a supportive learning culture or an unsupportive blame culture.
3.2 Method

To examine police perception of accountability within policing, secondary data were accessed from a database of debriefs. These debriefs were originally conducted using an electronic focus group tool referred to as 10,000 Volts and data were analysed using thematic analysis. Discussions below provide details of these methodologies.

3.2.1 Secondary data

The use of secondary data has many benefits and has commonly been used to address important research questions in a variety of fields (Magee, Lee, Giuliani, & Munroe, 2006). For example, using pre-existing data allows researchers to address questions in a much shorter timeframe and at a lower cost than if data were collected first-hand, particularly when large numbers of participants are required (Mainous & Hueston, 1997). Primary research poses potential risk to participant wellbeing whereas secondary data avoids this risk as data has already been collected (Doolan & Froelicher, 2009). Furthermore, this approach can provide valuable access to data that would prove difficult to collect first-hand due to the sensitive nature of research or limited timeframe available for conducting it (Doolan & Froelicher, 2009).

Nevertheless, researchers must be equally aware of the drawbacks of using secondary data when assessing the validity of applying data to new research questions. Using secondary data requires researchers to work within the confines of the original study design and measures chosen (Doolan & Froelicher, 2009). Quite often this data may have been collected to address different research questions and so methods used may be less suitable for the secondary purpose. Furthermore, data may have been collected such a long time ago that interim changes reduce relevance of responses to current research. Careful consideration must therefore be paid to identifying a research question and the requirements data should meet before searching for suitable data. Secondary data should not be considered as either good or bad, but rather in terms of whether data and methods used adequately fit research requirements (Mainous & Hueston, 1997).

In line with objectives of current analysis, data requirements include generalizability of analysis across policing environments. Consequently, responses were required from large numbers of police practitioners of varying ranks and specialisms across UK forces. Additionally, discussions of accountability should arise of practitioners own volition rather
than being directly elicited using specific questioning. At this early stage of examination it would be inappropriate to direct responses because this may compromise development of a general overview. Overall, use of secondary data allowed a large number of responses to be collected within a limited timeframe from a dataset that had not specifically directed questions toward identifying accountability issues. Instead, this focus group database was designed to identify general strengths and weaknesses of policing across contexts.

3.2.2 Focus groups

As a facilitated interviewing technique, the focus group has become an increasingly popular method for obtaining opinions, values and beliefs (Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, & Davidson, 2007). Focus groups consist of open-ended discussions generated in relation to certain topics which enable researchers to examine respondents’ views and opinions in their own language (Agan, Koch & Rumrill, 2008), and gain greater insight into their perspectives and experiences (Kitzinger, 1994). This method was originally developed because of growing dissatisfaction with the use of individual interviews as it was felt that interviewers sometimes needed to be in a less controlling position to gather information (Kreuger & Casey, 2000). Consequently, focus groups use a facilitator to guide group discussions and provide clarification.

In addition to discovering new knowledge, focus groups are effective in eliciting collective opinions, values and beliefs (Cote-Arsenault & Morrison-Beedy, 1999). This method is particularly advantageous when research is interested in a range of views or generating discussion on a particular topic (Kreuger & Casey, 2000). Furthermore, as numerous people can be interviewed at once, time and money are saved, and respondents can clarify or add additional perspectives to comments made by others. Such methods are usually able to capture attitudes and experiences in greater depth than other interviewing methods due to interactions between respondents (Walston & Lissitz, 2000). All individuals are given the opportunity to contribute and so often describe discussions as empowering (Robson, 2002).

Given the numerous values of focus groups, the police service now uses them as part of evaluation and learning processes. Previously, evaluations were conducted through examination (frequently by an outside force) where there was a breakdown in performance and officers would face intense scrutiny at the hands of peers or higher ranking officers as part of this process (Association of Chief Police Officers in England and Wales, 2000). As
evaluations usually only occurred in cases where performance had been substandard, previous approaches “failed to consider the fact that much of the learning in any organization and particularly within the police service can, potentially, be derived from success” (Crego & Alison, 2004, p. 208). Consequently, police focus groups facilitate discussions to learn from mistakes and successes without seeking to single individuals out for direct scrutiny.

For example, focus groups are frequently conducted as part of debriefing processes for significant policing incidents to discuss the merits and weaknesses of incident management so that best practice may be developed across the service. They are additionally conducted to evaluate schemes that have or may be introduced within the service to identify potential problems and improvements. Thus, the focus group methodology has wide-ranging practical applications for generating perspectives from an array of individuals in relation to various issues. In line with pragmatism, sessions are not conducted with the goal of specifically developing theory, but are driven by the practitioner-based goal of identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve service performance. Therefore, any discussions relating to accountability identified within focus groups has stemmed from this goal of learning and improving service performance.

Focus groups also have multiple uses within academic research (Morgan, 1997). Firstly, they may be used as the primary data source for exploring a particular issue. Secondly, they may be used to supplement other data or assist with developing new data such as questionnaires. Thirdly, they may be used along with other methods as part of a multi-method design. The third approach was used within this thesis as the subjective perspectives of police practitioners form an aspect of overall analysis and serve the purpose of generating hypotheses for subsequent chapters. Typically, focus group sessions run for at least an hour to generate in-depth discussions (Robson, 2002) and police focus groups make use of two facilitators, one for guiding discussions whilst the other monitors content to ensure responses are detailed enough to make meaningful interpretations. This approach has been beneficial in generating sufficiently detailed discussions to aid with the development of hypotheses.

But despite the many advantages of focus groups, there are two disadvantages worth noting. Firstly, conversations can be controlled by dominant participants with other less dominant voices remaining unheard. Secondly, less dominant participants may feel uncomfortable disagreeing with consensus views (Robson, 2002). However, both disadvantages can be resolved by using electronic tools that allow participants to remain anonymous. Such tools
reduce self-awareness (Kiesler, Siegel & McGuire, 1984) and social desirability bias (Walston & Lissitz, 2000) which assists with generating candid responses. Anonymity also prevents respondents from being aware of pre-existing social relationships and hierarchies which also generates more candid discussions than achieved in face-to-face discussions (Olaniran, 1994).

3.2.3 10,000 Volts

The police service has embraced the use of an electronic focus group tool referred to as 10,000 Volts (hereafter 10KV) for generating candid conversations that assist with organisational learning. 10KV was developed by Jonathan Crego at the request of the British Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Crime Committee specifically for use within the policing community (Crego, 2002). The tool is referred to as 10KV in acknowledgement of the significant impact or ‘shock factor’ that critical incidents can have on UK policing (Crego & Alison, 2004). Development of 10KV was based on approaches used within the aviation industry that promote learning through non-attributable reporting of actions that could endanger air safety (Belisle, 1998).

10KV follows this same principle of ensuring responses generated are non-source attributable to facilitate open discussions (Kreuger & Casey, 2000). The ethos of such a system is on learning rather than culpability and thus all who participate are assured anonymity. However, because 10KV was designed to be non-source attributable, demographic information is not usually taken which means that only limited details can be provided at present. Analysis further seeks to respect this rule by ensuring that any traces of information divulged by practitioners that may allow the individual, incident or force in question to be identified are removed. Where this has occurred, the following symbols, ‘XXXX’ or ‘[ ]’ have been used.

The actual structure of 10KV consists of a collection of laptops networked together using 10KV software allowing comments made by one practitioner to be simultaneously transferred to all other networked laptops for others to view and comment on. In this way, the tool is used to generate an open discussion between practitioners who are potentially at risk by openly revealing mistakes and weaknesses to their peers (Crego & Alison, 2004). As participating practitioners are anonymous, even the quiet voices that would be uncomfortable vocalising opinions can be heard as everyone is given an equal opportunity to contribute regardless of
rank or role. An additional benefit of this open forum is that comments made by practitioners may aid the recall of others or prompt them to provide alternative perspectives.

Overall benefits of 10KV include the following: 1) it provides a safe environment for individuals to discuss sensitive topics without fear of consequences; 2) it can generate frank and candid feedback on difficult situations; 3) it enables practitioners to learn from each another’s experiences; 4) it can provide a cathartic outlet by allowing practitioners to voice concerns; 5) rank and role do not influence discussion as members of the focus group remain anonymous; 6) viewing responses from other practitioners can assist memory recall; and 7) practitioners are able to provide responses in their own words (Alison & Crego, 2008). In effect, 10KV removes blame from performance appraisal and focuses on the goal of organisational learning. Due to these features, 10KV is said to be a flexible and dynamic tool.

### 3.2.4 Data set

This dataset consists of comments generated by police practitioners over the course of 22 focus group sessions which were facilitated by Jonathan Crego of the MPS. Only 1 of these sessions was conducted more than a decade ago and the majority (16) were conducted within the last 5 years. Six sessions were conducted as debriefs to various high-profile incidents occurring within British policing over the last decade. These incidents include serial shootings, murder and rape investigations, child abduction, large-scale public order incidents, and deaths in police custody. Each event attracted high levels of attention from external audiences such as the public, media, government and IPCC both within and post-incident. Within each incident, members of the public were placed at risk and so much of this scrutiny was focused on the extent police were able to minimise harm and maintain public safety.

Of the remaining 16 sessions, 9 were conducted as part of policing improvement workshops, 4 during multiagency child protection training events, 2 as part of community focussed policing workshops, and 1 during a Borough Commanders’ workshop. Child protection training sessions were implemented in the wake of the death of Victoria Climbié, an event sparking the widespread criticism of the way agencies such as the police, social services and NHS managed the protection of vulnerable children. Plans to implement strategies to improve community policing developed from dissatisfaction of external agencies over how the service interacted with local communities and the perception that police were not addressing issues of importance to these communities. Each focus group session therefore arose from areas of
policing that attracted widespread attention and scrutiny. This is likely to be a causal factor for practitioners discussing accountability issues.

Of the 22 focus group sessions, 12 contained officers of ranks ranging from Police Constable to Deputy Chief Constable, 6 contained staff from across grade bands, and 4 were multiagency sessions containing practitioners from Health and Social Services in addition to police officers. Each session was typically conducted using between 10 and 20 practitioners to facilitate discussions without being overwhelming and difficult to follow. As noted above, brief demographic details are provided as the ethos of 10KV is anonymity. Only limited details of the origins of focus group incidents are given to maintain anonymity of forces and practitioners involved. Moreover, it is unnecessary for readers to know specific details of incidents as the aim of analysis is not to examine accountability issues in relation to a specific event, but to examine trends arising across policing.

### 3.2.5 Thematic Analysis

The method selected to analyse qualitative data was thematic analysis, a form of content analysis. In general, content analysis involves codifying both qualitative and quantitative information to identify patterns in the presentation and reporting of information (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). In this way, text may be classified into fewer content categories to make data more manageable (Weber, 1990). Content analysis methods seek to present and evaluate information in a systematic, objective and reliable manner so that conclusions can be drawn from data rich in detail and applied to a particular context (Guthrie, Cuganesan, & Ward, 2008). In contrast to other forms of content analysis, thematic analysis focuses on identifying common themes emerging across the dataset based on content rather than form (Simons, Lathlean, & Squire, 2008), to derive meaning rather than count frequencies of words or utterances (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Researchers may calculate frequencies of each theme, but this should be additional to interpreting the meaning of data (Joffe & Yardley, 2004).

Generally, qualitative approaches can be incredibly diverse and complex, but “thematizing meanings” can be viewed as one of the key skills required across all forms of qualitative analysis (Holloway & Todres, 2003, p. 347). Some forms such as conversation analysis (e.g. Hutchby & Woofit, 1998) and interpretive phenomenological analysis (e.g. Smith & Osborn, 2008) stem from particular theoretic or epistemological perspectives that have limited variability in method of application. Others such as grounded theory (Glasser, 1992) or
narrative analysis (Murray, 2003) stem from a broader theoretic framework and so allow greater variability in application. However, such methods have detailed technical procedures which can restrict their accessibility (Straus & Corbin, 1990). Thematic analysis differs to both approaches as it is independent of theory and epistemology, so may be applied across a range of datasets. However, thematic analysis can take a long time to complete and so researchers should be consciously aware of hazards such as boredom and fatigue. There is also a danger with flexibility if clarity is not given about what thematic analysis is and how it is performed. This has, in the past, led to criticisms being raised about lack of rigor (Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2002). Indeed, complaints have sometimes been levelled about the lack of clarity and guidance for conducting qualitative analysis in general (McCance, McKenna, & Boore, 2001) in addition to thematic analysis (Roulston, 2001). To avoid such criticisms, a detailed description of the method used is given below.

Thematic analysis may be defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Whilst thematic analysis has been widely used but poorly defined and there has been a lack of agreement about performing the method (Tuckett, 2005), Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a detailed step-by-step description which is followed within this analysis. Although some researchers may claim themes emerge from the text and that they are merely giving a voice to the dataset, this is not the case because interpretation influences identification of themes (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). Fine (2002) argues that “we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments” (p. 218) and so researchers play an active role in identifying and selecting themes of interest to present to readers (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). It is therefore ever more important to provide a detailed description of the method employed and to ensure this method matches the desired goal for knowledge acquisition (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As with any form of analysis, the method selected needs to be applied rigorously, and “rigor lies in devising a systematic method whose assumptions are congruent with the way one conceptualizes the subject matter” (Reicher & Taylor, 2005, p. 549). Within this chapter, thematic analysis was used as a realist method that examined how individuals made sense of their reality in terms of experiences of accountability and the influence it had on policing. Responses generated constituted a collection of free-narrative statements in relation to a particular policing incident, training sessions, or the implementation of new policing schemes.
Thus any mention of accountability arose of practitioners’ own volition rather than being coaxed.

As focus of analysis within this chapter is on accountability, only practitioner comments relating to accountability issues were used. Thus, before beginning the in-depth process of thematic analysis, the first stage of data collection involved reading through qualitative output to identify comments relating to the concept of accountability. Over the course of the 22 focus group sessions a total of approximately 8,918 comments were generated consisting of 214,900 words with the average comment length being approximately 24 words. From this dataset, 560 comments (6.28%) comprised of 15,781 words (7.34%) were identified as relating to accountability with an average comment length of 28 words.

The first stage of thematic content analysis consisted of identifying categories that applied to the data. This process began during the preparation stage where comments were identified and selected based on relevance to accountability issues. Within current analysis, observations were made about the similarities and differences that occurred within practitioners’ responses across focus groups. The first formal stage of thematic analysis involved moving between the selected dataset, coded sections of this dataset, and analysis sections subsequently produced. Practitioners’ comments were read carefully to identify emerging categories. As part of this process, comments were annotated and assigned to potential categories based on similarities and differences in underlying meaning. Thus, a large collection of data units and annotations were generated (McLeod, 2001). Whilst categories were mainly developed based on the data, as with an inductive approach (Patton, 1990), it is acknowledged that background literature and researcher experiences may have influenced categorisation processes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). However, comments were read and assigned to categories with careful consideration to ensure categories resulted from and were supported by the data instead of forcing data to fit categories.

The next stage of thematic analysis consisted of organising data units and categories into broader themes based on commonalities in content, thereby creating larger data segments (McLeod, 2001). Data segments were compared and contrasted to establish theme boundaries, correctly assigning chunks to themes (Tesch, 1990). It was important to also search for negative evidence to correctly assign units to themes and clearly identify boundaries between them (Simons et al., 2008). This method allowed theme differences to be refined and patterns identified. It also allowed data to be grouped into meaningful concepts that could be discussed.
in relation to theories whilst still maintaining language practitioners used to conceptualise points. This stage continued the bottom-up process with themes being data driven.

The final stages of analysis consisted of generating clear definitions and names for themes based on the overall content and message contained within them. As part of these final stages, themes were linked with relevant literature to place analysis findings within the wider context of accountability research and literature. It is acknowledged that this method may be criticised for allowing subjectivity to influence themes that were recognised (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, to allow readers to judge the veracity of themes identified, examples of comments that encompass each theme are presented. These direct quotes appear in italics throughout to allow readers to distinguish them from the main body of text.
3.3 Results

Overall, four major themes comprising 71.96% of total comments and 72.58% of total word count were identified. These themes were as follows: blame culture (25.71% of total comments and 19.65% of word count); performance driven culture (17.5% and 20.05%); media (16.25% and 19.29%); and lack of support (12.5% and 13.14%). Six minor themes comprising 24.94% of total comments and 25.59% of the word count were identified. These themes were as follows: clarifying accountability structures (6.78% and 8.26%); government impact (4.72% and 4.80%); inequality of accountability (4.81% and 3.78%); public confidence and necessity of accountability (3.65% and 3.75%); positive environment (3.03% and 2.66%); and IPCC (1.95% and 2.39%). A small proportion of comments (3.10% and 1.83%) could not be placed into any particular theme and so have been excluded. Within larger themes, subthemes have been identified but some comments could not be subcategorised and so were not discussed within subthemes.

Table 1 below displays the percentage of comments within each focus group that correspond to each theme, thereby allowing patterns to be established across policing areas. Larger themes tend to be present across most focus groups indicating the widespread influence of these forms of accountability within policing. However, themes such as ‘positive environment’ and ‘IPCC’ only appear in a couple of focus groups, the relevance of which is discussed within these themes. Overall, police perspectives indicate that accountability is manifested in various ways and has the potential to influence performance by altering morale, motivational goals and emotion. Consequently, themes are discussed in relation to each of these factors and are related to literature presented within the introduction to explain the potential influence of accountability on performance. Themes are not presented in order of size, but rather as they link to one another because focus is on generating understanding that supports hypothesis development.
Table 1
Percentage of comments made in relation to each theme across focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Blame Culture</th>
<th>Performance Driven Culture</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Lack of Support</th>
<th>Clarifying Accountability Structures</th>
<th>Government Impact</th>
<th>Inequality of Accountability</th>
<th>Public confidence and necessity</th>
<th>Positive Environment</th>
<th>IPCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Borough Commander meeting</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>15.78</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child abduction incident</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>30.77</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Child protection incident</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Child protection workshop</td>
<td>15.97</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Child protection workshop</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>7.89</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Child protection workshop</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Community policing workshop</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Community policing workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.69</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Death in police custody</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>18.57</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>81.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Murder investigation</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Police improvement workshop (Deputy Chief Constable)</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Police improvement workshop (Directorate of Information)</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Police improvement workshop (Directorate of Public Affairs)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Police improvement workshop (Staff)</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>19.05</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Police improvement workshop (Resource Group)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Police improvement workshop (Serious Crime Directorate)</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Police improvement workshop (Service Reference Group)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Police improvement workshop (Special Operations)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Police improvement workshop (Territorial Policing)</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Public order incident</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Rape investigation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.37</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Serial shooting incident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.1 Morale

Police practitioners discussed both informal aspects of accountability environment such as media scrutiny, and formal aspects such as structure of internal mechanisms, legitimacy of the IPCC, and policing targets, that could affect morale.

Media

Much of the public’s information about policing is obtained from media portrayals through various mediums. Consequently, media scrutiny plays an influential, albeit informal, part in public perceptions of the service (Mawby, 1999). Police discussions about the media reveal the influence this external audience can have on performance by altering morale and influencing the direction of enquiries. Discussions fell into two subthemes: media influence and negativity (47.25%); and managing the media (41.76%); some comments could not be assigned to a particular subtheme (10.99%). Comments about media influence were present in most focus groups indicating that problems with this audience may be present across policing areas.

Media influence and negativity

The dominant perspective across practitioners was that the media were intent on publicising news stories that portrayed the police in a negative light. There was a sense that regardless of how the service functioned, the media would continue to look for faults. Consequently, practitioners felt a sense of frustration and lack of morale because regardless of attempts to work hard and achieve positive results, efforts would be criticised. At the very least, media coverage of an incident provides a permanent audit trail of police actions across the course of an incident which creates evaluation pressure. However, given the influence the media has on public perception, practitioners also worried the public would consequently view them negatively. In addition to lowering morale, practitioners believed the media could influence the direction of enquiries as officers sought to avoid public criticism.

The media and in particular the tradition of investigative journalism has a longstanding history of serving as a watchdog that presides over the actions of police and other public services (Mawby & Wright, 2005). The power of media coverage over policing was demonstrated in 2003 when an undercover documentary entitled “The Secret Policeman” highlighted racial discrimination within the service. After the broadcasting of this
documentary there was public outcry that resulted in the suspension and dismissal of officers, overviews of race equality schemes, service-wide examination of training on race and diversity issues and an assessment of police recruitment procedures. Discussions generated by police practitioners indicated their awareness of media power which led to frustration over the constant negative criticisms received irrespective of effort invested in maintaining public safety.

- “Media are interested in bad news - it would have to be a fantastic good news story to divert them - can't just pluck out of thin air”
- “It didn't matter what we did the media were always going to focus on the negatives - they don't do good news."
- “The media don't just challenge our values they subvert them. Should we carry on treating all news organisations as equal partners when some of them don't respect us or our mission?”
- “The media has the power to direct both an enquiry and a team and can easily have a detrimental effect on morale.”
- “Media management or media control? Feeling that we should reign in the media especially where they have the potential to influence the flow of information into the enquiry that actually gets in the way of the enquiry.”

Managing the media

In acknowledging its influence over policing, practitioners noted the need to ensure the media were managed appropriately; however there were two sides within this debate. Some believed the service needed to direct greater resources into media management to ensure strategies were well developed and flexible. This group believed that because of the impact the media had on policing, public perceptions, and morale, it was important for more positive news stories to be generated through better handling of media questioning and interference. Others believed that too much focus was given to appeasing a media intent on hunting out negative news stories for public entertainment. This second group believed the public wanted bad news stories and so the media were supplying a demand which resource allocation would not reduce. Consequently, some viewed media management to be beyond direct control.

- “Need to have a flexible media strategy in force that can 'shift' the openness element if/when required in support of investigative objectives.”
- “Make the media as hungry for good news stories as they currently are for the opposite”
- “To achieve this we need to change the public's desire for bad news stories as the media are only responding to their customer demands”
“Senior officers are too worried about the media and need to pull back from courting them as much; they need us more than we need them.”
- “We do need to stop the knee jerking to media led issues and focus on the long term solutions that we know will deliver”

**Inequality of accountability**

Morale could further be affected by the unequal way in which police practitioners perceived accountability mechanisms were implemented. Again, discussions were generated across most focus groups (except for child protection workshops) with practitioners noting disparity in the extent police were held accountable. For example, some officers managed to avoid accountability, either because of seniority or the negative attention the service would face if misconduct was highlighted. Consequently, perceptions of unfairness and illegitimacy at the way accountability mechanisms were implemented could lead to reduction in both morale and motivation. The general attitude was that all practitioners should be held to account for misconduct regardless of their position or criticism the service would face as this was a fairer way to implement accountability. As previously discussed, legitimacy and fairness are aspects of an organisational environment that are integral to facilitating a supportive learning environment (Dekker, 2009; Dobbinz et al., 1993).

- “Why are ACPO colleagues beyond reproach, only junior ranks and the Commissioner are accountable”
- “Yes, difficult to deal with poor performing senior people - "boy’s network" that closes ranks”
- “There was no accountability for actions which meant issues were not addressed.”
- “We have lost the will to hold people to account - we tend to fudge the issue, e.g. promote or transfer rather than demote or fire.”
- “Has any senior manager ever been sacked as a result of failure to perform? When it does take place I will believe we are moving towards a true performance culture”

**Clarifying accountability structures**

Relating to inequality was practitioners’ dissatisfaction at the level of clarification provided within accountability structures and mechanisms. In particular, there was confusion over who should be accountable for particular roles and how accountability would be implemented. Practitioners felt the service had taken on too many responsibilities outside the original remit which overstretched limited resources, but accepting responsibilities meant employees were accountable for them. Discussions also noted lack of clarity in multiagency aspects of
policing as it was often unclear which agency should lead and take responsibility and consequently how accountability structures worked across agencies. The danger in failing to provide clarification is that responsibility and accountability can be passed between agencies, particularly if motivated by self-preservation (Alison, Crego, Waring, & Eyre, 2008). This process of deferring responsibility can lead to lack of action which has negative consequences for the situation and morale.

- “We need to be clear about what the police are responsible and accountable for, we often it appears take too much responsibility for areas of business where other agencies should play a greater role this includes the management of missing people and child protection”

- “Partnerships require equal accountability - not with the police automatically become the public facing body and therefore having to spend time chasing partners to complete actions expected of them rather than spending that time working on the areas on which police can personally impact”

- “What is the accountability mechanism for partnership groups - lack a clear lead”

- “Partnerships need to include a better balance for responsibility of outcomes. The Police always seem to take the lead on any problem because we and our partners know we will get the job done. In the current climate this needs to be looked at to ensure those who assume responsibility should have it.”

- “Clear identification at the strategy meetings of lines of responsibility: who did what, when and why that person/agency was best suited to the task”

**Independent Police Complaints Commission**

Within two focus groups, one relating to death in police custody and the other to a rape investigation, a few practitioners noted that IPCC involvement in police performance evaluations was illegitimate. Within both of these incidents, police were in the process of being investigated by the IPCC which is likely to have influenced comments generated. As previously noted, the IPCC is the first independent body to be set up to investigate public complaints against UK police. Previously, public complaints were investigated by the police, defying the basic principle that no agency should judge itself (Punch, 2009). The few practitioners that doubted the abilities of this organisation believed it did not understand pressures faced within policing and would not take these into consideration when evaluating conduct. Consequently, this form of performance evaluation was viewed to be unfair. Although tensions were only highlighted by a small proportion of practitioner comments and only in relation to two focus groups, for these practitioners the IPCC were viewed to lack
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legitimacy. As already highlighted, demands from illegitimate authorities can be viewed as intrusive and can negatively impact on morale and motivation (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999).

- “Who guards the guards?...to whom is the IPCC accountable? How is operational performance and standards maintained and be seen to be maintained?”
- “Apologies after years of litigation or after an IPCC investigation tend to carry little weight.”
- “I spent a lot of time trying to explain to IPCC what we were doing. It felt like they had little understanding of the pressures that we had to deal with.”
- “It difficult not to conclude that [the IPCC] are hovering waiting for the opportunity to become directly involved.”

Performance driven culture

The final theme in which practitioners across focus groups noted that morale was affected was the presence of the performance-driven culture within policing. Although practitioners understood the necessity of displaying effectiveness to external audiences, they believed the current target driven culture had negative consequences for service functioning. Two subthemes were identified: changing performance measures (54.08%); and influence of performance measures (36.73%). A small proportion of comments could not be subcategorised (7.14%).

Influence of performance measures

Practitioners noted that resources within the service were limited and consequently setting numerous targets meant focus could only be directed to areas measured. The widespread perception was that targets set only addressed areas of policing that were easy to measure such as number of crimes solved rather than qualitative issues of victim satisfaction. This compromised policing standards and led to a drop in employee morale due to perceptions that limited police resources were often directed toward addressing inappropriate targets rather than issues of importance to the public. Indeed, it has been noted that the performance driven culture within policing creates a highly political arena that maintains a culture of blame (Long, 2003).

As previously discussed, the emphasis on measuring performance using targets stems from NPM techniques introduced by the government during the 1990s for establishing service’ effectiveness (Van Dooren, 2005). Police are now scrutinised against a backdrop of
performance indicators and objectives which undermine performance by redirecting resources onto coping with ever more elaborate forms of NPM (Seddon, 2008). Although this approach has led to greater resource efficiency and transparency by increasing auditing and appraisal mechanisms, it has been criticised for creating an ‘inspection society’ where all aspects of public services are scrutinised against numerous performance indicators and objectives (Power, 1997). The perception that targets are often selected based on ease of measurement rather than robustness leads to a drop in morale (Lapsley, 1996; Seddon, 2008).

- “The increase in the proportion of complaints...is more to do with the inability to provide the public with what they should expect from us, which in turn is largely due to the redirecting of finite resources in entirely inappropriate ways, in order to achieve ridiculous levels of performance indicators. Examples of this are the legions of very young school children, many only 10 years old, being criminalised for school yard antics because they represent 'easy' detections. The police should never be run, as it is now, via 'systems analysis', where the achievement of targets is more important than the quality of the service we provide. Also, what are we 'not' doing while wasting our resources on inappropriate activity-what we are not doing is targeting the 'real' criminals, because they are too resource intensive, that is, represents a less 'productive' activity. It is far better, apparently, to arrest 10 year olds, S5 Public Order and possession of Cannabis! It’s 'more productive'!”

- “I do not believe that quality of service is about league tables or performance data. It is simply about people delivering to the best of their ability based on what we as senior managers ask them to do. We risk a significant drop in quality of service as we reduce support function and morale drops (it has already).”

- “My team officers are targeted with getting sanctioned detections each month by SMT but not one of my ward priorities are recordable/detectionable crimes; therefore my officers spend time away from the community issues in order to please the SMT. Is this the norm?”

- “Stats and targets are crippling policing. We spend far too much trying to 'paint' the correct picture! The public may hate the picture painted but our leaders see it as master piece!”

**Changing performance measures**

Practitioners believed the focus on quantitative targets across policing was damaging to performance, particularly in rape and murder investigation or community focussed policing. This was because qualitative issues were more important in these areas, but these were not easily measurable. For example, how police interacted with victims and their families, and members of the public was crucial to these incidents. Practitioners felt penalised by the target culture if work did not match measures because they could face scrutiny or loss of resources which were redirected to easily measurable areas of policing. Some practitioners wanted
targets eradicated and others wanted a reduction in quantitative and increase in qualitative measures such as victim satisfaction, but the general perception was that current measures were inappropriate. Target cultures can encourage organisations to become overly focused on outcomes rather than processes. This can have a negative effect on performance due to limited guidance provided and increased pressure associated with lack of direct control over outcomes (Siegel-Jacobs & Yates, 1996).

- “The challenges that face us are significant as we are confronted with a multitude of competing priorities. However, we must look beyond the performance led world of volume crime and the Policing Standards Unit. The Force may be criticized for missing a target for vehicle crime or burglary, but this will pale into insignificance when compared to the loss of public confidence that will occur if we make a mistake on a high profile murder investigation.”
- “We focus too much on performance and targets when the most important thing has to be the quality of the service. Often immeasurable but how we leave people feeling must be a priority”
- “We need to see more focus on the quality issues in terms of service delivery - qualitative performance culture rather than quantitative. We don't even ask some of our victims of crime what they think of the service they have received from us. Some of these people are more concerned about HOW they are treated rather than whether there is a sanctioned detection!!!!”
- “Too many stats most people do not care about robbery stats, they care about dog mess bikes on footway, antisocial behaviour is a huge area...what you see on way to work or shopping or walking in your area after dark (if u dare). That is what matters not statistics or models or management speak”

### 3.3.2 Motivational goals

Other themes discussed by practitioners highlighted the impact aspects of the accountability environment could have on motivational goals and therefore attention focus. Police identified two aspects of the accountability environment that could lead to distractions in attention focus: government impact; and blame culture.

#### Government impact

Linked with the presence of a performance culture, police practitioners across most focus groups noted the influential and sometimes interfering role the government played in setting targets which created conflict. Two subthemes were identified: government influence (48.15%) and conflicting audiences (40.72%); a smaller group of comments could not be assigned to any subtheme (11.11%).
Government influence

Practitioners felt the government were very influential in prioritising resources and the way the service worked by setting performance targets and agendas. As discussed within Chapter 1, the introduction of the tripartite system formalised the division of responsibility between the Home Office, the Local Police Authority, and the Chief Constable. These agencies are ultimately accountable to Parliament through the Home Secretary who is responsible for setting key policing priorities. Introduced as a government driven initiative in 2004, the Police Performance Assessment Framework was developed by the Home Office and ACPO to provide a firm but fair framework for performance management. This framework provides a means of holding all forces to account for performance and allows comparisons to be made across forces. The significant role the government have played in changing police accountability systems and the power they have over setting budgets may explain why practitioners feel controlled by this external audience.

- “Well to some extent we are driven by politicians and media and that’s democracy and CITIZEN Focus???”
- “It should be the police being able to listen to the community instead of acting on what the politicians want”
- “We are always having to bow down to government/politicians/GLA/[Local Police Authority] it's frustrating as they collectively???? Off the [police] all the time”
- “How do we get away from the just do it culture when we all know as soon as the government gives us the next priority all our previous plans and intentions will probably go out of the window? This is when we tend to ignore our policies and values to ensure we can say we met the government initiative. I don't think we will ever get away from this political aspect impacting on how we do things. Although I hope we do!”

Conflicting views

The main problem practitioners identified with level of government involvement was that targets set were often at odds with what the public actually wanted from their local police force which led to perceptions of illegitimacy. Police felt they were placed in a difficult position of balancing the conflicting views of these audiences, which placed them under further pressure. Pressure increases when audience views conflict because following the views of one audience can leave agents open to scrutiny from another and conformity becomes an unsuitable strategy (Hall et al., 2007; Tetlock, 2002). As a result of threat posed to social identity, conflicts arise between the goals of minimising cognitive effort, dissonance,
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and ambiguity (Green, Visser, & Tetlock, 2000). Individuals must therefore engage in self-critical methods of thinking to construct defensible integrative positions (Tetlock, 1992). Whilst self-critical thinking can improve performance, police noted that sometimes views between the government and public were irreconcilable which directed attention away from the task toward identifying ways of appeasing both audiences.

- “Who are our real customers – politicians or people – we have GOT to make a choice between these two because they ARE different”
- “There is a strong need for the politicians to be made to realise that their aims may not be those of the population at large.”
  “Unfortunately the Government is becoming ever more controlling of the police and they are the ultimate populists”
- “Certainly difference between what the government believes is important and what the public thinks is important. Politically driven”
- “We should focus on the public not on Government measures as the public mood is changing back to simple helpful public service”
- “You seem to forget that what people need reassurance about is not necessarily the same crimes as those that fall into the basket of 10. Ward panels should set priorities, but the Borough says it has to be in line with Borough priorities, is this their priority - maybe not.”

**Blame Culture**

In line with previous focus group research, one of the largest themes to emerge was the prevalence of a blame culture within policing (Crego & Alison, 2004); a theme that arose across most focus groups. Given that current analysis includes police perspectives from forces across the UK, this culture may be endemic to the organisation rather than isolated forces. Discussions were centred on three interrelated issues: presence of a blame culture (40.27%); changing the blame culture (38.33%); and influence of blame culture (21.40%).

**Presence of blame culture and punishment**

Practitioners noted that the police service was still entrenched in a culture that sought to apportion blame despite claims by the organisation that it had moved away from this negative culture. Discussions identifying the presence of this unsupportive environment suggested that police practitioners believed blame and punishment would be apportioned for negative outcomes. As previously identified, blame culture is related to a person centred approach to error that sees punishment as a necessary deterrent for preventing employees from committing
mistakes (Dekker, 2011). However, fear of blame and punishment can contribute toward errors and prevent employees reporting mistakes which inhibit organisational learning (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). It can also distract attention from the task at hand to focussing on self-preservation (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). This distraction in attention focus may lead to vital information being missed which could negatively impact on the quality of judgments and decisions formed.

- “We still have a massive blame culture - despite managers saying we do not.”
- “But legislation around police conduct, the IPCC etc. fosters and promotes a blame culture. It is unrealistic to suppose otherwise”
- “There is an issue of gripping the brass rail. A simple mistake could land them in Crown Court”
- “Apart from the tragedy itself - some people's reputations, feelings and careers have been blighted. Others' have flourished. That is incredibly difficult to cope with.”
- “Factors get in the way of this - fear of losing job, being seen as a trouble-maker, not supporting corporate line, being seen as negative, being seen as not wanting change”
- “Try being on the wrong end of a totally unfair misconduct allegation; have your life ruined too.”

**Influence of blame culture**

Practitioners’ discussions supported the notion that blame culture could lead to mistakes being hidden rather than voluntarily reported for fear of blame and punishment. Consequently, both individual employees and the organisation may be prevented from learning and improving performance. In this respect, adopting accountability mechanisms that seek to assign blame is paradoxical to the organisational goal of learning because it fosters mistrust (Dekker, 2008). Whilst mistakes may be identified when negative outcomes occur, the ability to learn from mistakes before they are able to cause negative outcomes could be prevented if police are discouraged from voluntarily reporting these mistakes because of fear.

- “2 Sergeants reported near miss and the next day were issued with Regulation 9 notices, we don't engender people with the opportunity to report for fear of discipline. Because of this, what is the 'true' situation? How many near misses go unreported? How many incidents don't we learn from as a result of non-reporting? What are the true numbers?”
- “Cultural issues around blame etc. People become worried about their position/job. Inhibitors within the police service around being honest and open”
- “Can we truly learn lessons when we are focussed on defending our position?”
"Overwhelming pressure as the enquiry unfolded heightened, the need to operate successfully, professionally etc., but lowered your confidence in achieving this. The result of this was an increase in the perceived pressure; the decision making process both at an individual and a team level was as a consequence flawed. This does not mean that poor or wrong decisions were always a result, but their likelihood was increased. It seemed that when errors were made, then because of the high pressure and low esteem a 'blame culture' became increasingly apparent.”

"Unfortunately the culture of the British media and political class equates responsibility with blame and seems to take perverse delight in individual and collective failure. This could mean organisations are more concerned with protecting reputations than learning from mistakes”

Changing the blame culture

Practitioners voiced a desire to move away from the blame culture to a more supportive learning environment where individuals would be free to report mistakes without fear of punishment. Within this supportive environment, practitioners felt they would be more willing to voluntarily report mistakes before they led to negative outcomes. There was also a desire for practitioners both within the police and across agencies to share responsibility and accountability rather than seeking to transfer blame onto others. This would facilitate greater collaboration and could minimise failures to act. These approaches are compatible with the notion of learning and just cultures where balance is achieved between learning from incidents when errors occur and accountability for consequences of such incidents (Dekker, 2011).

"This is still a strong blame culture organisation and that will hold us back - we've got to make it OK to identify things for the organisation and individuals which need improving without it being seen as detrimental to individuals”

“What happens when it goes wrong is it a cover up culture or a hands up culture? Risks taken in good faith, with the level professional knowledge of the individual and in the light of knowledge then known, that subsequently go wrong, should be professionally de-briefed, the individual supported and recognised for the ability to make decisions.”

“To allow innovation & creativity to flourish we need a culture that truly empowers its staff and allows risks to be taken without fear of blame or punishment. I don’t think we are there yet. Additionally what skills & tools do we actually give our staff to allow them to break away from traditional thinking?”

“To remove blame culture we must concentrate on WHY something has happened rather than the WHO did it.”

“Accepting that we share the same responsibility rather than dumping it on any one agency!”
3.3.3 Emotion

Analysis of police perspectives also suggested that lack of support within policing may influence emotional states such as regret which can either encourage individuals to carefully consider and critically evaluate judgments and decisions or to be overly risk averse depending on whether motivated by accuracy or self-preservation.

Lack of support

As a result of blame culture there was a general perception that the organisation was unsupportive when negative events occurred. The phrase – “success has many fathers (and mothers), but failure is an orphan” defined this category. Across focus groups practitioners noted that lack of support prevented learning as individuals sought to protect themselves rather than admit mistakes. There were three subthemes: self-protection (50%); support (32.86%); and risk aversion (17.14%).

Support

The subtheme of support centred on practitioners’ acknowledgement that to engender an environment where individuals perform to the best of their abilities they would need to be supported by the organisation to prevent them feeling constrained. However, practitioners did not believe they were supported when investigations encountered difficulties but would be criticised as the organisation and other audiences sought to identify mistakes. Organisational support is a fundamental aspect of creating just cultures by promoting learning rather than punishment, accepting that mistakes may occur and encouraging employees to report them without fear of blame (Lee et al., 2009). Consequently, lack of support may prevent the organisation from achieving the goals of minimising mistakes by discouraging greater investment of cognitive effort and reporting mistakes.

- “I picked up a mistake, dealt with it straight away, reported it and 20 minutes later had the Supt who never comes in giving me what for”
- “Being able to use professional judgement and step outside the remit when needed and feel supported to do so”
- “Being able to challenge can only happen in an environment where there is respect for different opinions and staff are not afraid of managers. This is how good organisations work”
- “You only feel supported whilst the going is good. It’s not always seen as innovation. Can feel very exposed”
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- “Greatest difficulty is fear of no support from colleagues/managers when things go wrong”
- “I’m only noticed by Senior Police Officers when mistakes are made”
- “Supporting our leaders when they make difficult decisions ESPECIALLY when they are wrong.”

Self-protection

Adopting a person centred approach to error influences the form of accountability sought and as a large body of experimental research demonstrates, this has consequences for motivational goals, attention focus, and decision defence (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). Practitioners highlighted that lack of support could motivate individuals to become focussed on protecting themselves and their position rather than learning. The term ‘covering our backs’ was used to refer to the process of self-preservation and providing suitable justifications that mitigate blame. Whilst being able to provide a rationale for actions is a central feature of giving an account, problems arise when individuals become overly focussed on making decisions that will protect them to the detriment of what is better suited to the situation.

- “Should be a basic aspect of all that we do, not to "cover our backs" but to learn what we do well and not so well”
- “Has the system left every agency with a feeling of impending doom; when will it all go wrong. What will the courts/public enquiry/press make of my decisions and will I get the backing of the organisation when I need it most. Therefore has it all just become one big 'back covering' exercise?”
- “'Learning the Lessons' should not be quite so focused on how we can better say 'sorry', the objective should be to learn from previous mistakes so we don't find ourselves in the position where we have to say 'sorry' in the first place.”
- “People will respond to a genuine human being and their honesty. It is the best policy, although I know it's hard when you feel beleaguered and set upon on every side. It takes a lot of courage to try not to cover things up, and wisdom to know the difference.”
- “Starts at the top of the organisation and involves allowing and acknowledging that people make mistakes, as long as we don't keep making the same mistakes!”

Risk aversion

Police practitioners felt the lack of support within policing was stifling creativity which could result in risk aversion due to fear of blame and punishment. As previously noted, the emotion of regret is associated with this process of risk aversion because risk adverse strategies are adopted to reduce this unpleasant emotion (Anderson, 2003). It is therefore possible that an
unsupportive environment and fear of blame may lead to greater anticipation of regret stemming from worry about judgments and decisions being linked to negative outcomes. The motivation to reduce this unpleasant emotion may encourage practitioners to avoid selecting options difficult to justify. Seeking to avoid risk is not necessarily a negative strategy, nor is being able to justify why options were selected. Indeed, the purpose of policing is to reduce risk posed to public safety and justifications are required to encouraged police to carefully consider decisions before acting to minimise errors and protect public safety. However, where accountability leads practitioners to consider minimising threat to personal well-being in addition to public safety this may compromise their ability to focus on the task.

- “The blame culture must be addressed before we can truly move on. It is unhealthy and stifles creativity, innovation and risk taking.”

- “The problem with this cautionary approach where we are encouraged to justify and record decisions for taking and not taking action is that it delays command decisions being made quickly, when quick decisions are needed. Always referring to being in the High Court in a few years time is hindering leadership. This IS a risk averse approach which can put possible reputation issues and financial considerations over the safety of the public.”

- “Doing your best but still getting it wrong is the key element of this heading. All too often 20/20 hindsight is applied to post incident reviews when of course the right answer/course of action is immediately identified. This is especially the case when the review is external. If we are truly a learning organisation we should accept we will get it wrong. Currently I believe the 'do nothing option' is all too often the default position rather than to take a risk of not doing the right thing.”

- “Risks can be taken in a supportive environment - much harder when you feel you are going to be blamed.”

“IT is far too easy to be a risk adverse leader. The easy decision is to go along with policy, launch an investigation, and do what is normally done. How about saying no, refusing to act, how about rewarding and even supporting the leaders who make difficult decisions and cover the leaders who won’t. Senior managers who delegate decisions to a more junior level to avoid making a difficult decision rather than empowering or developing”

3.3.4 Restoring the balance

Although the majority of practitioners’ comments thus far have created a negative picture of the accountability environment, it is important to provide a balanced reflection by highlighting the benefits of accountability. Indeed, not all comments generated were negative as police practitioners were aware of the intended purpose of accountability for improving performance.
Positive Environment

Although this theme only arose in 1 of the 22 focus groups, the positive experiences of these practitioners provides a contrasting anecdote to discussions of blame and lack of support. It was noted that the investigation had been difficult both because of the heavy workload and type of incident (murder investigation). But having the support of the service and public had provided a positive environment in which practitioners were able to work free from the culture of blame. These practitioners felt their local service had made progressive steps away from the blame culture prevalent across policing and had developed positive relationships with their community and local media. Consequently, focus could be given to managing the investigation rather than negative consequences that might befall individuals should they fail. This example of policing in a supportive and blame free environment highlights the benefits of cultivating such a culture. As discussions within this focus group highlight, performance is most effective when trust is based on the belief that a force is functioning to the best of its abilities rather than on the ability to instil fear.

- “We pulled together a structure that meant after a short period of time we had good accountability and support, responding positively to internal pressures and external attention of the media. There was no sense in that XXXX would not succeed and certainly no feelings whatsoever that people were waiting for others to fail, there was collective support and responsibility”
- “Successful media strategy to ensure that the story stayed on the front page of the newspapers.”
- “Positive feedback and support from cabinet level staff, Chair of Police Authority and management/supervisory staff on the investigation”
- “Culture change evident? - More away from winging/negative/can-do but can-do/positive position. There has been a very positive culture for a long time now as anyone who has worked there would be aware of;”
- “Worked with risk calculated and away from risk adverse culture - learning from when errors have been made appear to have avoided the blame culture”
- “Recognition from the community at what a good job the XXXX organisation has done - Community approached us with praise”

Public confidence and the necessity of accountability

Finally, whilst practitioners disapproved of lack of support, blame, and government controlled targets within policing, it is important to note the difference between rejecting accountability structures and rejecting the concept of accountability altogether. None of the comments generated by practitioners were critical of the notion of accountability, but rather the way
mechanisms were implemented. Practitioners, particularly within workshop focus groups, were aware that the function of accountability is to encourage improved performance and to aid future prevention and learning. Such goals are integral to the ability of any organisation to perform effectively. Indeed, some of the comments generated highlighted the importance of accountability for ensuring appropriate behaviour and effective performance. Practitioners were not advocating the removal of accountability from the service but that some mechanisms and the ethos behind them require alterations. It is possible that this theme mainly arose in workshop focus groups because discussions within these sessions were more reflective of general policing issues rather than particular incidents. Consequently, practitioners may have been less defensive and better able to reflect on the intended purpose of accountability.

Police practitioners additionally noted importance of accountability for securing trust of external agencies such as the public by demonstrating effective service and mistakes made would be prevented from reoccurring. As previously discussed, trust of the public and other external agencies is an important component of policing (ACPO, 2007). Failure to secure this trust will compromise the ability of the service to function effectively (Hough & Roberts, 2004). Not only do the public play a key role in providing information that aids with investigation, but it is also important for the public majority to obey the law. From an organisational perspective, accountability is a necessary component for securing trust because it allows audiences to evaluate the performance of an organisation and its members (Gerber & Mendelson, 2008). This is particularly important in organisations such as the police because of the responsibility they have in maintaining public safety. But as analysis of police perspectives indicates, some aspects of the accountability environment can prevent reporting of mistakes and providing an account of actions. Table 2 below provides a summary of the various ways police practitioners identified accountability to be manifested in policing and how this may influence judgments and decisions.

- “It is necessary for individuals to be held to account when they have failed to do their job properly”
- “The [police] must be accountable to the victims and the public.”
- “We should all bear responsibilities and accountabilities. This just isn't for the "leaders". Anyone who takes the pay cheque must be answerable for what they do and how well they do it.”
- “What matters is service to the public in such a fashion that they have confidence in the police to an extent that we can make mistakes without it all dissolving.”
- “People who have the right skills and are recognised both internally and externally for those skills - Police Officers and Police Staff recognised as being highly professional - this links to accountability and credibility. This in turn links to confidence - confident work force and public confident in their police service.”

- “The most successful organisation will struggle to prosper if it does not have the support and confidence of those that rely on it.”
Table 2
The potential influence of accountability on judgments and decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Impact on performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media scrutiny</td>
<td>Negative media coverage of police performance regardless of effort invested creates frustration and lowers morale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media scrutiny</td>
<td>Influence of media on public perceptions can lead public to negatively view police performance, further lowering morale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>Inequality of accountability</td>
<td>Perception that some officers manage to evade evaluation due to seniority of rank or negative attention that would be attracted to the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>Inequality of accountability</td>
<td>This inequality is viewed as unfair and introduced divisions between practitioners, reducing morale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying accountability structures</td>
<td>Lack of clarification in accountability structures creates confusion, particularly in multiagency settings which can result in responsibility being passed between individuals and agencies to avoid accountability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying accountability structures</td>
<td>Lack of clarification in accountability structures can lead to lack of action and morale is reduced because of failure to work effectively toward same goal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy of IPCC</td>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy of IPCC stemming from the belief that this organisation does not understand pressures faced within policing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legitimacy of IPCC</td>
<td>Performance evaluations are unfair because they fail to consider this pressure which leads to greater criticism and lower morale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance driven culture</td>
<td>Lack of discrimination in outcome focussed performance measures across policing and failure to consider that different factors are important depending on specialism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance driven culture</td>
<td>Inappropriate measures lead to criticism when these are not achieved and to resources being reallocated to other areas of policing which reduces morale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation and cognitive processes</td>
<td>Government influence over performance measures is viewed to be illegitimate as their view is often at odds with what the public want from their local police force.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation and cognitive processes</td>
<td>Police under pressure to juggle disparate views of public and government to avoid criticism which can distract attention away from the task.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame culture</td>
<td>Presence of blame culture within policing leads police to worry about potential to be blamed and punished if outcomes are negative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame culture</td>
<td>Can lead them to become motivated to protect themselves and may detract attention from task onto identifying ways to avoid blame.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Lack of support</td>
<td>The police service and external audiences fail to support police when outcomes are negative, instead seeking to identify and assign mistakes to individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Lack of support</td>
<td>Can lead police to anticipate the regret they would feel if their judgments and decisions were linked to the negative outcome which can lead to risk aversion strategies motivated by self-preservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive environment</td>
<td>Practitioners in one focus group identified their force had worked to provide more support, remove blame culture, and have better links with the media and public.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive environment</td>
<td>Focus could be directed to the investigation rather than self-preservation which improved performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public confidence and the necessity of accountability</td>
<td>Practitioners understood the importance of accountability for facilitating trust from key stakeholders such as the public and its intention to improve police performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public confidence and the necessity of accountability</td>
<td>Accountability was viewed as necessary within policing but the way accountability was sought and the blame culture behind mechanisms may be preventing positive goals being achieved.</td>
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</table>
3.4 Discussion

This chapter sought to identify police perspectives of the accountability environment in which policing is conducted and how these factors may influence judgments and decisions. Overall, analysis identified the complexity of accountability structures within policing due to the numerous roles the service is responsible for and the many audiences they are formally and informally accountable to. However, criticisms were particularly focussed on blame culture and lack of support underlying mechanisms which may hinder rather than improve performance. Firstly, factors such as relentless media criticism, inequality and lack of clarity in accountability mechanisms, perceived illegitimacy of audiences such as the IPCC, and performance culture all have the potential to reduce morale. Secondly, government interference and blame culture may cause attention to be directed toward protecting oneself at the expense of judgment and decision accuracy. Finally, lack of organisational support may lead to increased anticipation of regret and risk aversion due to fear of punishment. However, many of these factors are interlinked creating a web of accountabilities that collectively influence judgments and decisions by altering emotion, motivational goals and attention focus.

Understanding the potential impact of accountability on judgments and decisions requires distinctions to be made between practitioners’ perceptions of accountability mechanisms and the concept of accountability. Whilst dissatisfied with the form accountability took and the ethos behind it, practitioners were not critical of the concept itself. On the contrary, they were aware of the importance of accountability and transparency for demonstrating effectiveness to the public and that mistakes made would be dealt with appropriately, thereby preventing reoccurrence. Furthermore, it was recognised that the intended purpose of accountability was to improve performance by encouraging police to invest greater effort into tasks and to ensure that mistakes made would be identified to aid with learning and prevention. However, practitioners’ discussions suggest that the form accountability mechanisms take and how they are interpreted is influenced by organisational culture which could prevent the service from achieving these goals.

For example, blame culture and lack of organisational support within policing were two of the largest themes to be identified across focus groups. Practitioners felt that when negative events occurred, rather than supporting employees the service would seek to apportion blame and punishment. This was reminiscent of a person centred approach which focuses on
outcomes rather than processes and assumes errors are caused by individual flaws rather than widespread systemic problems (Lee & Harrison, 2000). Consequently, the service may attempt to reduce errors using blame and punishment in the belief that this will deter others from repeating mistakes. In line with previous organisational research, practitioners noted that rather than promoting learning, this culture made them reluctant to admit mistakes for fear of blame and punishment (Ruitenberg, 2002; Sharpe, 2003). Paralleling proposals by Dekker (2011), this unsupportive environment may prevent the organisation from identifying necessary improvements for preventing future errors and fear of blame could instil and increase the motivation for self-preservation.

Accordingly, whilst accountability may encourage greater investment of cognitive effort (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), the desire to avoid blame and punishment may lead some of this effort to be focussed on minimising or avoiding blame rather than critically evaluating judgments and decisions. In this way, aspects of the accountability environment within policing may lead self-preservation to become an aspect of decision making processes. In addition to dividing limited attention focus, fear of blame and punishment may also compromise judgments and decisions by increasing practitioners’ anticipations of regret. The tendency to attribute more regret with action over inaction (Zeelenberg et al., 2002) and desire to reduce this unpleasant emotional state may lead practitioners to become overly risk averse or decision avoidant. It is important to note that risk aversion is not necessarily a negative objective; indeed an overarching goal of policing is to reduce risk to public safety. However, this should be differentiated from the goal of reducing risk to personal reputation, career prospects or wellbeing. Selecting an option that is easier to justify is not the same as selecting an option most suitable for minimising public risk within the situation. Therefore, if conflicts arise between protecting the public and protecting oneself, judgments and decisions may be negatively affected.

In addition to the police service, this blame culture was identified as being present in external audiences such as the media and public. Police believed that regardless of efforts invested, agencies such as the media and public found fault with their actions which led to frustration over inability to control or alter these perspectives, thereby lowering morale. Dissatisfaction at the lack of clarity and consistency in responsibility and accountability also led to reduced morale as police felt some employees managed to evade accountability, particularly those in senior positions or if negative attention would be attracted to the service. As noted by Zhao et
al (2007), fairness and equality are important aspects of organisational appraisal mechanisms for eliciting employees’ trust and support. Failure to obtain police practitioners’ support for accountability structures appears to have created perceptions of illegitimacy which may not only lower morale, but could also increase stress and cynicism (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999).

Perspectives of illegitimacy in accountability mechanisms were further identified in relation to involvement of external audiences such as the IPCC and government in performance appraisals. The notion held by a few practitioners that IPCC involvement in investigating police conduct was illegitimate stemmed from the belief that they had no experience of decision making in difficult policing environments and so would not take these factors into consideration when evaluating performance. Consequently, evaluations made were seen to be unfair. Practitioners’ also perceived government involvement in setting performance targets to be illegitimate and to interfere with the ability of the service to function effectively. The main objection raised was that targets were at odds with what the public wanted from their local police service which made them inappropriate and illegitimate. Limited resources meant that police were often only able to tackle measurable issues and so the public would be dissatisfied with police performance. Consequently, government involvement may not only lower morale, but could also affect attention focus as practitioners are forced to balance opposing views as part of decision making processes (Green et al., 2002).

Overall, whilst police practitioners felt accountability was a necessary aspect of policing, they wanted changes to be made to the ethos of the accountability environment. Predominantly, there was a desire to move away from the blame culture to a fairer system where all practitioners were responsible for their actions but errors were not all viewed as punishable offences. This did not entail removing accountability from the service, but rather judging errors in the contexts they were made. The aim of changes was to reduce pressure and achieve the organisational goals of improved performance and prevention of future errors. Suggestions paralleled the notion of a just culture approach which argues that although the ability to instigate punishments is an important aspect of accountability, it is one that should be reserved for wilful negligence rather than honest mistakes (Dekker, 2008). Calls for accountability should be about “people, regulators, the public, employees, trusting that you will take problems inside your organization seriously” rather than discouraging employees from providing errors out of fear (Dekker, 2011, p. 23).
Accountability should be forward-looking such that in addition to noting the mistake and harm that arose from it, opportunities are identified for preventing reoccurrence. Organisations should acknowledge that mistakes do occur, but preventing reoccurrence requires creating a reporting environment (Lee et al., 2009). This is achieved when employees are not afraid to admit mistakes because they trust that they will be supported and appraised fairly (Zhao et al., 2007). Accordingly, organisations need to distinguish between ‘honest mistakes’ arising from good intentions and ‘illegitimate behaviour’ resulting from intentional misbehaviour and negligence (Dekker, 2011). Treating these two types of mistakes differently still serves the purpose of discouraging intentional misbehaviour but also reduces fear of punishment for honest mistakes. There is evidence that the service is moving toward facilitating a more honest and open reporting environment where practitioners make decisions free from the pressures of blame. As discussions within one focus group highlighted, this force had made attempts to remove the blame culture and facilitate positive links with the local media and community. This allowed practitioners to focus on the investigation knowing that internal and external agencies supported them with the goals they were trying to achieve. As discussions in this focus group highlight, performance is most effective when trust is based on believing a force is functioning to the best of its abilities rather than on being able to instil fear of punishment.

Furthermore, the very structure of focus groups that generated these discussions indicates the service is attempting to advance away from a blame culture. As previously highlighted, 10KV focuses on learning and generating candid and honest responses without fear of culpability, therefore comments are made anonymously (Crego, 2002). The use of this tool to debrief some critical incidents demonstrates a desire to learn without seeking to punish. The notion that 10KV elicits candid responses is supported by comments generated and discussed within this chapter in which practitioners displayed disapproval of many aspects of internal mechanisms that they may not have felt comfortable with raising in face-to-face discussions. The continued use of tools such as 10KV may serve to alter police perspectives of the service over time. However, such a tool cannot be used in isolation; the service and external audiences must demonstrate a shift in attitude away from the person centred approach to identifying and addressing traps within the organisation (such as blame culture) that contribute toward these errors. Only then can police trust that judgments and decisions made in good faith to the best of their abilities will not be treated the same as intentional misdemeanours.
3.4.1 Limitations

Whilst this qualitative analysis has raised some important issues that will be addressed further in subsequent chapters, it is important to note potential limitations as these impose boundaries for interpretation of analysis. Firstly, population information is limited as 10KV focus groups do not usually collect demographic details from practitioners. Although focus groups were conducted with forces from across the UK, specific details about individual practitioners’ service lengths, ranks and roles were not available. Therefore, caution is advised in attempting to make generalisations to specific areas of policing without further examination. However, subsequent chapters will seek to examine these issues by analysing the strength of relationships between factors identified in this chapter.

Additionally, data were obtained from focus group discussions conducted in relation to high impact areas of policing where forces had been subject to external scrutiny which is likely to have influenced discussions. Whilst 10KV removes blame from external audiences, it is unable to alter the extent individuals blame themselves. Consequently, some discussions may have resulted from practitioners’ attempts to justify performance to themselves rather than being a true reflection of the accountability environment in which policing is conducted. It is possible that discussions generated may differ when forces are not under scrutiny, as demonstrated within workshop focus groups that generated more reflective comments about accountability, noting its importance for facilitating public trust. However, as comments made across focus groups were non-source attributable, discussions generated were more likely to accurately represent practitioners’ perceptions than would be possible using methods involving face-to-face contact. Current analysis does not argue that the accountability environment identified is a true reflection of that present within policing, but that it represents the environment police practitioners perceive themselves to be working in, and such perceptions could influence decisions and actions.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter identified many interconnected accountability issues present within UK policing. Although these myriad aspects of accountability are complex and relationships were not clearly measured, analysis nevertheless provides an overview of the stable environment in which police practitioners work. Overall, current discussions suggest the accountability environment policing is conducted in is based on blame and lack of support. This culture
influences the form accountability mechanisms take and how these are viewed by practitioners, leading to increased fear of punishment and motivation for self-preservation. Additionally, lack of clarity and fairness in accountability mechanisms, and influence of government initiatives in policing may lower morale. Perceptions of the accountability environment could therefore influence police judgments and decisions by altering morale, motivational goals, attention focus, and emotions such as anticipated regret. Furthermore, practitioners’ perspectives of the lack of control they have over altering audience perceptions may lower morale and motivation. This issue is addressed further in the following chapter by examining senior investigating officers’ perspectives of personal capability to manage external perspectives in comparison to tasks directly related to the incident.
4. MANAGING EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS IN MAJOR CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

The previous chapter identified that police practitioners believed audiences internal and external to the service sought to allocate blame and punishment when outcomes were negative which created additional pressure as both outcomes and external perceptions are beyond direct control. This issue is addressed further in the present chapter by comparing officers’ perceptions of personal capability for managing external perceptions in contrast to investigative tasks. In particular, this research is focused on the role of senior investigating officers (SIOs) responsible for managing major crime investigations. This specialism was selected due to the increased focus major investigations attract from various audiences including the public, media and other stakeholders, and the long-term impact these investigations have on external perceptions. Although all aspects of major investigation may be difficult to manage, the central argument is that officers will view themselves to be less capable of managing external perceptions given the lack of direct control and level of complexity involved.

4.1.1 The role of a senior investigating officer

An SIO is a plain clothes detective working within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the police service which is distinguishable from both Uniformed and Special Branches. The CID investigates major crimes such as murder, rape, serious assault, fraud and other crimes that require complex detection skills. Overall, the role of a detective is to “ascertain whether a crime has occurred, identify who was responsible and construct a legal case against them” (Innes, 2002, p. 681). The CID is therefore comprised of investigative teams of detectives from varying ranks working together using information obtained through numerous avenues including interviews, witness statements, police databases, and forensic materials to achieve the shared goal of maintaining public safety by building and delivering a case to the CPS for trial.

Central to the work of an investigation team is the raising of actions defined as “any activity which, if pursued, is likely to establish significant facts, preserve material, or lead to the resolution of the investigation” (ACPO, 2005, p. 77). Raising, allocating, completing and reviewing actions are therefore key components of a team’s workload, and failure to manage
Managing external perceptions in major crime investigations

this work effectively will hamper the efficiency of the investigation (Cook & Tattersall, 2008). There are numerous skills that are common to major investigations including preservation of life, preservation of scene, securing evidence, identification of victims, and identification of suspects (ACPO, 2005). The work of an investigation team is therefore complex and requires specialised management and coordination. It is the responsibility of an SIO to provide this specialised management by guiding the investigation, managing resources, developing strategies, and directing the team with regard to roles and responsibilities.

Although all officers are accountable for their actions, as head of the team the SIO carries overall responsibility and accountability and so must ensure that all aspects of an investigation are conducted in the most effective manner (Cook & Tattersall, 2008). Managing major investigations such as murder, child abuse, and rape involves making difficult decisions in dynamic environments characterised by complexity, uncertainty, time constraints and accountability pressure (Crego & Alison, 2004). Despite information often being incomplete or lacking (Saunders, 2001), SIOs must learn to juggle and make sense of large quantities of information and develop hypotheses about what has or may be occurring (Alison, Barrett, & Crego, 2007).

As previously noted, investigations of this nature attract a host of public and media attention which poses long-term consequences for public perceptions of policing. For example, the Soham murders in 2002, the Cumbrian shootings in 2010, and most recently, the News of the World telephone hacking scandal in 2011 all demonstrate the widespread scrutiny critical incidents can encounter. Any serious investigation may thus be conducted under the watchful eye of the victim’s family, public, media, and fellow peers, with decisions being further examined by higher ranking officers as part of the internal review process (ACPO, 2000). As a consequence of the risk posed to public safety and negative impact failure would have on external perceptions, major investigations must be correctly diagnosed and managed from the initial phase to prevent them from rapidly escalating (Flin, Pender, Wujec, & Grant, 2007). Poor management can lead to vital evidence being lost which may never be regained (Cook & Tattersall, 2008). Indeed, there are many examples of well publicised cases where erroneous decisions led to evidence being lost and investigative avenues being missed that compromised the reputation of the service and officers involved in investigative decision making (Gladwell, 2005). For example, the investigation by Essex police in 2001 into the death of Stuart
Lubbock at the home of television presenter Michael Barrymore attracted widespread criticism due to police failure to secure the scene as potentially crucial evidence was subsequently lost.

Consequently, an SIO is required to develop a range of skills, some of which will involve managing tasks that directly relate to the investigation and others involve managing the perceptions and evaluations of others external to the investigation team. Yet rather than being entirely separate responsibilities, investigative tasks and external perceptions are interconnected. Whilst failure to build a successful case can have a negative impact on external perceptions, negative perceptions can also hinder case building by preventing information and evidence being gathered. Indeed, as the previous chapter highlights, police practitioners are all too aware of the important role external perceptions play in policing. Investigation management should therefore be most effective when the SIO can successfully manage all aspects of the investigation, not just those directly related to case building.

### 4.1.2 Accountability and control

Previous chapters established that policing is conducted against a backdrop of accountability mechanisms that serve to ensure officers act fairly, proportionately and effectively. These mechanisms involve the evaluation of one party’s performance by another possessing the power to exact consequences based on appraisals (Hall et al., 2003). Thus, the perceptions and evaluations of audiences are central to the concept of accountability because they determine the outcome of appraisals including whether blame or punishment are apportioned. As with most organisational settings, police are formally and informally accountable to a range of audiences internal and external to the service which means performance may be continually appraised (Frink & Klimoski, 2004). Formal mechanisms such as performance reviews, IPCC investigations and legal court proceedings pose consequences for career prospects and may even lead to civil or criminal prosecution. Informal mechanisms including appraisals from colleagues, victims and their families, the media and public also pose consequences for professional reputation and may create pressure for formal mechanisms to be instigated.

Overall, performance evaluation mechanisms are based on two principles: identifying when mistakes have been made to prevent repeat occurrences; and assigning culpability and punishment to deter others from committing errors (Boin et al., 2005). Yet despite intending to facilitate trust, not all forms of accountability lead to transparency as the rigorous hunt to
assign culpability actually encourages individuals to hide mistakes for fear of punishment (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Sharpe, 2003). The previous chapter demonstrated that in general, police practitioners across various disciplines perceive that the organisation and other key stakeholders seek to apportion blame for negative outcomes. SIOs in particular have noted the presence of a blame culture within major crime investigations which places officers under increasing pressure (Crego & Alison, 2004). Although it is possible that these perceptions do not accurately reflect the accountability environment, the widespread belief that blame culture exists is enough to influence police judgments and decisions (Weber & Johnson, 2009).

As previously noted, this blame culture approach to performance evaluation parallels the person centred view that errors result from individual failings which can be reduced through training and punishment. Organisations adopting a blame culture tend to be overly outcome-focused in their perpetuation of the notion that negative outcomes result from errors committed by individuals and positive outcomes from absence of error (Dekker, 2011). Whilst error can contribute toward negative outcomes, this view fails to consider the notion that outcomes are beyond direct control because factors other than decisions and actions also influence them (Elliott, 2005). Furthermore, blame culture is clouded by hindsight, encouraging audiences to search for and find mistakes in the belief that the worse an outcome was the more mistakes must have been made (Dekker, 2011).

Previous research highlights that hindsight bias leads to oversimplification in causality with outcome likelihood being overestimated because appraisals start from the knowledge of the outcome and work backwards to assess how it could have been prevented (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Rather than focusing on the context in which judgments and decisions were made, outcome severity overshadows evaluation. Consequently, audiences assume the responsible agent should have foreseen the negative outcome and so are at fault for not preventing it. This is in contrast to systems approaches such as just culture which emphasises the need to appraise decisions and actions in relation to knowledge, goals, attention demands and environmental context present at the time they were made (Dekker, 2011). Therefore, not only does blame culture affect willingness to admit mistakes, but also how audiences view performance and the form of accountability sought.

Overall, audience perceptions are beyond direct control and blame culture may reduce control still further by encouraging audiences to focus on outcome severity rather than the context
judgments and decisions were made in. Although SIOs may make decisions they believe will improve the investigation, they are unable to control how others will perceive and evaluate these decisions. In contrast, as investigation manager, SIOs have greater control over factors directly relating to case building such as assigning roles and responsibilities, creating a positive team atmosphere and managing information flow (Crego & Alison, 2004). As SIOs perceive themselves to have less direct control over external perceptions and evaluations compared with investigative tasks, it is hypothesised that they will perceive themselves to be significantly less capable of managing external perceptions than tasks directly relating to case building.
4.2 Method

Current analysis is based on data collected from a secondary source. The strengths and weaknesses of secondary data have already been addressed within the previous chapter (see section 3.1.1) and so are not discussed again in this section. Instead, details of the original method and purpose of research are provided, along with a description of how data were used within analysis.

4.2.1 Participants

Using a simple random sampling method, 71 senior police officers (61 male) from 31 police forces across the UK participated in the original study during August of 2006. Of the 69 officers providing details of rank, 40% (28) were Detective Chief Inspectors, 37% (26) were Detective Inspectors, 17% (12) were Detective Superintendents, 4% (3) were Detective Chief Superintendents, and 2% (2) were Chief Inspectors. Length of service ranged from 6.5 to 31 years with a mean and median of 20.88 (SD = 6.40) and 22 years respectively. Furthermore, approximately 94% (66) of these senior officers had been assigned the role of either SIO or deputy SIO in a critical or major incident including rape enquiries, serious assault, manslaughter, kidnap and abduction, human trafficking, terrorist activity, sieges, organised crime, fatal fires, contract killings, and murder.

4.2.2 Questionnaire

The data were originally collected using a questionnaire designed to examine relationships between need for cognitive closure, empathy, and senior officers’ perspectives of their effectiveness in managing aspects of an investigation that require either cognitive or interpersonal leadership skills. Overall, the questionnaire pack was comprised of four sections. The first section asks participants to provide demographic details including rank, length of service, police force, and whether they had any prior involvement with managing critical and major incidents. The second section contained a vignette and skill sorting task comprised of 18 related scenarios and officers were required to rate their level of capability for managing each scenario. The third section contained a variety of individual differences measures but these are not the focus of this analysis. Current research uses data obtained within section two of this questionnaire pack and so further details of this section are provided below.
Vignette

Vignettes are generally comprised of text, images or other stimuli presented via short written prompts or as live events that seek to elicit participant responses (Hughes & Huby, 2002). Within the questionnaire, text format was used to allow research to be easily disseminated to senior officers across forces via e-mail. Overall, the vignette narrative details a series of suspicious deaths occurring in medical settings over a 4 year period (see Appendix A for the vignette and skill sorting task). As the narrative unfolds, further evidence emerges that links each death to one potential suspect, a male nurse. Participating senior officers were assigned the role of SIO in charge of this investigation and so were responsible for managing the incident.

Over the last few decades, the use of vignettes has become increasingly popular due to researchers recognising the limitations of questionnaires for instigating features of naturalistic context which can limit applicability of responses to naturalistic settings (Gould, 1996). Vignettes can simulate various aspects of research topics of interest (Lanza & Carifio, 1992), but it is acknowledged that as with any research tool, they cannot completely mirror the complexity and richness of naturalistic contexts (Kinicki, Hom, Trost, & Wade, 1995). For example, in reality people may navigate through their environment actively searching for information, whereas with vignettes they only have access to information presented which guides their thinking (Parkinson & Manstead, 1993). Additionally, with a written vignette people may disengage from the task whereas within the naturalistic context of managing a major investigation this would not be possible due to potential catastrophic consequences.

Although vignettes are selective in the information they present, this feature can be beneficial in encouraging participants to focus on particular aspects of a situation that are pertinent to the research (Hughes, 1998). Indeed, Rossi and Alves (1980) note the ability of some vignettes to simplify representations of the real world to reduce the overwhelming complexities present in everyday life. Furthermore, vignettes are cost effective and can be conducted much more quickly than observational studies (Sumrall & West, 1998). It was a particularly advantageous methodology for both the original and current research because full access is unlikely to be granted for observing SIOs in on-going major crime investigations due to the distraction this may cause to the investigation. Thus, the use of a written vignette allowed researchers to access SIO perspectives without jeopardising real investigations.
In addition, when used for quantitative purposes, as with the original and current research, the vignette methodology allows data to be quickly generated from a large group of participants in a relatively short timescale (Gould, 1996). As information presented is standardised (Braspenning & Sergeant, 1994) participants are able to provide responses in relation to the same stimulus (Lanza & Carifio, 1992) which can lead to more uniform data allowing direct comparisons to be made between participants (Gould, 1996). When based on real life events or case studies, vignettes can be useful in allowing experienced individuals to detect subtleties in the scenario (Sumrall & West, 1998). Finally, when vignettes facilitate participant anonymity, their use can reduce socially desirable responding biases (Constant, Keisler, & Sproull, 1994). This was an important factor for both the original and present research as SIOs were required to rate their capability of managing various scenarios that would be integral to conducting a high-profile major investigation of this type.

Overall, the vignette was selected as a cost-effective method that would allow researchers to access the views of a large group of SIOs using a standardised scenario. To this end, ratings of abilities were elicited in response to the narrative generated but should also be influenced by SIOs’ prior knowledge and experiences. However, given the vignette’s inability to generate many of the complexities present within critical incidents such as time constraint and competing demands, it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which responses would transfer to real incidents. Care must therefore be taken in generalising results and at best conclusions drawn may provide a potential indication of practitioners’ perceived capabilities.

**Skill sorting task**

The 18 related scenarios were developed based on the previous findings of a study conducted by Crego and Alison (2004). Within this study, 28 SIOs responsible for managing high profile incidents were asked to reflect on their experiences and to identify factors that contributed to the outcome of these incidents. Furthermore, they were required to group these factors into themes that regularly occur within critical incidents. Themes identified included: family liaison (effectively managing the victim’s family); media influence (ensuring media issues are effectively managed); record keeping (keeping an accurate record of the investigation and relevant complexities); SIO leadership (effectively guiding and motivating staff); relationship with community (managing the community effectively and providing support); external advisors and partners (making optimal use of advisors); team atmosphere (creating and maintaining a positive team atmosphere); roles and responsibilities (ensuring staff are clear
about their tasks and roles); and politics (acknowledging the political sensitivities of the investigation).

Overall, these 9 themes were used to generate the 18 scenarios with 2 scenarios created for each theme. In this respect, scenarios were tailored to the vignette narrative of a series of suspicious deaths in medical settings, but were framed by the difficulties SIOs identified as frequently presenting themselves across critical incidents. For example, across the course of the vignette, several suspicious deaths are identified and become linked to a male nurse who has evaded investigation for several years by frequently relocating to different hospitals. Consequently, the investigation would be large-scale due to the number of suspicious deaths identified, which presents many investigative challenges due to the level of resources that would require coordination and vast amounts of information generated in response to inquiries. Ensuring team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and remain motivated across the course of the investigation would be important for effectively completing investigative tasks. Additionally, the size of the investigation would attract attention from several audiences such as victims’ families, the media, community, and Chief Constable. SIOs would be required to manage these different perspectives and demonstrate the effectiveness of the investigation to audiences. Table 3 below displays the list of scenarios generated.

Participants were asked to consider their capability of effectively managing each scenario in relation to the incident presented within the vignette and indicate whether they would be ‘very good’, ‘good’, or ‘fair’ at handling them. Within the original design, researchers sought to ensure a normal distribution across responses and so participants were instructed to identify 4 scenarios they would be ‘very good’, 10 they would be ‘good’, and 4 they would be ‘fair’ at managing. Of the 4 scenarios categorised as ‘very good’, participants were asked to identify 1 they would be ‘best’ at managing. Additionally, of the 4 scenarios categorised as ‘fair’, participants identified 1 they would be ‘worst’ at managing.

This skill sorting methodology was originally selected rather than Likert scales to prevent SIOs from responding uniformly and to encourage them to prioritise those problems they would be ‘better’ or ‘worse’ at coping with. The terminology used to distinguish between capabilities was chosen carefully to avoid requesting SIOs to identify themselves as being poor or lacking the ability to deal with any important aspect of investigative management. Despite participation being anonymous, it was recognised that appraising capabilities in areas
Managing external perceptions in major crime investigations

integral to role is difficult without the added pressure of admitting poor or failing performance. The term ‘fair’ was selected to represent the lower end of the performance scale as SIOs would be more willing to categorise their capability level as fair rather than poor.

At this point, it is important to indicate some of the flaws within the questionnaire design so that interpretation of results adheres to these restrictions. Firstly, participants were asked to reflect on their own abilities which may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of where strengths and weaknesses actually lie. A more robust measure of true ability would include perceptions of team members and colleagues in addition to observations of the senior officer in action. Consequently, results must be interpreted as the subjective perspectives of senior officers rather than objective measures of true ability. Secondly, the questionnaire was not piloted prior to being distributed amongst senior officers, thereby preventing design flaws from being removed prior to data collection. Had this been done, the questionnaire design would have been much more robust. However, the design still has value in accessing the perspectives of high ranking officers.

4.2.3 Analysis of skill sorting task

As previously noted, the original research goal was to examine relationships between empathy, need for closure, and cognitive or interpersonal leadership. Consequently, the 18 scenarios were split into two groups based on whether they required cognitive or interpersonal leadership skills. However, the goal of this research is to examine whether significant differences exist in capability perceptions between tasks involving management of external perceptions of performance compared with tasks that are more directly related to case building. To this end, the 18 scenarios have been split into two groups based on these distinctions (see Table 3).

To validate this categorisation of scenarios, another PhD student within the University of Liverpool also assigned scenarios to these 2 category groups. Inter-rater reliability was established using statistical analysis, Cohen’s $k = .89 \ (p < .001)$, $N = 18$. As a Cohen’s $k$ score of between .60 and .75 is considered to be good (Fleiss, 1981), this level of consistency between raters was acceptable. However, subsequent discussion conducted between raters to establish justifications behind categorisations led to complete consensus. The following analysis compares whether significant differences exist in capability ratings between scenarios involving external perceptions and investigative tasks.
### Table 3

List of scenarios presented within the skill sorting task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Perceptions</th>
<th>Investigative Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Dealing with Bellamy’s son, who vents his anger at you for ‘neglecting’ his father.</td>
<td>K. Not being distracted from your responsibilities by tasks that other members of staff should be carrying out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Justifying your decision to the Chief Constable regarding not investigating Atwill further after Bellamy’s initial complaint.</td>
<td>L. Organising the potentially overwhelming flood of information from the media, your staff, the families of potential victims and the health service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Managing the media where they appear to be ahead of the investigation. For example, by televising interviews with potential victim’s family members who have yet to make official statements.</td>
<td>M. Ensuring that all relevant parties are ‘kept in the information loop’ throughout the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Reassuring the local community during the investigation.</td>
<td>N. Maintaining morale where it is apparent that some staff are no longer working collaboratively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Dealing with competing demands from the media, the community, the Health Authorities, and ACPO.</td>
<td>O. Boosting morale where some team members perceive they have already failed in ‘allowing’ Atwill to stay at large for so long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Speaking to a victim’s family after a member of the investigating team leaks sensitive information regarding the victim to the press.</td>
<td>P. Dealing with staff members who remain confused about the nature of their role, despite being assigned their responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Justifying your strategy where journalists have heavily criticised the investigation.</td>
<td>Q. Improving interagency communication, where, despite several previous attempts, you still need additional information from several Health Authorities, social services and hospitals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Dealing with certain newspaper headlines stating that police are principally to blame.</td>
<td>R. Choosing between several conflicting pieces of advice from external advisors on how to interview Atwill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Dealing with the long term effect this case may have on the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Prioritising the following demands: the health services’ urgent request for a briefing report, victims’ families requesting to speak to you, and speaking to other potential victims.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Results

Using a combination of t-tests, Friedman’s ANOVAs and Wilcoxon tests, this results section examines whether significant differences exist between SIOs’ capability ratings for investigative tasks compared with management of external perceptions. As data are categorical, analysis is predominantly conducted using non-parametric tests. The rating scale is as follows: 1 = ‘fair’; 2 = ‘good’; and 3 = ‘very good’.

The mean, median and mode values of SIOs’ capability ratings are displayed in Table 4. As SIOs were asked to indicate 10 scenarios they were good at managing, but only 4 for very good or fair, percentages are also provided to allow comparisons between ability levels across scenarios. Figure 1 displays the percentage of fair, good and very good ratings each scenario received. Whilst most scenarios had a median and mode value of 2, translating into a capability rating of ‘good’, managing long-term community impact had median and mode values of 1.5 and 1 respectively indicating a capability rating of ‘fair’.

According to mean values, SIOs perceived themselves to be more capable of boosting morale (M = 2.40), clarifying roles (M = 2.26), and maintaining morale (M = 2.26), and less capable of managing long term community impact (M = 1.56), media (M = 1.65), and justifying the decision not to investigate earlier to the Chief (M = 1.68). For percentages, managing long-term community impact (M = 12.01%), media (M = 10.60%); and justifying the decision not to investigate earlier (M = 9.54%) received a higher proportion of fair ratings than other scenarios. Reassuring the local community during the investigation (M = 7.15%); and prioritising demands from Health, victims and victims’ families (M = 6.56%) received a higher proportion of good ratings. Boosting morale in staff who felt they had failed (M = 11.31%); clarifying team roles (M = 8.38%); and organising the potential flood of information (M = 8.04%) received a higher proportion of very good ratings.

Results of a one-tailed dependent t-test conducted on overall mean ratings for external perceptions and investigative tasks found that SIOs perceived themselves to be significantly more capable of managing investigative tasks (M = 2.15, SE = 0.27) than external perceptions (M = 1.87, SE = 0.22), t(67) = -5.67, \( p < .001 \), \( r = .28 \), confidence interval (CI): 95% ± .09. However, this effect size is relatively small.
### Table 4
Senior investigating officers’ perceptions of capabilities across scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>% Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>% Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>% Very Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O. Boosting morale</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Clarifying roles</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Maintaining morale</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Conflicting interview advice</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Prioritising demands</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Organising information</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Managing family</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.689</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Dealing with son</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Maintaining information loop</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Not being distracted</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Competing demands</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Reassuring local community</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Improving interagency</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Justifying strategy to media</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Managing media blame</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Justifying decision to Chief</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.54</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Managing media</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.638</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Community impact</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.01</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following on from the finding that mean capability ratings for investigative tasks were significantly higher than external perceptions, a Friedman’s ANOVA was conducted to identify particular scenarios that SIOs perceived themselves to be significantly more capable of managing. Results showed there was a significant difference in SIOs’ ratings of capability across the 18 scenarios, $\chi^2(17) = 136.64$, $p < .0001$. Wilcoxon tests using a Bonferroni correction were conducted to establish which of the 18 scenarios were significantly different from one another in terms of capability ratings. Therefore, all effects are reported at a .0027 level of significance and only significant results of post hoc analysis are reported in Table 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Dealing with son</th>
<th>151</th>
<th>299</th>
<th>198</th>
<th>191.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Justifying decision to Chief</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Managing media</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Reassuring local community</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Competing demands</td>
<td>226.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Managing family</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Justifying strategy to media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Managing media blame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Community impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Not being distracted</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Organising information</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Prioritising demands</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>122.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Maintaining information loop</td>
<td>169.5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Maintaining morale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Boosting morale</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Clarifying roles</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>136.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Improving interagency</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>315</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Conflicting interview advice</td>
<td>323.5</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.48</td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>-.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing external perceptions in major crime investigations

Post hoc analysis revealed a mixture of significant and non-significant results that together created clusters of scenarios that participating SIOs perceived themselves to be significantly more or less capable of managing. For example, perceptions of capability were significantly lower for managing both long term effects of the investigation on the community (M = 1.56) and media blame (M = 1.69) than most of the other 18 scenarios. Exceptions to this were managing the media (M = 1.65), justifying the decision not to investigate earlier to the Chief (M = 1.68), justifying strategies to the media (M = 1.85), improving interagency relationships (M = 1.90), and prioritising competing demands (M = 1.93). A common factor between most of these scenarios is that they involve managing perceptions of audiences external to the investigation team such as the media, community and Chief.

Capability ratings for investigative tasks more directly related to case building such as clarifying staff roles (M = 2.26), maintaining staff morale (M = 2.26), prioritising demands (M = 2.18), organising information (M = 2.13), maintaining the information loop between relevant parties (M = 2.07), and not being distracted (M = 1.94) did not significantly differ from one another. These findings support the proposal that a distinction may be made between capability and whether scenarios involve managing external perceptions or investigative tasks. However, it is important to note that many of the scenarios SIOs perceive themselves to be more capable of managing represent short-term issues that would require management over a period of hours and days with greater predictability of the impact of actions on outcomes. Conversely, many scenarios SIOs felt less capable of managing were more complex, representing long-term issues that would require handling over weeks and months with less predictability over the impact actions may have on outcomes. It is possible that timescales and complexity contribute toward perceptions of capability.

Finally, SIOs were asked to identify the 1 particular scenario they would be ‘best’ and the 1 they would be ‘worst’ at managing (see Table 6 and Figure 2). Overall, a greater number of SIOs felt they would be best at boosting team morale (14.71%, 10 SIOs), followed by organising vast amounts of information (11.76%, 8). Conversely, a greater number of SIOs perceived themselves to be worst at managing long-term community impact (20.60%, 14) and justifying the decision not to investigate earlier to the Chief (15.94%, 11). None of the SIOs thought they would be best at managing scenarios involving external audiences such as managing media blame and managing the long-term community impact which further indicates the difficulty of managing these scenarios. Additionally, none of the SIOs thought
they would be worst at investigative tasks such as managing competing demands, maintaining and boosting morale, and clarifying roles. This suggests these scenarios are relatively less difficult to manage in comparison to other scenarios. None of the SIOs thought they would be best or worst at reassuring the local community during the investigation which indicates that this scenario is neither the most easy nor difficult to manage. In total, 49 SIOs thought they would be best and 18 thought they would be worst at managing investigative tasks. Conversely, 19 SIOs thought they would be best and 51 thought they would be worst at managing external perceptions.

Table 6
Scenarios that senior investigating officers perceived themselves to be best and worst at managing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>% Best</th>
<th>Worst</th>
<th>% Worst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External perceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with son</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying decision to Chief</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing media</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassuring local community</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing demands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying strategy to media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing media blame</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community impact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising demands</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigative tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being distracted</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising information</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining information loop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining morale</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosting morale</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifying roles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving inter-agency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting interview advice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>72.06</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, results of a Wilcoxon Signed-ranks test found that although more SIOs thought they would be worst (Mdn = 4) rather than best (Mdn = 1) at managing external perceptions, this difference was not significant, \( T = 2, p > .05, r = -.55 \). However, significantly more SIOs thought they would be best (Mdn = 6) rather than worst (Mdn = 1) at managing an investigative task, \( T = 1, p < .05, r = -.81 \). Furthermore, significantly more SIOs thought they would be best at managing investigative tasks (Mdn = 6) compared to external perceptions (Mdn = 1), \( T = 0, p < .05, r = -.89 \). But although more SIOs thought they would be worst at managing external perceptions (Mdn = 4) compared to investigative tasks (Mdn = 1), this difference was not significant, \( T = 1, p > .05, r = -.33 \). It is noted that even results that were non-significant had \( r \) values (-.55 and -.33) that indicate medium effect sizes. Therefore, in
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support of the hypothesis, results indicate that significantly more SIOs thought they would be best at managing investigative tasks than external perceptions.

Figure 2. Scenarios SIOs perceived themselves to be best and worst at managing
4.4 Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to compare SIOs’ perspectives of capability for managing perceptions and evaluations of others external to the investigation team in relation to investigative tasks that directly relate to case building. The central hypothesis was that SIOs would perceive themselves to be significantly less capable of managing external perceptions and evaluations in comparison to investigative tasks. Analysis provided support to this hypothesis as capability ratings were significantly higher for managing investigative tasks such as boosting team morale (M = 2.40); clarifying roles in officers confused about responsibilities (M = 2.26); and maintaining morale in staff no longer working collaboratively (M = 2.26). Conversely, capability ratings were significantly lower for scenarios such as dealing with the long term impact of the investigation on the community (M = 1.56); managing the media when they were ahead of the investigation (M = 1.65) or blaming SIOs (M = 1.69); and justifying the decision not to investigate the suspect earlier to the Chief (M = 1.68). Overall, results indicated a general trend with SIOs perceiving themselves to be significantly more capable of managing investigative tasks than evaluations from audiences external to the investigation team such as the community, the media, and the Chief.

Although it is not possible to make definitive conclusions about the reason why SIOs perceived investigative tasks to be easier to manage than external perceptions, a factor that divides these two types of scenario is control. As previously noted, SIOs view themselves as having less control over external perceptions than investigative tasks such as managing roles and responsibilities (Crego & Alison, 2004). Although no aspect of a police investigation is completely controllable, managing the perceptions of others is exceedingly challenging, not least because of the numerous audiences that may formally and informally evaluate performance. The perceptions of these audiences can be influenced by numerous factors, not all of which directly relate to an investigation. For example, previous negative experiences with a police force may bias public perceptions of the effectiveness of an investigation. Consequently, as it is not possible to directly control the views of others, perceptions of capability cannot be improved by increasing control in this way.

As previously noted, blame culture further reduces perceptions of control because audience appraisals are subject to hindsight bias and outcome severity (Dekker, 2011). The widespread perception that the service and audiences external to it perpetuate a culture of blame was demonstrated by analysis within Chapter 3. Predisposition toward the view that negative
outcomes result from blameworthy decisions and actions can create additional pressure by failing to objectively consider environmental and organisational factors beyond an individual’s control that may contribute toward outcomes (Elliott, 2005). Blame culture environments encourage evaluations to be biased toward finding individuals culpable because decisions and actions are evaluated in light of the known outcome (Dekker, 2001) making it easier to attribute the outcome to foreseeable and preventable failures (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Thus evaluating judgments and decisions based on severity of outcome rather than the environment in which they were made and the intentions of those who made them reduces control still further.

The finding that SIOs perceive themselves to be less capable of managing external perceptions than investigative tasks has implications for police performance. Firstly, the potential relationship between capability and level of direct control may be interactive with less control leading to lower perceptions of capability which in turn reinforce perceptions of lack of control. This cycle could create additional pressure, particularly in high-profile investigations that attract widespread attention from various audiences. In conjunction with findings from the previous chapter that practitioners’ perceive the organisation to be unsupportive when negative events occur, this may further serve to heighten evaluation pressure. Consequently, the combination of these factors along with salience of potential punishments all has the potential to influence performance and encourage officers to hide mistakes for fear of reprisals.

Secondly, perceiving oneself to be less able to effectively manage external perceptions may influence ability to interact with these audiences and consequently the way audiences perceive police handling of investigations, posing further consequences for the success of an investigation. External audiences play an important role within investigations, both by providing key information that may lead to identification of crucial evidence, and by exerting pressure on agencies to exact formal accountability mechanisms. Being less capable of managing such perceptions may increase the potential for audiences to view performance in a negative light which may make them reluctant to assist with investigations and could increase calls for formal accountability mechanisms to be implemented. Whilst previous research highlights the impact accountability has on performance by altering decision goals (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), present findings suggest the potential for performance to be influenced by additional pressures created as a result of feeling less capable of managing audience’
perceptions and evaluations. Being scrutinised by various audiences internal and external to the service is an inevitable and important aspect of policing. It is vital that policing be transparent, mistakes identified to aid future learning, and acts of wilful negligence punished. The unavoidability of having performance observed and evaluated by audiences may create additional pressure if officers cannot manage audience perceptions effectively.

However, given the importance of investigative tasks to the successful building of a case, it is positive that senior officers perceive themselves to be capable of managing these factors. Indeed, the police service dedicates itself to training officers to develop investigative skills as it is acknowledged that these are vital to the management of an incident. But external perceptions can also influence the success of an investigation and so it is important to ensure officers are equipped with the skills required to manage these aspects of investigation management as well. Within organisations that adopt a blame culture, the most successful way of avoiding blame and punishment would be to evade negative outcomes because outcomes bias appraisals. However, as factors beyond individual control can influence the resolution of an incident, this is not a viable strategy.

The most attainable optimal approach is to ensure judgments and decisions are based on information available, suitability to the situation, and in light of individual and environmental constraints. Performance evaluations should therefore be based on these factors rather than severity of outcome. Evaluations should be guided by the principle that outcome has no bearing on intent; if an act was intentionally illegitimate, dishonest, or negligent it will remain so regardless of whether the outcome was satisfactory or not (Dekker, 2011). Conversely, a negative outcome does not necessarily mean culpability should be assigned to those involved despite the attraction of seeking retribution.

Overall, given the central and prevalent role external perceptions and evaluations play in policing, it is important to ensure that officers perceive themselves to be and actually are capable of managing these perceptions. Although it is not possible to control perceptions of others, it may be possible to improve perceptions of capability by replacing blame culture with just culture. A just culture should facilitate greater control over performance appraisals because evaluations would be based on suitability of decisions and actions in relation to the situation they were made which could increase perceptions of capability. Furthermore, officers may be empowered to act without fear of blame for honest mistakes or factors beyond their direct control. This does not mean completely removing culpability, but making
distinctions between intentional misdemeanours and errors made unknowingly, based on good intentions. It is also important that officers are trained to develop resilience against evaluation pressures to minimise distractions from investigation tasks. Just as officers are trained to manage tasks directly related to case building, it is important to teach skills for managing pressures inherent to the policing environment, including those created by external evaluations and accountability.

4.4.1 Limitations

Whilst this research provides a first step in establishing the difficulty of managing external perceptions in comparison to other investigative problems, it is important to highlight limitations. Firstly, the skill sorting task had a restricted number of categories with SIOs only being able to classify capability levels as ‘fair’, ‘good’ or ‘very good’. They were also restricted in the number of problems they could assign to each category because the original research design sought to create a normal distribution for capability across scenarios. Although this method was useful in encouraging SIOs to prioritise capabilities, the small number of categories restricts the capacity to make subtle distinctions between capability levels. Either expanding categories or using scales would allow greater discriminations to be made, although it is acknowledged that officers may be reluctant to rate performance at lower ends of the scale.

Secondly, the lowest category on the performance scale was defined as ‘fair’ rather than poor, meaning that even when capability to manage a particular scenario was categorised at the lower end of the performance spectrum, ability was still classified as being reasonably competent. For this reason, current analysis does not ascertain whether SIOs perceive themselves to be poor at managing any aspects of an investigation. However, this scale still provides a relative measurement of tasks that SIOs felt more and less capable of managing. Thirdly, capability ratings are subjective as they are based on SIOs’ perspectives rather than those of fellow officers or researchers’ observations of performance. It is possible that differences may arise between perceptions and actual capabilities within real investigations. Thus, caution is recommended in generalising results outside of current settings.

Finally, the questionnaire did not ask SIOs to provide reasons for categorisations, thereby preventing definitive conclusions being drawn about the relationship between control and capability. This presents difficulties for interpreting why SIOs perceived external perceptions
to be more difficult to manage than investigative tasks. Whilst control is likely to play a role in these interpretations, other factors such as complexity may also influence them. The generalizability of findings to other major investigations is limited by inability to determine the extent to which the unique narrative of the vignette influenced ratings. For example, the narrative specifies that opportunities were missed to investigate the suspect earlier which could have influenced capability ratings for scenarios such as justifying the decision not to investigate the suspect earlier. Had previous opportunities not been missed to investigate, SIOs may have felt more capable of justifying decisions to the Chief. Indeed, it is likely that environmental factors influence appraisals of control, capability, complexity and interactions between the three. Yet overall, this research has utilised the knowledge and experiences of several experienced senior officers and so has value in indicating the relative difficulty of managing accountability issues within major investigations.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, current analysis indicates that SIOs perceive themselves to be less capable of managing aspects of major investigation that relate to external perceptions in comparison to those relating more directly to case building. Lack of control over the perceptions of others may be a contributing factor to the pressure accountability creates by reducing personal appraisals of capability. Thus, as accountability pressure increases, the lack of control over evaluations may negatively affect judgments and decisions. This places SIOs in a difficult position given the influential role of external perceptions on the running of an investigation in addition to the reputation of officers and the organisation. Taken in conjunction with findings from Chapter 3, aspects of the stable accountability environment in which policing is conducted may be characterised by a person centred approach that reduces officers’ control and perceived capability of managing evaluations. This may potentially impact on judgments and decisions by influencing emotions, motivational goals and attention focus. Subsequent chapters present a case study that examines these factors in further detail.
5. A METHODOLOGY FOR EXAMINING ACCOUNTABILITY IN CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS

Previous chapters have so far examined police perspectives of the influence accountability has on performance and the relative difficulty of handling external perceptions in comparison to investigative tasks within a high impact incident. Analysis indicates that managing external perceptions and evaluations is one of the most difficult aspects of policing within a critical incident and blame culture can affect the form accountability takes and how it is perceived by employees. Overall, police perceived accountability to be driven by an unsupportive blame culture. This culture has the potential to negatively influence judgments and decisions by increasing regret which can lead to risk aversion (Anderson, 2002), and altering motivational goals which influences attention focus (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Using the policing specialism of negotiation coordination in crisis situations, the following case study examines the impact of accountability on regret, motivational goals and performance quality. This chapter discusses the development of methods used to examine these issues. But first, a brief overview of the role and purpose of negotiation coordination is provided to facilitate understanding of this research.

5.1 The role of negotiation coordination in crisis situations

The term ‘crisis situation’ is used to refer to a variety of policing incidents that can range from hostage barricades, kidnappings, and suicide interventions to other potentially critical incidents (Vecchi, Van Hasselt, & Romano, 2005). One factor they all have in common is that threat is posed to the lives and wellbeing of members of the public. It is the responsibility of police to try to reach as peaceful a resolution as possible with minimal harm to all. Due to level of risk posed, these incidents can attract attention from numerous sources internal and external to the service which may leave those responsible for managing incidents open to potential scrutiny. Management of these incidents follows a command and control (C2) structure based on three levels of command: ‘Gold’ (strategic), ‘Silver’ (operational) and ‘Bronze’ (implementation) (Punch, 2009). The Silver Commander, referred to as the Incident Commander, is responsible for managing the crisis situation as a whole, designing and implementing strategies, requesting and allocating resources, and delegating tasks. This individual is therefore inundated with information and numerous tasks including developing strategies. Successfully managing crisis incidents requires specialized knowledge across a
variety of areas that it would be infeasible for one individual to possess; therefore Incident Commanders have access to specially trained police advisors.

The least lethal method available for achieving the goal of peacefully diffusing the situation is crisis negotiation as this method seeks to encourage subjects to alter behaviour using persuasive communication techniques such as rapport-building rather than use of force. Incident Commanders will therefore often request the assistance of a specialist negotiation advisor referred to as a Negotiator Coordinator to develop negotiation strategy. The advice provided by this specially trained police officer is comprised of identifying negotiation strategy options, formulating judgments about these options and providing information to assist with understanding subjects’ (hostage takers or suicidal individuals) motives or behaviours. This advisor possesses a wealth of negotiation knowledge and experience that far surpasses that of the Incident Commander and so their advice can be integral to developing negotiation strategy.

Accountability research to date has largely focused on the decision maker, ignoring the impact of accountability on judgments and advice quality in advisors. This is despite the increasing trend within organisations to seek advice from ‘knowledge specialists’ that provide unique perspectives and information not already possessed by the decision maker (Phillips, Mannix, Neale, & Gruenfeld, 2004) that can improve decision accuracy (Yaniv, 2004). Advisors possess a wealth of unique knowledge and experience within a specific field that far exceeds other members of the organisation. Given the tendency to defer to the opinions of another when viewed to possess greater knowledge and expertise (Steginga, Pinnock, Gardner, Dunn, & Gardner, 2002), knowledge possessed by advisors places them in a position of authority to influence decisions (Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007). Based on the belief that accountability improves performance, many organisations adopt a system where advisors can be held accountable both formally and informally for advice that contributes toward decisions. Despite the use of advisors for making important decisions within organisations, there is still an absence of research examining whether advisors produce better quality advice when held accountable compared to when exempt from these pressures.

The issue of how accountability may influence advice quality is a particularly pertinent topic within UK policing at present given the high profile IPCC investigation into events leading up to the death of Raoul Moat. At 1.15am on Saturday 10th July 2010, after 6 hours of police negotiations in Rothbury in Northumberland, 37 year old Moat killed himself with a sawn-off
shotgun. This was at the end of an 8 day police manhunt, during which time he had shot his ex-girlfriend, her current partner and a police officer, killing the partner. The IPCC are investigating many aspects of events leading up to Moat’s death, including use of police Tasers and complaints from his family that police prevented them from assisting negotiators to persuade Moat to give himself up. The outcome of this investigation may have wide-ranging consequences for Northumberland Police, not least as it is being resolved within the public forum of the media. As part of this process, the IPCC are evaluating command decisions made and the rationale behind these. Advice contributing toward the decision to reject offers from family members to assist with the negotiation process is also likely to be considered. This is a very real example of how advisors in field settings can find themselves having to account for advice even though they were not responsible for making decisions. Understanding whether accountability impacts on judgments and advice formation within such high stakes environments is an increasingly important issue given the catastrophic impact these events can have on public safety and perceptions of policing.

The remainder of this chapter now focuses on detailing methodologies utilised to investigate these issues rather than discussing studies per se (as in Lyle, 2003). For readers to evaluate both the credibility and generalizability of research findings in an informed manner (Mishler, 1990), it is important to provide a thick, detailed description of the context in which research was developed, methodologies used, procedures and participants along with a rationale (Ponterotto, 2006). This chapter therefore focuses on discussing the development of methodologies and explaining why they were selected. First, an overview is provided of research issues chapters seek to address to allow readers to evaluate the value of methods in relation to research goals.

Chapter 6 examines Negotiator Coordinators’ attitudes toward accountability and policy by asking them how they believe both impact on judgments and decisions. Examining accountability using practitioners’ beliefs provides clearer understanding of their experiences with this mechanism. Whilst Chapter 3 provided an overview of the general accountability environment policing is conducted in, Chapter 6 solely focuses on Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs, highlighting individual differences that occur across these advisors. Chapter 7 examines relationships between accountability perceptions, anticipated regret, advice importance, and the potential influence of risk on these relationships. This focus stems from discussions in Chapter 3 which indicated that lack of organisational support may influence
emotions such as regret. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the impact of changing accountability perceptions on motivational goals for saving lives and self-preservation and whether this influences advice quality. The remainder of this chapter provides a rationale for the use and development of a simulation to address research goals, research procedure, developing a measure of advice quality, and an overview of data analysis methods.

5.2 Simulation: Creating a microworld

The term ‘simulation’ refers to high fidelity replications of complex, dynamic, real life events that measure credibility on the extent experienced decision makers take them seriously and engage as they would in operational settings (Klein & Woods, 1993). Simulations are often used to enhance performance of practitioners because skills learned in simulations may be transferred to applied settings (Ward, Williams, & Hancock, 2006). Using simulation based training (SBT) practitioners such as the police and other emergency services are able to practice making judgments and decisions in environments similar to those faced in the field without putting real lives at risk (Crichton, Flin, & Rattray, 2002). The purpose of such training is to move novices beyond procedurally based thinking toward a situational based style of processing that is adaptive and responsive to events as they unfold and to novel situations (Ross, Phillips, Klein, & Cohn, 2005). These skills are essential for proficient decision making in naturalistic contexts such as those encountered by police officers (Crandall, Klein, & Hoffman, 2006). However, transferability of skills is dependent on the extent simulated environments replicate the complexity of real incidents so that learning transfers to ‘on the job’ performance (Rosen, Salas, Silvestri, Wu, & Lazzara, 2008).

Fidelity, the extent to which a simulation is able to replicate the operational environment, is an important aspect of encouraging practitioners to engage in simulated environments so that they think, feel and behave as they would in real situations. Issenberg and Scalese (2008) distinguish between physical, environmental and psychological fidelity with physical fidelity referring to the accuracy with which a simulation replicates the operational environment. Environmental fidelity refers to the extent the simulation represents visual, motion and other sensory cues that would be present in reality. Finally, psychological fidelity refers to the extent a simulation requires the user to experience the same sensory and cognitive processes for task completion as they would in operational settings.
Issenberg and Scalese (2008) further note that level of fidelity should be based on whether physical or cognitive tasks are under investigation and on the goals of training. Presently, the issue is to examine the impact accountability has on anticipated regret, appraisals of advice importance, motivational goals, and advice quality. These issues are predominantly cognitive and as such require simulations that focus on psychological fidelity. These simulations would therefore need to create the perceptions, emotions and behaviours that occur in real crises (Raybourn, 2006), such as tension, time pressure, risk, uncertainty, frustration and a sense of inadequate information (Borodzicz, 2004). However, because physical fidelity is a secondary consideration it is not necessary for participants to be in an environment that requires physical activity. Instead computer based simulated environments such as those used in microworlds would be suitable.

The term microworld is used to refer to complex computer based simulations that replicate some aspect of reality and allow examination of participant interaction with the simulation (Berndt & Dömer, 1993). Funke (2001) states that all microworlds have three general characteristics in common: complexity, dynamicity, and opaqueness. Complexity arises out of the number of features participants must consider in order to make decisions, or the numerous sometimes conflicting goals that must be traded or prioritised. Also, because microworlds are interactive (participants’ responses to information presented alters feedback received) and allow participants to choose from many possible courses of action, there will be side effects for any given course of action. Microworlds are dynamic because they react to decisions and actions made by participants in real time without participants having control over decision pace. Finally, microworlds are said to be opaque because some aspects of the system are not visible, which means that participants will be required to use previous experiences to make inferences or develop hypotheses.

Throughout the course of engaging with a microworld, participants are presented with numerous different problems as opposed to single, well-defined tasks. Selecting problems or tasks to present to participants can be a useful mechanism for examining specific research questions. For example, complexity, time allocated for completion and content of tasks can be altered to induce stress or emotional responses. To complete tasks, participants will be required to use both previous experience and knowledge as well as what they learn about the hidden structure of the microworld (such as time constraints) to make judgments and decisions and develop contingency plans. Participants must constantly assess the status of the
microworld environment to evaluate the success of their strategies but must also decide when it is appropriate to stop searching and start planning. In doing so they are required to coordinate macrocognition skills such as thinking, planning, problem solving and decision making rather than working on isolated tasks. Berndt and Dörner (1993) state that “to these cognitive demands come the more or less strong emotions that are elicited by success or failure, and by the events in the microworld and their importance…Thus, the subjects have to cope with their own emotions” (p. 178).

The strengths of microworlds for conducting research lie in their ability to produce environments that replicate reality and to present participants with complexities present in field-based research (the strengths of naturalistic paradigms). With microworlds it is also possible to have more experimental control than is present in most naturalistic research because researchers can manipulate the complexity of the environment to some extent and all participants begin at the same base point within the microworld (the strength of experimental paradigms). However, the control afforded still does not match that of experimental research. The nature of the independent (IV) and dependent (DV) variables differs to that of traditional experimental research as IVs are system characteristics (e.g. complexity or feedback structure) as oppose to discrete stimuli, and DVs cannot be easily mapped on to system characteristics to form neat stimulus-response laws. Furthermore, consistency will be compromised as feedback participants receive will depend on judgments, decisions and actions they have made. Thus, although participants start off at the same baseline with identical stimuli, input and stimuli will rapidly alter between participants as they interact. Drawing comparisons between participants therefore becomes increasingly difficult as a result of this compromise between experimental control and realism (Gonzalez, Vanyukov, & Martin, 2005).

Despite methodological drawbacks, simulations that contain some advantageous features of the microworld still represent the best form of methodology for research within this thesis. In using computer based simulations researchers do not have the problem of attempting to gain access to practitioners in naturalistic settings where threat may be presented to the running of the incident and the safety of the researcher. For example, with research focus on crisis situations, any disruptions to the running of an incident could be devastating. Researchers are unlikely to be granted access by the police as their presence may provide a distraction to all parties involved. Also, the occurrence of such incidents cannot be predicted and so even if
A methodology for examining accountability in crisis negotiations

access were granted, knowing when and where to collect data would be infeasible. Additionally, each crisis incident is different and attempting to draw comparisons between judgments and advice provided at each incident would pose difficulties. However, Negotiator Coordinators’ experiences of real crisis situations are invaluable to the development of narratives for simulations ensuring that problems generated are realistic and elicit relevant emotions and cognitions. It is important that content is challenging and contains environmental factors present in naturalistic situations; therefore practitioner involvement in simulation development is valuable for achieving such goals (Zimmerman, Sestokas, & Burns, 2011).

To reconcile difficulties, this research makes use of a tactical decision scenario (TDS) design. A TDS is a simulation comprised of a series of scenarios and dilemmas that require participants to make decisions and take actions that could impact on the behaviour of others (Crichton et al., 2002). The goal of a TDS is to place individuals in a cognitively complex exercise where they are required to provide a detailed description of how they would respond to unfolding complex situations (Zimmerman et al., 2011). It is referred to as low fidelity because information is predetermined and standardised rather than interactive. Whilst it may be argued that this detracts from reality where individuals would be able to interact with their environment and actively seek information (as with microworlds), the narrative of the TDS was developed to minimise this weakness. For example, the information given to participants reflected the type of information they would feasibly have access to in real crisis situations and it was realistic that further advice participants may request would not always be available.

Overall, the strength of a TDS lies in its ability to provide contexts and problems or tasks that are similar to those practitioners would face in reality in terms of complexity and pressures (time constraints, uncertainty, lack of information and control over pace, ill-defined or conflicting goals and stress). It may be argued that a weakness of the TDS methodology is that it is not interactive, but this lack of interaction gives rise to a host of strengths. For example, participants all receive standard information in the same sequence with the same time delays between presentations of new feeds. Participants therefore all engage in exactly the same procedure meaning there is greater consistency and researchers have greater control over the simulation. It is thus possible to draw firmer conclusions than may be drawn with microworlds but still allowing some complexity present in naturalistic settings. Due to consistency in narrative and procedure TDSs may also be conducted on numerous participants.
at once, saving both time and financial cost. Whilst TDSs sacrifice some fidelity possessed by traditional microworlds, they still maintain much of the environmental richness and complexity in addition to allowing researchers greater experimental control. This is a necessary trade-off to make within this research given the novelty of the topic under examination.

5.3 Developing a tactical decision scenario

To develop a TDS that presents tasks and problems reflective of those encountered in real crisis situations it was important to have an understanding of the role of negotiation in crisis incidents, knowledge about the nature of these situations and the type of advice Negotiator Coordinators would be required to give. To develop such knowledge and understanding, the researcher attended a week-long crisis negotiation training course conducted at a police training college based in Kent during May of 2008. This course was a mixture of classroom based learning of basic theories and principles of negotiation along with real-time simulations in a variety of settings to practice skills. Classroom based learning was structured in an open manner so that students could raise questions or share experiences with the rest of the class when pertinent to the lesson. Course lecturers also provided personal examples to illustrate the application of theories and principles to real negotiation contexts.

During this course, it was possible to seek clarification on issues and to engage in in-depth dialogue with students and experienced lecturers to obtain narratives of previous involvement with crisis negotiation. As previously noted, it was an essential requirement that the narrative of the TDS contained stimuli reflective of naturalistic settings to evoke the same macrocognitive skills that would be utilised in formulating advice in real crisis situations. Designing scenarios that encompass realistic stimuli requires the assistance of experienced and expert individuals within the particular domain (Crandall et al., 2006). Thus, in-depth dialogues with experienced lecturers were invaluable to the design of the TDS narrative and to understanding the requirements of these advisors within such incidents. Additional observations of course simulations facilitated understanding of the way crisis simulations run and how they may develop or escalate into increasingly dangerous situations.

Although the negotiation course is taught by Kent Police, trainee negotiators from all over the UK attend, thus training delivered is representative of training that negotiators across the UK receive. The chosen topic for the current TDS was suicide intervention and was selected due
to the substantial focus placed on this form of crisis intervention during the course as a large proportion of negotiator callouts are of this nature. Principles adopted within suicide intervention are similar to those used throughout all crisis negotiation training and parallel those used in business negotiation (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Borg, 2004). What differs from situation to situation are the tactics employed. Due to the high focus within negotiation training and the relatively high deployment to suicide intervention incidents it was likely that most, if not all, participants would have some experience with callouts of this nature.

The TDS was developed in conjunction with the head of the Hostage Negotiation Unit for the MPS who was also a Negotiator Coordinator within this unit. He had over 10 years of negotiation experience both within the UK and internationally. Given his level of experience and links within the police service, particularly within the realm of crisis negotiation, he was able to secure the endorsement of relevant authorities and to facilitate access to negotiator events such as conferences and meetings for participant recruitment. Without his assistance it would have been extremely difficult to gain access to participants as this group of individuals are already overworked and take on the role of negotiator in addition to other policing duties. He was also invaluable to the development of the narrative, script and recording of the TDS and in ensuring that the narrative possessed a high level of realism.

Overall, the TDS was presented to participants in real-time using Microsoft PowerPoint and was comprised of several video and audio clips that played automatically. Slides were not repeated. There were five advice points at which participants were required to provide the advice they would give to an Incident Commander in relation to information presented (see Figure 3 for an example of TDS interface). A within-subjects design using threat to life as the risk manipulation was chosen to examine the impact of risk on perceptions of accountability, anticipated regret, advice importance, motivation (for saving lives and protecting self), advice quality and relationships between these various factors. The risk manipulation involved increasing threat of injury and death to the lives of two female students across the narrative and is presented in Table 7 (see Appendix B for TDS script).

This risk manipulation was chosen because interviews with negotiators and negotiation trainers highlighted the important role threat to life plays within negotiation as the key aim of negotiation is to reduce threat of harm. Additionally, it was felt that level of threat to lives would influence the extent to which participants felt accountable because as previously noted, any death in police custody must be investigated post-incident to establish what occurred. As
part of this investigation all parties directly involved would be required to give an account of their actions. Increasing threat to the lives of the students therefore provided a manipulation for increasing the likelihood that Negotiator Coordinators would be formally held to account. Furthermore, the TDS was designed to increase level of involvement as the simulation advanced because participants were required to provide advice that was increasingly tailored toward the situation as they received more information to assist with developing a mental model. For example, at the start of the TDS, participant involvement was minimal with general advice being requested via telephone in relation to basic information provided. The lack of information was designed to reflect the type of information Negotiator Coordinators frequently receive during initial callouts and to prevent them from developing a detailed mental model of the incident at this stage. As the TDS developed, participants were required to attend the scene and provide specific advice with the potential to directly influence the incident, thereby increasing involvement. These manipulations of risk and involvement as the simulation progresses were measured using a pilot panel, as will be discussed further below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice Point</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Welcome slide, introduces participants to the TDS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Instructions slide, informing participants about how research will be conducted and what will be required from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘Call from Incident Commander, Today – 2.32pm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>Initial telephone call from the Incident Commander introducing himself. Informs Negotiator Coordinator that he’s received a call stating that there are two students dressed in gothic attire sitting on the edge of a roof of a high rise university building. They aren’t causing any damage but he’s worried in case one of them falls. He wants advice about what to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘Arrival at Scene, Today – 3.00pm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Clip of Incident Commander standing on the rooftop but at a distance from the students. Informs Negotiator Coordinator that students are still sitting on the roof edge. An officer has tried speaking to them but they told him to go away. Incident Commander wants students to come down safely and be checked over by paramedics. He asks for a negotiation strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘Negotiation in progress, Today – 3.28pm, Your negotiation team are now engaged’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>A negotiator runs over with a progress update. She says students refuse to communicate with them. The only comment students have made is that they want some water. She isn’t able to authorise this so is asking the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander doesn’t have a problem with water being provided but asks for advice from Negotiator Coordinators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘Negotiating continues, Today – 4.11pm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>A negotiator runs over to report that one of students has slipped or fell from the rooftop. She doesn’t think the other student pushed her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘Ten minutes later, Today – 4.21pm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>Incident Commander approaches the Negotiator Coordinators with information from paramedics. They can see the body but haven’t approached her yet, but it appears as though she is dead. The student fell from roof head first. Incident Commander is irritated and doesn’t think Negotiator Coordinators are helping the situation. He questions Negotiator Coordinators’ ability to provide advice and wants to know what to do next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Information – ‘One hour later, Today – 5.21pm, One student is still on roof and refuses to come down. The two negotiators are still with her. The Incident Commander approaches you and asks for your advice.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Incident Commander introduces the deceased student’s sister who is distressed at the death of her sister. She pleads with Negotiator Coordinators to allow her to go on to the roof and speak to the remaining student to try to convince her to come down. Incident Commander bluntly asks whether Negotiator Coordinators will use the sister as an intermediary or not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Procedure

5.4.1 Participants

Seventy-five police officers (56 male) took part in this research, with a success rate of 100%. Police officers were drawn from 17 police services across the British Isles, including England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, The Isle of Man and Jersey. They were selected to participate using a method of availability sampling which was the most appropriate method to use given the difficulty in gaining access to these specialised advisors. Of the 74 participants providing details of rank, 39% (29) were Sergeants, 32% (24) were Inspectors, 16% (12) were Chief Inspectors, 11% (8) were Superintendents or above, and 1% (1) was a Constable. Number of years in service ranged from 6.5 years to 34 years with a mean and median of 21 (SD = 5.63) years. Number of years negotiation experience ranged from 3 months to 14 years, with a mean and median of 4.5 (SD = 3.26) and 4 years respectively.

5.4.2 Pilot study

Before conducting research with participants the study was piloted with a panel of 3 police officers. This pilot study was conducted to test the risk manipulation, perceptions of involvement and whether tailoring of advice increased across the TDS, the narrative possessed psychological fidelity, and rating scales would be interpreted as intended. This group consisted of officers from Gwent, Kent and West Mercia police services with between 17 and 23 (X = 19.66) years policing experience and 5 and 8 (X = 6.66) years negotiation experience; 2 were Chief Inspectors and 1 was a Detective Chief Inspector. The pilot panel viewed and responded to the TDS in isolation using the same method subsequently used by participants. Post-TDS completion they were interviewed to check the effectiveness of the risk manipulation, perceptions of increasing involvement, and TDS design.

Feedback from panel members supported the notion that the narrative was realistic and created increased accountability pressure, particularly the death of the student (advice point four) and the unsupportive attitude of the Incident Commander (advice point five), which highlighted the potential for post-incident scrutiny. They also felt that level of involvement increased as a result of being required to provide information that was increasingly specific to the situation as the incident progressed and length of time they had been involved with the incident. Interpretations of rating scales were also consistent with definitions discussed in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.
Overall, the pilot panel’s perceptions of risk increased across advice points as the scenario developed. At the initial advice point, brief information provided did not indicate that subjects intended to cause harm to themselves or others and so risk was interpreted as being low. However, across advice points two and three, perceptions of risk increased as a result of both subjects refusing to communicate; within negotiation training officers are taught that lack of engagement is a cue that subjects may intend to cause themselves harm. As the student death at advice point four indicated that subjects’ motivations had been to cause personal harm, this further increased risk to the remaining student. At the final advice point, continued lack of communication with the remaining student served to further increase risk perceptions. Additionally, the unsupportive and questioning nature of the Incident Commander at this point added pressure by drawing attention to the notion that external audiences may negatively appraise advice provided. Thus, the pilot panel felt the risk manipulation was successful in increasing perceptions of threat to life and personal reputation as the incident progressed.

It is also relevant to note that despite perceptions of risk increasing across the scenario, uncertainty remained relatively high but the origins of this uncertainty altered. Uncertainty refers to instances where the outcome or the probability of achieving a particular outcome is unknown (Luce & Raiffa, 1957) and is often discussed in relation to risk because of the influence one can have over the other. Uncertainty can either arise as a result of some unknown feature in the state of the world (diagnostic uncertainty) or being unsure about the consequences of actions (outcome uncertainty) (Kirschenbaum, 2011). The pilot panel noted that at advice point one uncertainty related to the type of incident faced (diagnostic uncertainty) as the limited information provided made it difficult to develop a situational model that would allow them to forecast potential outcomes of advice (outcome uncertainty). Across advice points two and three, diagnostic and outcome uncertainty remained high in relation to subjects’ motivations as lack of engagement prevented further information being gathered. After the death in police custody at advice point four, diagnostic uncertainty was reduced as subjects’ motivations became clearer through this change in situation. There was also greater certainty that an IPCC investigation would take place post-incident which led to outcome uncertainty over how advice would be evaluated by others. Thus, although the pilot panel perceived risk to increase, overall perceptions of uncertainty remained relatively constant, but the origins of this uncertainty altered.
5.4.3 Procedure

To capture Negotiator Coordinators’ responses to the TDS, 10KV was used. As a detailed discussion of this electronic focus group debriefing tool was provided in Chapter 3, details are not repeated (see section 3.1.3). However, in a departure from previous use of 10KV, current research used this tool to record responses rather than formulate discussions between practitioners. This tool was selected for use because responses are safely stored directly to a hard drive which prevents them from being lost. When participants fill in paper forms there is always a possibility they will be mislaid or participants forget to return them to researchers. There can also be difficulties in deciphering handwriting leading to errors in interpretation. But as responses were typed by participants there was no need for transcription, saving time and preventing misinterpretation. Whilst advice is provided verbally in real crisis situations, 10KV allows advice to be constructed as it would within naturalistic contexts. Thus, difference mainly lies in the method of delivery. Additionally, the use of 10KV coupled with Microsoft PowerPoint and a projector to play the TDS meant that several participants could take part at once saving both time and money.

Each TDS was conducted on groups of between 8 and 12 participants at a time using a conference room equipped with tables and a presentation screen. Laptop computers were set out on tables and each one was linked to a central laptop and hub that facilitated the session. These laptop computers networked together using 10KV software presented the means through which participants were able to respond at each of the 5 advice points. When participants entered the conference room they were asked to take a seat in front of a laptop. They were then introduced to the 3 researchers and verbally briefed about the purpose of this study. At this stage they were then informed that participation was voluntary, they had the right to withdraw consent at any time, responses obtained were confidential, and that participation was completely anonymous (see Appendix C for verbal briefing sheet). Participants were verbally instructed about how the research would be conducted in addition to being given an information sheet (see Appendix D) and asked to fill out a written consent form (see Appendix E). To allow participants the opportunity to withdraw data at a later date, they were asked to provide a unique identifier that could be a series of letters, numbers or a combination. Participants were instructed to email researchers quoting this reference number should they wish to withdraw data.
After completing the consent form, participants provided demographic details including rank, gender, number of years in service, number of years negotiator experience, and police service within which they were currently employed. Respondents were instructed that they would be playing the role of a Negotiator Coordinator. The TDS was then played via the overhead projector and speakers and participants were instructed to provide advice at 5 advice points. At each point participants were also asked to provide ratings on a 10-point scale (where 1 = not at all and 10 = a great deal) for the following: 1) How accountable do you think you will be held for advice you have given?; 2) How important is the advice you gave to the successful resolution of the incident?; 3) How much regret do you anticipate feeling if the incident reaches a negative resolution?; 4) How much was your advice motivated by the desire to save lives?; and 5) How much was your advice motivated by the desire to protect yourself?

Although the scenario was not truly interactive as actors did not respond to advice given by participants and advice was given via typed messages as opposed to verbally, participants were provided with sufficient information upon which to act to overcome this. For example, within advice points enough information was given so that participants could form an impression of the situation and were aware of what issues the Incident Commander was asking for advice in relation to. Once the TDS had finished, participants were asked to provide responses to the following accountability questions: 1) How do you think accountability impacts on your judgments and decisions?; 2) In your opinion, what is the purpose of policy?; 3) How do you think policy may influence your judgments and decisions?

When these questions were completed participants were thanked for their time and provided with a group debrief of the simulation by a highly trained Negotiator Coordinator to ensure their well-being was maintained and to seek feedback about the TDS design. Participants noted that the design was successful in increasing perception of risk as the incident progressed. It is interesting to note that whilst participants acknowledged being uncertain about the type of incident they faced at the initial advice point due to lack of information, there was disparity in terms of how this uncertainty was perceived. Despite little indication of risk at this initial stage, some had already forecast the potential for the incident to progress to a worst case scenario whilst others saw the incident as being relatively benign. This highlights the potential for individual differences in interpretation of uncertainty. Finally, participants were given the gold standard of an expert panel of Negotiator Coordinators as to how they would respond to the TDS. Participants were informed before taking part in research that they...
would have the opportunity to compare performance to that of an expert group presenting a learning opportunity and an added motivation to invest cognitive effort (Crichton & Flin, 2001).

Overall, responses to the post-TDS accountability questions are used to establish attitudes to accountability and policy in Chapter 6. Ratings of personal accountability are used in Chapter 7 along with advice importance, and anticipated regret to examine relationships between these variables. Finally, ratings of personal accountability are used in Chapter 8 to establish whether perceptions of personal accountability have any impact on motivational goals or advice quality.

5.5 Gold standard response

To provide participants with a learning opportunity and motivation to take part in this TDS, and to provide a standard to which participant advice could be compared for developing advice quality scores, a gold standard response was required. Although this research is concerned with examining quality of judgment and advice rather than quality of decisions, there is a lack of literature that provides information about measuring advice quality. Advice formation may be similar to earlier stages of decision making where individuals form judgments; however differences arise because making decisions requires options to be selected and put into action (Vohs et al., 2008). Conversely, with advice formation an advisor identifies options, formulates judgments about these options (including judging the superiority of one option over others), yet they are not required to put a chosen option into action.

A good decision can be defined as one that satisfies a definitive requirement, for example maximizing an expected utility (Edwards, Kiss, Majone, & Toda, 1984). However, such a definition ignores the notion that other factors beyond the control of a decision maker can impact on the success of a decision outcome. As Elliott (2005) found in his study of military commanders, very few of the outcomes observed were not considered to be affected by factors aside from the decision made. In evaluating a decision based on outcome, problems arise because “a good decision cannot guarantee a good outcome. All real decisions are made under uncertainty. A decision is therefore a bet, and evaluating it as good must depend on the stakes and the odds, not on the outcome” (Edwards, 1984, p. 7). When judging quality of advice, further problems arise as strictly speaking there are no outcomes on which to compare
advice quality because advisors are not responsible for making and putting choices into action.

In line with the just culture approach (Dekker, 2011), any measurement of advice quality must therefore consider the situation in which advice was provided and the information available when that advice was formulated. As Borodzicz (2004) notes, it is much more difficult to gauge whether judgments and decisions were right or wrong within the context they were made than it would be to merely appraise them in terms of outcome. However, the use of an expert panel represents a method for assessing the quality of officers’ advice whilst still taking into account the context in which it was constructed. The concept of comparing officers’ decisions to those of one or more experts is not new to the police as it is the method used for assessing performance in operational decision games (Stewart, 1998). Overall, instead of measuring advice quality in terms of outcome, it can be compared to advice provided by a panel of experts that have constructed advice under the same conditions as participants. Furthermore, having a panel instead of just one expert ensures the standard to which participants are compared is not the idiosyncratic opinion of one individual but represents a course that several ‘experts’ have reached consensus on. But using an expert panel as the benchmark standard for participant comparison raises two questions: What constitutes expertise? How can an expert response be collated?

5.5.1 Defining expertise

Numerous methods to date have assumed the term ‘expert’ is synonymous with the concept of a proficient decision maker (Orasanu, Martin, & Davidson, 2001; Elliott, 2005). Within the expertise literature it is generally agreed that it takes 10 or more years to develop expertise in any given field (Klein et al., 1986; Elliott, 2005). However, it should be noted that the mere accumulation of experience is not sufficient to develop expertise as it is important to have feedback that is accurate, diagnostic and timely to allow people to learn (Shanteau & Stewart, 1992). Also, in policing contexts such as crisis incidents where situations and techniques may alter over time, to be classed as an expert individuals would need to still be operationally active in the role of Negotiator Coordinator to ensure that skills are up-to-date and that they still receive regular feedback with regard to the accuracy of advice for improving the situation.
Quantity of experience in terms of years is an unsuitable benchmark to use alone for selecting experts because it ignores the quality of this experience. For example, a Negotiator Coordinator in a remote, rural area of the UK with 4 years’ experience may have less practical experience and skill development than a Negotiator Coordinator with 2 years’ experience working in the Hostage Negotiation Unit at the MPS in London which is in frequent receipt of negotiator callouts. It would seem that the ability to regularly test skills and receive effective and timely feedback is an invaluable component of developing expertise. As Shanteau, Weiss, Thomas, and Pounds (2002) state “at best experience is an uncertain predictor of degree of expertise” (p. 254).

Other predictors of expertise have been developed including that of social acclamation which refers to a process of asking other professionals within a domain to identify individuals whom they consider to be expert within that domain (Shanteau, 1992). Given that fellow professionals possess knowledge within the target domain, they are more likely to be better at gauging individuals that excel above all others in that field irrespective of number of years’ experience. However, whilst it is unlikely that many professionals would falsely identify the same individual as an expert, there is still the possibility that responses may be influenced by the ‘popularity effect’ (Shanteau et al., 2002). Nevertheless, Shanteau (1988) states that this represents the best starting point he has come across in identifying experts.

Thus, through this process of social acclamation, numerous Negotiator Coordinators were asked to identify individuals they considered possessed expertise in the field of negotiation coordination. Those individuals identified most frequently by colleagues were contacted and further information was sought with relation to whether they were still operationally active on a regular basis, and how many years’ experience they had in negotiation. It was part of the criteria that prospective experts were still regularly operationally active and that they had at least 10 years’ experience. Thus, criteria for becoming a member of the expert panel were threefold: identification using social acclamation, regular operational activity to practice skills and remain up-to-date, and over 10 years of experience for breadth of knowledge and longevity in role.

5.5.2 Demographics of expert panel

Using this process of expert identification, 5 experts (1 female) were selected from the MPS and agreed to take part in the expert panel. Number of years policing experience ranged from
24 to 30 (M = 28, SD = 1.6) years and negotiation experience from 10 to 15 (M = 13, SD = 1.2) years. Three of the expert panel were Superintendents and 2 were Chief Superintendents. It should be noted that the rank of the panel is higher overall than that of the participant group. However, negotiation is one of the few areas of policing where rank is of little importance because it is not concerned with investigative principles but with communication, thus role is what matters. Each of the 5 experts had negotiated in numerous domestic suicide situations similar to the TDS narrative. Further, they have performed as international crisis negotiators on behalf of UK policing in support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, assisting in cases where British citizens have been kidnapped or abducted abroad. To ensure consistency, this expert panel completed the TDS using the same procedure detailed above for participants. The identities of the experts were kept anonymous, even from one another so that this did not affect their willingness to provide advice.

5.5.3 Collating an expert response

Experts are not immune from making mistakes, but having a panel and using a consensus method allows these to be minimised. However, the ability to access a panel of 5 busy experts in one location at the same time was infeasible. Thus, a Delphi method was chosen to develop a gold standard response to the suicide intervention TDS. This technique was originally developed by the RAND Corporation in California as part of a military defence project to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts using a series of questionnaire rounds (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). Helmer and Rescher (1959) justified the scientific use of expert opinion in inexact sciences where reasoning is often informal and in part based on intuitively perceived facts and implications. Later developments of this technique have removed the restriction of consensus such that the tool is now defined as “a social research technique whose aim is to obtain a reliable group opinion using a group of experts” (Landeta, 2006, p. 468).

The Delphi method is a repetitive process in which experts are consulted at least twice on the same question to allow them to reconsider responses in relation to those of other expert group members. Whilst in the second round experts are able to view one another’s responses they are unable to attribute them to individuals. All responses are received directly by the group coordinator who, in the first stage, examines them to highlight where consensus and disagreement exists. In the second stage, these integrated responses are then returned to expert
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Panel members to reappraise in an attempt to reach an agreement in response to questions posed. This second stage can be repeated again to refine the group response.

The pros of this technique in comparison to other group techniques are that as group members complete all stages separately without any form of direct interaction, there is a reduction in many undesirable psychological effects such as inhibition and dominant personalities (Landeta, 2006). As experts complete the first stage in isolation from other expert responses, processes such as groupthink are minimised. The existence of a group coordinator to integrate responses and instigate repeated rounds of the technique improves the ability of research to obtain a reliable group opinion. However, numerous methodological criticisms have also been levelled at this technique including deciding who to use as experts and the biases that each may have (Linstone & Turoff, 1975), the ability of a consensus approach to reach the truth (Sackman, 1974), the inability of expert group members to personally interact in an informal focus group format (Milkovich, Annoni & Mahoney, 1972), and the difficulty in reviewing the method’s accuracy (Becker & Bakal, 1970).

Despite these criticisms, the Delphi technique was still utilised for the following reasons. Experts were selected using robust criteria as detailed in the previous section and 5 experts were used to minimise the impact of individual idiosyncrasies. Such individuals were deemed to have obtained significant varied experience within negotiation to consider them ‘expert’. Whilst consensus methods may be criticised in terms of their ability to reach the truth, they do allow for the development of a group agreement. Negotiation is not an exact science and so definitive truths in terms of which discrete pieces of advice to dispense in any given negotiation scenario do not exist. Instead, the context in which advice is provided is essential in evaluating advice quality. Whilst there are benefits to engaging in focus group discussions, it was not possible to have all 5 experts together in the same location to facilitate a discussion and this would also have removed the element of anonymity. Even with its limitations, the Delphi technique represents the most suitable approach to developing a gold standard for this research as it allows group consensus to be established in relation to courses of advice expert Negotiator Coordinators would advocate providing in relation to information presented within the TDS.

It is noted that experts can be reticent about engaging in the Delphi technique as it is time consuming, repetitive and there are often long delays between responding and receiving feedback (Landeta, 2006). However, experts were briefed about research purposes and told
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what the methodology would entail before seeking consent. The topic of the research was one that was directly relevant to this group and so they were motivated to take part provided they received a copy of findings in the form of a report. Overall, whilst there are methodological pitfalls to the Delphi technique, it represents the most suitable tool for obtaining a gold standard response within this research.

5.5.4 Delphi procedure

A three-round Delphi method was used to create a gold response. For the first round, the expert panel viewed and responded to the TDS in isolation using the same method used by participants. They were additionally asked to provide feedback verbally about the risk manipulation and psychological fidelity of the TDS, and whether they felt anything needed to be altered. The panel were satisfied with the TDS and that the risk manipulation was appropriate and effective. As experts engaged in this first round using the same method as subsequently used by participants, responses were subject to the same environmental, emotional and cognitive influences as participants. This provided a level of consistency between participants and experts that is an important aspect of drawing comparisons between groups within an experimental paradigm.

For the second round of the Delphi, the researcher acted as group coordinator integrating responses from each expert to highlight similarities and differences. This document was returned to experts to reappraise their responses in relation to the rest of the panel so that an agreement could be reached. This second stage of the Delphi provided experts with an opportunity to reflect on advice they had provided without environmental, emotional and cognitive pressures they may have felt within the TDS. A gold standard is supposed to represent the best possible course of advice and so it was important to allow experts to reflect in a context free from environmental or emotional pressures, where they could be objective but still with the knowledge of constraints that had been present originally.

Consensus was reached for all advice points except the third where the expert panel was split with regard to whether or not the Incident Commander should be advised to provide water to the two students on the rooftop. This discrepancy was fed back to the expert panel again for a third round of the Delphi exercise but experts were still unable to reach a consensus with regard to this advice point. Advice point three was therefore identified as being ‘wicked’ because even a panel of experts were unable to reach a consensual agreement over what
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course of advice would be optimal. Rittel (1972) coined the term ‘wicked’ to refer to problems that are ill-defined and where it is difficult to arrive at a solution because there is no clear right or wrong answer and no way to know what the consequences of an option will be until it is put into action. It is further noted that the police service does not provide guidance on this issue and so Negotiator Coordinators would have to provide advice based solely on their own experience-driven perspectives. Due to an inability to reach a consensus at this advice point, it has been removed from the analysis in relation to assessing quality of advice in Chapter 8.

5.6 Measuring advice quality

To allow comparisons to be drawn, both participant and gold standard responses given at each of the four remaining advice points were broken down into advice units with each unit representing a different point or piece of information provided. For example, “Risk assessment to identify and mitigate potential harm to the two students, the public and officers” and “Isolate – ensure that as far as possible the negotiator(s) are the only people the two students can speak to”. Next, participant responses were compared to the gold standard to quantify similarities and differences. A process of inter-rater reliability was conducted using a second researcher from the University of Liverpool to compare advice quality ratings across 40% of the dataset. Pearson’s correlation statistics show strong significant positive correlations across the four advice points (\(r = .79, p < .001\); \(r = .75, p < .001\); \(r = .74, p < .001\); \(r = .81, p < .001\) respectively) indicating high consistency between raters. Following a method advocated by McGraw and Wong (1996), a two-way mixed model interclass correlation was conducted to calculate absolute agreement between raters. Significant correlations were found between raters at advice point one (\(R = .82, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI: .53, .92})\); advice point two (\(R = .79, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI: .52, .90})\); advice point four (\(R = .67, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI: -.02, .87})\); and advice point five (\(R = .73, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI: -.19, .92})\). This indicates an acceptable level of absolute agreement between raters across advice points.

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8 there are two aspects to advice quality: relevance and suitability. To take into account the proportion of advice units officers provided that did not match the gold panel, the number of pieces of their advice that matched the gold standard was converted into a percentage to create relevance scores. The suitability score is the number of pieces of the gold standard that are contained in officers’ advice. The number of pieces of advice officers provided in total for each advice point was also included in analysis. This
allows a distinction to be made between advice qualities in terms of how much advice participants provided, how much of it was suitable (optimal) and the proportion that was relevant.

5.7 Analysis

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 use a variety of statistical analyses to examine accountability, motivation and advice quality. For example, a combination of correlations, ANOVAs and regressions are used to examine factors that influence perceptions of accountability and the relationship between accountability, motivational goals and advice quality. Tests were conducted to ensure that data met the relevant parametric assumptions for each form of statistical analysis used and where assumptions were violated, the appropriate corrections were made. For example, most of the variables violated the normality assumption. Therefore, where correlations have been conducted the non-parametric Spearman’s statistic has been reported rather than Pearson’s.

For both one-way and repeated ANOVAs, the F-statistic can be quite robust to violations of normality when group sizes are equal (Donaldson, 1968). Where group sizes are not equal, the F-statistic is influenced by skew which can affect error rate (Wilcox, 2005). Given that sample sizes within this research were equal, the violation of the normality assumption was not problematic for conducting ANOVAs. For one-way ANOVAs, the F-statistic is also fairly robust in terms of error rate if data violates the homogeneity of variance assumption when sample sizes are equal. Where larger variance exists in the larger sample size group than the smaller sample size group, the resulting F-ratio tends to be conservative. Conversely, where smaller variance exists in the larger sample size group, the resulting F-ratio tends to be liberal (Glass, Peckham, & Sanders, 1972). But again, given the equal sample sizes, any violations to homogeneity of variance did not unduly affect the F-ratio.

For repeated measures ANOVAs, where the additional assumption of sphericity (the assumption that the level of dependence between experimental conditions is equal) was violated, multivariate tests were reported. The Greenhouse-Geisser correction was adopted when its estimated value fell below 0.75. However, this correction is said to be too conservative when values fall above 0.75, such that too many false null-hypotheses fail to be rejected. Thus, where the Greenhouse-Geisser correction value fell above 0.75 the more liberal Huynh-Feldt correction was used in line with recommendations made by Girden
(1992). Furthermore, the method of post hoc analysis used for both forms of ANOVA was the Bonferroni correction. This method was selected over other forms because it controls the familywise error rate and may be used when conditions are not independent, as with repeated measures designs. Although controlling for this Type I error means compromising statistical power which can inflate the Type II error rate, it possesses more power than other conservative tests such as Tukey’s range when number of comparisons are small (Field, 2009).

For the regression analysis, both linear and quadratic regression statistics were produced to examine whether a relationship existed between accountability and advice quality across advice points, and whether such relationships were linear or curvilinear. To compute the quadratic equation, the independent variable (perception of personal accountability) was squared and this squared variable was entered into the model as a second independent variable to produce curvilinear analysis. Assumptions of this analysis were met and so corrections were not required.

But before conducting qualitative analysis, the following chapter qualitatively analyses Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about the impact accountability and policy have on performance, highlighting similarities and differences between advisors in relation to these beliefs.
6. EXAMINING NEGOTIATOR COORDINATORS’ BELIEFS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY AND POLICY

Analysis of police perspectives in Chapter 3 indicated that the form accountability mechanisms take are influenced by a culture of blame that has the potential to impact on judgments and decisions by altering internal factors such as regret, motivational goals and attention focus. This chapter advances these findings by identifying differences in Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about the influence accountability has on judgments and decisions and their use of policy when forming judgements and decisions. Whereas Chapter 3 provided a general overview of accountability in policing, this chapter directs officers’ responses toward particular questions that seek to clarify relationships. This research highlights the potential link between expectations of the influence accountability has on performance with judgment and decision strategies used within an incident. But in order to understand the value of this research it is necessary to clarify the role of advice within decision making.

6.1.1 The role of advice in decision making

Despite the vast body of research examining accountability and decision making, little focus has been directed to advice formation which is surprising given the widespread use of advisors in organisational settings and their influence over decisions. The increasing trend within organisations to seek advice from ‘knowledge specialists’ providing unique information and perspectives not already possessed by the decision maker (Phillips et al., 2004) stems from the acknowledgement that this advice can improve decision confidence (Van Swol & Sniezek, 2005) and accuracy (Yaniv, 2004). Indeed, within crisis situations Negotiator Coordinators are requested to provide advice because the Incident Commander recognises that they possess far greater negotiation knowledge and experience which is valuable for strategy development. Consequently, negotiation advisors can play an influential role as decision makers tend to defer to the opinions of those with greater knowledge and expertise (Steginga et al., 2002). Thus, the unique knowledge and experience held by Negotiator Coordinators places them in a position of authority to influence negotiation decisions (Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007).
Given the central role of accountability in policing for improving performance and eliciting the support of external stakeholders, all police practitioners are responsible and have the potential to be held accountable for conduct regardless of rank, role or specialism. Whilst advisors are not responsible for decisions, they are responsible for advice and can be held to account for this advice. They therefore provide additional value in sharing accountability which allows decision makers to reduce evaluation pressure felt (Yaniv, 2004). Advice provided is comprised of identifying viable options for negotiation strategies, formulating judgments about options, and providing information to assist the Incident Commander with understanding subjects’ motivations. To this end, advisors are mainly responsible for judgments rather than decisions, but both utilise similar underlying cognitive processes such as information processing and identifying and evaluating options (Montgomery, 2005). The main difference is that decisions require commitment to an option whilst judgments can be valid end-states without commitment (Yates, 2001). Accordingly, whilst negotiation advisors are responsible for giving judgments, the Incident Commander is responsible for deciding whether to implement them.

Due to threat posed to life in crisis situations, Negotiator Coordinators must ensure advice is of the highest standard so that strategies implemented are those most suitable for the situation. The environment in which advice is formulated reflects contexts described and studied within NDM, characterised by: ill-structured problems (subjects’ motivations can be unclear); uncertain dynamic environments (intelligence can be patchy); shifting ill-defined or competing goals (demands of subjects and other parties can alter and conflict); multiple-event feedback loops (conflicting information from various sources); time constraints (pressures to reach a successful resolution quickly, subject’ demands); high stakes (lives at risk), multiple players (subjects, hostages, organisation, media, public etc.); and organisational norms and goals that require balancing with personal choice (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Consequences of making mistakes in such high-impact, highly charged situations can be devastating, both for lives involved and personal reputation of police officers. Consequently, understanding the impact of accountability on advice formation is an important aspect of examining judgment and decision making within crisis incidents.
6.1.2 Accountability beliefs and use of policy

Overall, this chapter focuses on Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about accountability, the purpose and use of policy, and potential relationships between them. Defining the term ‘belief’ can be difficult because numerous definitions exist and it is often used without reference to specific definitions (McLeod & McLeod, 2002). For example, although beliefs are stable across situations they can be conscious or subconscious (Leatham, 2006), held by an individual or group (Pehkonen & Pietilä, 2003), seen as subjective knowledge or judgment that develops through experience (Pehkonen & Pietilä, 2003), and are linked with emotions (Speer, 2005). Within this context, the term ‘belief’ refers to a subjective judgment negotiation advisors possess with regard to the influence accountability and policy has on judgments and decisions. These stable beliefs exist across situations influencing expectations about how performance is affected. Given that expectations are able to influence the focus of attention toward certain features of a situation (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001), it is possible that accountability beliefs may alter the way advisors engage with a situation.

The focus on policy within this chapter stems from analysis of police perspectives in Chapter 3 which indicated that blame culture and lack of support within policing could increase risk aversion by encouraging motivation for self-preservation. Research indicates that risk aversion can manifest itself through lack of creativity or action (Anderson, 2002) and conformity to audience views in an attempt to avoid negative appraisals (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Organisational policies consist of guiding principles that establish the direction of an organisation, thereby indicating its views and stance on particular issues (Anderson, 2005). Policies shape judgments and decisions by identifying courses of action that employees may take (Reason, 2000). Making judgments and decisions that correspond to policy can serve as a method of conforming to organisational views in an attempt to increase support (Wallis & Gregory, 2009). Conformity strategies are more likely to be adopted when individuals are motivated by self-preservation over accuracy (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). It is therefore possible that advisors may conform to organisational policy if driven by the motivation for self-preservation, a goal more likely to be elicited when the organisation is viewed to be unsupportive and blaming (Dekker, 2011).
Organisational policies can provide valuable support for officers when formulating judgments and decisions as they usually evolve through a process of learning from unsatisfactory outcomes. Policy creation typically seeks to avoid or reduce negative effects identified or to obtain a positive benefit, but conformity to policy regardless of situation is an inappropriate strategy. Within any organisation, policy development must balance generality of guidance to transcend situations with specificity for ensuring guidance is adequate for a particular situation (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The idea of balancing generality and specificity is not new but reflects a concern plaguing literature on personality assessment, that of bandwidth fidelity (Cronbach & Gleser, 1965). Bandwidth fidelity refers to the assessment of gains and losses in analytical and predictive power that occur from using broad-band versus narrow-band assessment. As has been the case with the bandwidth fidelity dilemma, policy makers are required to balance generality and specificity in order to facilitate the most successful guidance.

Policing environments are often dynamic which makes it difficult for policies to be general enough to cover all contingencies whilst remaining specific enough to provide adequate guidance within a particular incident. Furthermore, not all policies develop through a learning process. For example, Operation Kratos is the code word used by SO13 (anti-terrorist branch of the Metropolitan Police Service) to refer to policies that relate to ‘shoot to kill’ tactics used for suspected terrorists and suicide bombers. These tactics were developed shortly after the September 11th attacks and were first activated on the 7th July 2005. Kratos has only been exercised once, in the mistaken shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes on the 22nd July 2005. Although these policies were developed in consultation with Israeli and Sri Lankan law enforcement agencies, they were not developed in the environment they were subsequently used. This may, in part, explain why Kratos was only implemented once and has since been abandoned.

Thus, existing policies may not be suitable for all situations, particularly if novel. Strategies used to formulate judgments and decisions should be flexible, being guided by accuracy which will entail the use of knowledge and experience in addition to policy (Lipshitz et al., 2001). Advice formation can be considered as residing along a continuum in terms of the extent it is driven by

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4 Jean Charles de Menezes was a Brazilian National shot dead by Metropolitan police at Stockwell Tube Station in London, on the 22nd July 2005 after being mistakenly identified as a suicide bomber about to explode a device on the London Underground. The death of de Menezes sparked a public debate over the use of a ‘shoot to kill’ policy known as Operation Kratos which had been introduced for use with suspected terrorists and suicide bombers.
pre-existing organisational policy or knowledge and experience. Within crisis situations, optimal advice is likely to be developed using flexible strategies driven by the goal of accuracy to save lives. But as the following analysis of Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs will indicate, accountability beliefs may alter this goal.

Overall, this chapter will identify differences that occur in accountability beliefs and the potential of such beliefs to influence motivational goals and use of policy during advice formation. Analysis is not driven by hypotheses but seeks to identify potential relationships to expand on conclusions drawn in previous chapters and contribute to subsequent hypothesis development.
6.2 Method

Chapter 5 provided a detailed discussion of methodological approaches taken; therefore only brief details of demographics and analysis methodology are given in this section.

6.2.1 Participants

Due to time restrictions, only 51 (39 male) of the 75 Negotiator Coordinators completed the post-TDS questionnaire. Length of service ranged from 9.75 to 34 years, with mean and median of 20.04 (SD = 5.29) and 20 years respectively. Negotiation experience ranged from 6 months to 14 years, with a mean and median of 4.33 (SD = 3.22) and 3.5 years respectively. The rank of officers ranged from Sergeant to Chief Superintendent.

6.2.2 Procedure

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of 10KV and thematic analysis; readers are redirected to sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 for a detailed description of this tool and method. Thematic analysis followed the same realist method, examining how individuals made sense of their reality using perceptions of accountability and policy. Overall, approximately 5013 words and 201 comments were generated in response to the post-TDS questionnaire with an average comment length of 25 words. Responses to the question ‘How do you think accountability impacts on your judgments and decisions?’ fell into 2 belief groups: positive impact and negative impact. Response to the question ‘In your opinion, what is the purpose of policy?’ fell into 2 belief groups: policy as guidance and as a tool for justification. Response to the question ‘How do you think policy may influence your judgments and decisions?’ fell into 2 belief groups: supportive framework and constraint.
6.3 Results

This results section firstly presents analysis of Negotiator Coordinators beliefs about the influence of accountability, followed by beliefs about the purpose and influence of policy on judgments and decisions.

6.3.1 Accountability beliefs

Responses to the question of how accountability influenced judgments and decisions were separated into two main belief groups, indicating the impact of this social mechanism may not be uniform across all advisors. Overall, 58.83% (30) of participants believed accountability could have a negative impact on judgments and decisions; 29.41% (15) thought it had a positive impact; and 11.76% (6) could not be categorised. Discussions below highlight the potential consequences of each belief on performance.

Positive impact

This group of Negotiator Coordinators believed that accountability encouraged them to consider and reflect on the situation and information available carefully before forming judgments. Accountability was viewed to be a necessary feature of the organisation leading to increased focus on providing optimal advice. Given the potential threat posed to lives within crisis situations, these advisors believed it was important to ensure the influence of judgments and information on the situation had been carefully considered before being provided. Thus, in addition to the gravity of the situation, accountability was viewed as a necessary factor for encouraging investment of cognitive effort. Although it is uncertain why differences arose in accountability beliefs, the view that accountability is a necessary mechanism for improving performance suggests these advisors have had positive experiences with accountability mechanisms.

This view was more closely aligned to the notion that evaluation mechanisms are fair and legitimate rather than unsupportive and blame seeking. Consequently, the attention focus of these individuals may be less likely to be distracted from the situation by fear of punishment for outcomes beyond their control and self-preservation (Dekker, 2009). In this respect, positive beliefs could serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy because not being distracted by self-preservation
would actually allow greater focus on accuracy and providing advice that is relevant to the situation (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). It is important to acknowledge that accountability may influence officers in different ways as variations in expectations may alter the impact that accountability has on performance.

- “With appropriate training in a given role, accountability will always focus your decision-making.”
- “A sense of accountability should underpin decision-making, as judgements and decisions can affect the lives of others.”
- “This should focus the decisions such that they are carefully considered. The greater the accountability, the more one should be certain of the decision made.”
- “It makes me more considered - look at the wider picture; not just me and the team HT to think about.”
- “It should make me think very carefully about the implications of anything I advise or say concerning this situation to the subjects or other police officers.”
- “It makes you consider the potential outcome of any action you subsequently take or advice you give.”

**Negative impact**

The overall perspective in this accountability belief group was that accountability could sometimes have a negative impact on judgments and decisions by encouraging risk aversion. These advisors believed that focussing on accountability could lead to worry about the consequences of advice beyond the incident which may cause attention to be distracted from the situation. However, two differences arose within this belief group about strategies adopted to cope with accountability: 19.61% (10) of advisors adopted a risk aversive approach; and 39.22% (20) of advisors allowed accountability to have a minimal impact by choosing to ignore it and focus on the incident.

**Risk aversive approach**

These advisors noted that being anxious about post-incident appraisals could sometimes lead them to avoid giving risky advice which may nevertheless be beneficial to the situation. Despite being motivated to save lives, knowing they may be held to account post-incident could lead them to provide advice they thought would be defensible, which is not necessarily the same as
optimal. This risk aversion can stem from motivation for self-preservation which alters attention focus (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). The danger for these advisors may be that in becoming overly risk averse this may prevent them providing optimal advice because it is viewed as risky. Furthermore, fearing the consequences of being held to account may divert attention from the incident to self-preservation.

- “It makes you consider your decisions and advice and be aware of the future consequences. As a result it makes you more conservative and less likely to try high risk options which may result in a desired outcome.”
- “Considering how my decisions will be interpreted after the event in the cold light of day increases the stress of a situation. It can mean being more averse to risk.”
- “On occasion it can slow dynamic decision-making down. It can make people risk averse, especially in high profile incidents where life is at risk and there is a possibility of a coroner’s court or Inquiry.”
- “It affects the way that I consider situations. The life of the person is paramount but I consider the importance of protecting myself and others should the incident end in death or serious injury. Protection of the person, colleagues (especially if inexperienced) and the organisation.”
- “Yes, particularly in the blame culture we are in, both internally (the organisation) and externally (the public/press etc.).”

**Minimal impact approach**

This group of Negotiator Coordinators were aware that being overly focussed on post-incident appraisals could compromise ability to provide advice within the incident. However, they believed it was important to remain focused on the situation and provide advice driven by the goals of accuracy and saving lives rather than the potential to be held accountable. Consequently, these advisors sought to minimise the influence of accountability on advice by concentrating on the incident and avoiding thinking about accountability within the situation. This motivation to remain focussed on the situation and provide optimal advice paralleled that of the positive impact belief group. However, rather than viewing accountability as a mechanism that would improve performance, it was viewed as a distraction to be ignored during the incident.

- “I am aware of it, but if you do your job to the best of your skills and abilities and in a professional manner, then you should have little to concern yourself with. If you make a decision based upon the fact that you are accountable, then that can skew your thought processes.”
Examining Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about accountability and policy

- “Accountability is always in the back of your mind as if things go wrong you will be asked to account for your actions. However, at the time of a live incident it becomes a distant second to saving the life of the person you are dealing with.”

- “I know it is there but make my decisions so as there is a successful outcome and not worry about how it looks. I also think that if your decisions are made for the right reasons, i.e., successful outcome, then you need not worry about it.”

- “When deployed as a co-ordinator I am focused on resolving the incident, preserving life and reducing danger. I am not consciously thinking that if I make that decision I am going to have to justify it later, although I know I will have to. I do not believe that this strongly influences my decision-making on deployment. I am acting in good faith.”

6.3.2 Purpose of policy

Further differences were identified in relation to the purpose of policy. Most Negotiator Coordinators defined it as a form of guidance (70.58%, 36 advisors); some as a tool for justification (25.49%, 13); and a couple of advisors as a stringent set of rules (3.93%, 2). There has been very little examination of police perspectives of policy and so this section examines beliefs in relation to the general concept rather than a particular set of policies. It is noted that different opinions could be elicited in relation to particular policies depending on officers’ experiences of their ability to assist with their role.

Policy as guidance

The majority of Negotiator Coordinators’ viewed policy to be a useful form of guidance which could be circumvented if necessary – ‘To provide guidance as to what course of action should be taken in certain circumstances. This need not be the case in all instances’. This approach represents a more flexible style of decision making such that where suitable policies exist to provide guidance then they should be followed. However, these individuals were aware that policy could not be relied upon across all instances and that it was also necessary to use knowledge and experience to assist with judgment and decision formation. Accordingly, policy was treated as a flexible set of guidance based on good practice that allowed other approaches to be taken if necessary.

- “Policy provides a framework for corporate activity. Think of it like a map. It can give you some really good advice on how to get from A to B but it should also allow for more than one route to be taken.”
"Policy is a guidance or framework for doing something. You can do things outside of policy as long as it is based upon the available information at that time and it is reasonable, proportionate and common sense. Policy does not, and never can, cover every situation."

"To give guidance and support to people dealing with difficult issues. It should come from experience and be a distillation of good practice. Therefore it should be followed in most cases, but must be approached as guidance rather than a rigid set of rules, because circumstances differ."

"Guidance and framework. But never say never, never say always. Sticking to policy is not a defence for failing in a task."

**Policy as a tool for justification**

Others identified the purpose of policy as a tool for justifying or protecting judgments and decisions made. As previously highlighted, research suggests that if audience views are known, the most likely strategy will be conformity (Tetlock et al, 1989), particularly when motivated by self-preservation. It is therefore possible that where policies do exist, some advisors may conform in the belief that this will increase organisational support. Seeking to provide justifications is not an inherently deficient strategy, it is a positive sign that ‘good’ reasons can be provided. However, if flexibility is compromised because individuals are only willing to make judgments and decisions that conform to policy regardless of circumstances, this can have a negative impact on performance.

- "To provide a framework to inform decision-making and to provide protection when followed."
- "To establish protocols for best practice. Unfortunately it is used by the organisation to pillory those who step outside of the written protocol."
- "To give a foundation upon which one operates and to set parameters within which one is expected to stay. Outside of these the accountability stakes rise unless you can put forward strong reasons for ignoring them."
- "To provide guidance and support to protect the individual and the organisation."
- "Policy sets parameters to which we work with. That is what we will be judged against in the event of a negative outcome."

It is also relevant to note that a couple of Negotiator Coordinators appeared to view policy as a set of rules to be followed rather than as guidance – "Policy is the formal ‘rules’ for practice to
be carried out.". The danger with strictly following policy arises in instances where it is not comprehensive or specific enough to provide guidance within a situation. Research indicates that practitioners working within critical incident environments avoid making important decisions partly due to some ineffective policies. For example, in multi-agency settings practitioners have been found to cite policies as being too complicated or not comprehensive enough to provide support in decision making (Eyre, Alison, Crego, & McLean, 2007). Research has also found that officers at the front line of policing did not feel they were sufficiently consulted over policy creation (Beck & Wilson, 1997). As a consequence, they felt they were working within policy frameworks unable to adequately assist with situations encountered.

It is important to note that most policies can aid decision making, even in instances where policies are generic they may still be very useful. For example, the generic principle of preserving life serves a valuable purpose of reinforcing the overarching goal of policing. Yet, complications arise when the situation becomes complex with preservation of one life taking precedence over the life of another. In situations where policy is not comprehensive enough or does not exist, those unwilling to depart from it may end up in a state of decision avoidance or may delay making a decision until the situation escalates so that it becomes covered by policy or someone else takes over. However, as this analysis highlights, not all officers perceive accountability and policy in the same way and it is therefore possible that differences arise in the use of policy during advice formation.

6.3.3 Policy beliefs

In support of the notion that individual differences occur in use of policy, two different beliefs arose in response to the question of how policy influences judgments and decisions. Overall, the majority of Negotiator Coordinators (84%, 43) believed policy provided them with a framework for forming judgements and decisions but would circumvent it when necessary if they had suitable justifications for doing so. A smaller proportion (16%, 8) felt policy constrained judgments and decisions.
**Policy as framework**

Most Negotiator Coordinators believed that policy could and should be circumvented if necessary and if adequate justifications were available - “It provides a framework within which I can work. If I know that policy must be deviated from to save life or serious injury, I will justify my decision-making and rationale”. This represents a more flexible view to judgment and decision making, whereby policy is seen as providing guidance but it is acknowledged that some circumstances require judgments and decisions to be made that are not covered by policy. They noted that accountability within these situations would be high so justifications were necessary. As these advisors are aware of the need to provide justifications for circumventing policy, they may more carefully consider judgments so that they are confident that advice provided is optimal and has substantial justifications.

- “Policy must be regarded when making decisions. However, it must also be recognised that policy will not cover every eventuality. The opportunity exists for more inventive actions, but if taken it is essential to know what the policy does say and be able to justify deviating from it. Deviating from policy requires justification and accountability.”

- “Policy affects decision-making in that it provides boundaries of activity. It’s like the map I referred to. You can take different routes but if you choose to go off the map you should have a clear idea why and what route you are taking........”

- “Generally it informs decision-making, but all situations are different and it can only be a guide.”

- “It guides it, and I will try to comply wherever possible, however it has to be recognised that this is not always possible due to the myriad of circumstances that may arise.”

- “Decisions should take account of policy, i.e. legal restrictions, but policy cannot cater for all eventualities and therefore flexibility is still required.”

**Policy constrains**

A smaller group of advisors felt policy dictated and constrained the way they were able to formulate judgments and decisions – ‘It can reduce the options available and stifle free decision-making’. When individuals feel judgments and decision are hindered, they may believe they have lost the freedom and flexibility needed to manage the situation. According to Nutt (1993), the ideal decision maker uses a variety of skills such as sensing, intuition, feeling and thinking in decision processing. A multitude of circumstances can arise within a crisis situation which may
require multiple strategies and feeling constrained may prevent officers making optimal judgments and decisions.

- “Policies have to be worked within and could constrain decision-making.”
- “It establishes best practice but can stifle creative thinking.”
- “Policy dictates how you think and act.”
- “It gives a starting point and a safety net, but can also cramp creativity and is often risk averse.”
- “Again, it should not, but it has a tendency to make decisions more complicated than they need to be.”
- “It guides me and sometimes dictates my actions.”
6.4 Discussion

This chapter sought to examine differences in Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about the impact accountability and policy had on judgments and decisions. Overall, analysis found that some advisors believed accountability had a positive impact on performance encouraging them to invest cognitive effort and to focus on saving lives. Others believed accountability had a negative impact by encouraging focus to be directed toward post-incident appraisals rather than the situation. However, within this negative belief group some advisors sought to prevent this negative impact by actively focussing on the situation and ignoring accountability. With regard to policy, most advisors believed it was a form of useful guidance that could assist with making accurate judgments and decisions but would not be suitable for all situations and could be circumvented if necessary. Others believed it was a tool for justifying judgments and decisions and so would need to be followed to receive organisational support. This analysis indicates that accountability beliefs may influence use of policy with negative beliefs leading advisors to protect themselves through conforming to policy. Conversely, positive beliefs may encourage flexibility with policy being used as a tool to assist with accuracy but being circumvented if necessary. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

6.4.1 Relationships between accountability beliefs and use of policy

The identification of different beliefs about the influence accountability has on judgments and decisions suggest that experiences of this social mechanism vary. One group of advisors believed accountability had a positive impact on performance leading them to adopt an open-minded, critical style of thinking. They noted crisis situations were risky due to threat posed to life and that it was important to invest cognitive effort into formulating advice to ensure it was of a high standard. Accordingly, accountability provided additional encouragement to invest greater cognitive effort and so was a necessary organisational mechanism. The views of these advisors paralleled the notion that accountability mechanisms were fair and legitimate which may have a positive effect on performance. For example, individuals are more likely to invest greater attention and effort into judgments and decisions when accountability mechanisms and audiences are perceived to be fair and legitimate (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Furthermore, these advisors may be less likely to become distracted from the situation by fear of blame (Dekker, 2011). Therefore this additional cognitive effort is more likely to be directed toward providing accurate advice that
Examining Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about accountability and policy

is suitable for the situation. Believing accountability to have a positive impact on judgments and decisions may allow this mechanism to improve these cognitive processes.

A second group of advisors believed that accountability had a negative impact leading attention to be directed away from the incident on to post-incident appraisals which could encourage risk aversion. Within this group of advisors, some noted that the potential to be held to account post-incident distracted them from the incident onto worrying about how advice would be appraised and the need to ensure they were protected from criticism. Consequently, they were sometimes reluctant to provide risky advice despite the potential for it to positively influence the situation. The proposal that accountability serves as a distraction parallels police views from Chapter 3 where it was noted that blame culture and lack of support could encourage self-preservation (Dekker, 2011) and risk aversion (Anderson, 2002). Thus, some advisors beliefs indicated that their experiences with accountability mechanisms had been negative. They viewed these systems to be unsupportive and to negatively influence performance.

However, other advisors within this negative impact belief group actively sought to avoid this negative impact through minimising focus on accountability within the incident. Instead, they remained concentrated on the incident and providing accurate advice driven by the goal of saving lives. For these advisors, although accountability could negatively influence performance they still shared the same motivation for accuracy as was held by the positive accountability belief group. The desire to save lives over all other goals led these advisors to choose to avoid focussing on accountability pressure rather than allowing it to encourage advice to become influenced by the motivation for self-preservation. In line with Weick and Sutcliffe’s (2001) proposal, these findings suggest that expectations of the way accountability influences performance may influence strategies adopted. However, accountability beliefs and motivational goals appear to play a mutual role in influencing strategies adopted. Believing accountability mechanisms to be unsupportive and to have the potential to negatively influence performance may lead to risk aversive strategies if advisors become motivated by self-preservation. But, if they are determined to remain solely motivated by the goal of accuracy and saving lives, the most likely strategy appears to be minimising the impact of accountability by ignoring this pressure within the incident.
Paralleling these different accountability beliefs and motivational goals, differences were also identified in Negotiator Coordinators beliefs about the strategies used to form advice within incidents as demonstrated through use of policy. In line with the view of Anderson (2005), most Negotiator Coordinators saw policy as a framework that usually represented the best course to take. They recognised that it was not all encompassing and should be circumvented if necessary to ensure accurate advice was provided within a situation. Policy was viewed to reflect the stance of the organisation and making judgments and decisions that conflicted with this stance would increase accountability and the need to provide justifications. Being willing to deviate from policy represents a flexible and critical style of thinking that involves evaluating situational information and previous knowledge and experience to ensure advice is accurate (Lipshitz et al., 2001). Similarly to positive and minimal impact accountability beliefs, this view centred on the goal of accuracy and saving lives. It is therefore possible that being motivated by accuracy rather than self-preservation may encourage greater flexibility in advice formation.

Conversely, a smaller group of advisors viewed policy as a tool for justifying judgments and decisions that should be followed to secure organisational support. As policy represents the stance of an organisation (Anderson, 2005), these advisors believed conforming to organisational views would increase organisational support. This finding is supported by Lerner and Tetlock (1999) who highlight the link between conformity strategies and self-preservation. Being reluctant to circumvent policy therefore represents a form of risk aversion, leading some advisors to note that policy could constrain judgments and decisions. The goal within this belief was self-preservation, paralleling the view that accountability has a negative influence on judgments and decisions. It is therefore possible that being motivated by self-preservation could encourage advisors to adopt risk adverse strategies in forming advice characterised by reluctance to circumvent organisational policy. This difference in policy beliefs may provide an indication of risk avoidance with those that see it as a form of protection being most reluctant to make judgments and decisions outside of this framework.

Overall, proposals link with discussions in Chapter 3 that distinguished between the influence unsupportive blame culture and supportive just culture environments could have on motivational goals (Dekker, 2011). Accordingly, unsupportive environments are more likely to elicit motivation for self-preservation, whereas supportive environments are more likely to elicit
motivation for accuracy as employees are less worried about unfair appraisals. It may be that when individuals view the organisation to be supportive, they believe accountability mechanisms positively influence performance encouraging greater investment of cognitive effort. Not feeling threatened may encourage motivation for accuracy and therefore use of flexible strategies to ensure accuracy. Conversely, viewing the organisation to be unsupportive may lead some officers to view accountability mechanisms negatively believing they can encourage motivation for self-preservation which distracts attention from the incident and encourages risk aversion. When motivated by self-preservation advisors may adopt conformity strategies in an attempt to increase organisational support, as demonstrated by reluctance to circumvent policy. But if determined to be driven by the goal of saving lives and accuracy, this could encourage advisors to actively avoiding focussing on accountability within an incident. Yet, remaining focussed on the incident may require additional cognitive effort. Overall, it is important to note that the different beliefs discussed within this chapter should not be viewed as discrete categories but as spectrums along which views and expectations may reside. As experience with accountability mechanisms alter or the organisational culture changes, so too may beliefs.

6.4.2 Limitations

Overall, it should be noted that whilst Negotiator Coordinators were operationally active and drawn from police services across the British Isles, analysis is based on only 51 participants. It is possible that if conducted with greater numbers different views would arise in relation to the impact accountability and policy have on judgments and decisions. Ideally, it would have been beneficial to conduct interviews to seek in-depth information and clarification about the basis of these beliefs and how they may be linked. The responses provided by officers can only be used to provide an initial indication of potential differences in stable beliefs and how these may influence motivations and cognitive strategies within an incident. However, given the limited time available and difficulties in gaining access to such a specialised group of officers, this was not possible. Future research may seek to clarify these issues further through conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with officers to examine relationships and whether they exist in different policing areas.
6.5 Conclusion

Analysis within this chapter indicates that together beliefs about the influence of accountability on judgments and decisions and motivational goals can influence cognitive strategies used to formulate judgments and decisions. For example, when Negotiator Coordinators feel supported by the organisation and see accountability as a positive aspect of policing they may also be motivated by accuracy and the need to provide optimal advice to save lives. For these advisors, it is acknowledged that policy cannot cover all situations and so it is important to be flexible and willing to circumvent policy if necessary to formulate accurate advice based on knowledge and experience. Conversely, when advisors feel threatened by accountability mechanisms and are motivated by the goal of self-preservation they may be more likely to utilise policy as a shield for protection from blame. Policy may be followed rigidly in the belief that this facilitates greater organisational support and minimises blame. Finally, when accountability mechanisms are viewed negatively but advisors are motivated by the goal of accuracy and saving lives, the likely coping strategy is to minimise focus and perceptions of accountability to avoid being distracted by post-incident appraisal. Figure 4 below displays potential relationships between these factors.
Examining Negotiator Coordinators’ beliefs about accountability and policy

The impact accountability has on judgments and decisions

Accountability has a positive impact by encouraging greater cognitive effort and critical thinking

Policy provides useful guidance to assist with judgments and decisions but can be circumvented if necessary as priority is saving lives

Judgments and decisions driven by the goal of accuracy and flexible strategies are used to achieve this

Judgments and decisions driven by the motivation of self-preservation leading to risk aversion as demonstrated by inflexible use of policy

Priority is to save lives and so it is important to remain focused on the situation and avoid being distracted by accountability

Judgments and decisions driven by the goal of accuracy but cognitive effort may be required to avoid being distracted by accountability within the incident

Policy provides a method of justifying judgments and decisions and so should be followed to avoid negative appraisals

Judgments and decisions influenced by the motivation of self-preservation leading to risk aversion as demonstrated by inflexible use of policy

Quality of judgments and decisions

Key

Belief (stable/ pre-existing)

Action (cognitions)

Figure 4. Potential relationships between accountability, policy and advice quality
7. EXAMINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RISK, ACCOUNTABILITY, REGRET AND IMPORTANCE

Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

Progressing from analysis of stable accountability beliefs, the present chapter examines dynamic accountability perceptions within a crisis situation and how these relate to internal factors such as regret and advice importance, and external factors such as risk. Analysis of police perspectives in previous chapters indicates that accountability may influence judgments and decisions by altering emotions such as regret and motivational goals. The following two chapters seek to measure these relationships. Accordingly, this chapter examines relationships between internal perceptions of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance arguing that all three distinctly separate factors relate to responsibility and anticipatory thinking and so should also relate to one another. As the overarching goal of negotiation is to reduce risk to life, analysis also examines the influence of situational risk on these factors. It is proposed that risk, as manipulated by escalating threat to life, will influence these three factors by altering the likelihood of the situation reaching an irreversible negative outcome (loss of life). Establishing factors that both influence and are influenced by accountability perceptions provides a foundation for furthering knowledge of the impact this social mechanism has on performance in critical incidents.

7.1.1 The influence of risk on accountability, regret and importance

The concept of ‘risk’ refers to the potential to incur loss (Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2009), a prominent feature of all crisis situations and indeed decision making in naturalistic settings. The presence of negotiators within crisis incidents is driven by threat posed to public safety and wellbeing, and the desire to reduce this risk. Consequently, it is important that judgments and advice be constructed effectively and tailored toward the specific situation, a process that requires continual updating of information relevant to the task (Elliott, 2005). According to NDM research, sustained situation assessment allows a mental model of the structure and nature of the problem to be developed (Mogford, 1990). This facilitates SA which enables individuals to forecast potential impact of advice (Endsley, 1988) and is an advantageous process for assisting advisors to formulate advice that may reduce risk to public safety. This chapter argues that risk will influence perceptions of three internal factors: accountability; anticipated regret; and advice importance.
Firstly, this chapter uses the term ‘accountability perception’ to refer to the extent Negotiator Coordinators perceive they will be held accountable by others. This concept is distinguishable from the extent an agent will actually be held accountable and the extent they hold themselves personally accountable. In contrast to stable beliefs, perceptions are intervening processes that exist between stimuli and responses which are dynamic; changing as stimuli alters (Garner, Hake, & Eriksen, 1956). Perceptions allow individuals to make sense of events and relationships by making them phenomenally real in the present (MacLeod, 1947). Therefore, accountability perceptions can allow agents to forecast the extent they will be held to account for advice they provide in the present. Accountability perceptions are not static but are subject to situational changes over time (Hall et al., 2007). In this respect, accountability should be viewed as a state of mind that is partly derived from interpretation of stimuli within the situation (Frink & Klimoski, 2004).

Within Chapter 3, analysis indicated that police practitioners viewed formal and informal accountability mechanisms to be influenced by a culture of blame that seeks to assign culpability for negative outcomes. This approach stems from the belief that the worse an outcome was, the more there must be to account for and is consequently driven by hindsight bias, predisposing audiences to attribute outcomes to errors committed by individuals (Dekker, 2011). Within blame culture organisations, employees tend to believe they are more likely to be held to account for negative rather than positive outcomes (Behn, 2001). As risk increases, there is a greater likelihood that a negative incident will occur. Consequently, as situational models indicate risk is increasing along with the likelihood of the incident reaching a negative resolution, this should heighten perceptions of accountability. The mandatory IPCC investigation into deaths in police custody may perpetuate this perception that accountability is increased when outcomes are negative. As the TDS narrative was designed to increase threat to life over the course of the simulation, it is hypothesised that perceptions of accountability will significantly increase across advice points (hypothesis one).

Secondly, as previously discussed, the blame culture environment in which policing is conducted can lead to risk aversion which has been linked with regret and anticipated regret (Anderson, 2003). Regret is a backward-looking emotion arising from counterfactual thinking (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). Anticipated regret is a forward-looking emotion occurring as a result of imagining personal impact on the future state of the world and comparing this with desired outcome (van Dijk, Zeelenberg, & van der Plight, 2003). The greater the discrepancy...
between imagined and desired outcome, the more regret will be anticipated. Although regret is experienced in everyday situations, the prevalence of this emotion may be higher in critical incidents as police are responsible for maintaining public safety. Indeed, regret may be more salient in situations where lives are at stake due to the potential severity of negative outcomes. Within crisis situations, increase in risk to life should heighten disparity between desired end state of minimising harm and potential end state leading to an increase in anticipated regret. Consequently, it is hypothesised that anticipated regret will significantly increase across advice points (hypothesis two).

Thirdly, advice importance refers to the extent Negotiator Coordinators perceive their unique knowledge and experience driven advice is important to the successful resolution of the incident. When tasks are viewed as being important they are prioritised and greater cognitive effort is invested (Barlas, 2003). This process of prioritisation is important because it is not possible to invest maximum cognitive effort into all tasks due to limited processing capacity (Halford, Cowan, & Andrews, 2007) and environmental constraints (Lipshitz, Sender, Omodei, McLennan, & Wearing, 2007). Prioritisation therefore plays a functional role in managing the constraint of limited processing capacity by indicating tasks that require most attention. As previously highlighted, the context in which Negotiator Coordinators formulate advice is complex making it impossible to invest maximum cognitive effort into all tasks that arise and so importance appraisals influence where and when greater cognitive effort is exerted. As risk to lives increases it is vital that maximum effort be invested in advice formation to reduce risk and prevent irreversible negative consequences. As risk to lives increases, Negotiator Coordinators’ unique knowledge may become integral to altering the situation and so may be viewed as more important to reducing risk. It is therefore proposed that perceptions of advice importance will significantly increase across advice points (hypothesis three).

7.1.2 Accountability, regret and importance

Regret may not only be experienced in relation to potential loss of life, but also the potential to be held accountable as a result of such losses. The possibility of being held accountable and punished can heighten the disparity between potential and desired end state. Although distinctly separate constructs, regret being an emotional response and accountability a cognitive appraisal, both are linked to responsibility. For example, regret is experienced when individuals feel personally responsible for causing a negative outcome, particularly if the
outcome could have been prevented (Ordóñez & Connolly, 2000). Individuals draw comparisons with what they could personally have done differently and regret results from this responsibility for failing to avoid the outcome (Mandel, 2003). Similarly, accountability is defined in terms of responsibility and the power of an audience to appraise the actions of an agent based on their responsibility (Hall et al., 2007).

Anticipated regret has already been linked to self-accountability as the responsibility component relates to an agent’s evaluation of their own performance (Passyn & Sujan, 2006). However, within accountability, responsibility stems from the extent external audiences may hold the agent to account. It is possible for internal and external standards of accountability to differ (Reb & Connolly, 2010); particularly when considering the direct access individuals have to cognitive processes and strength of evidence behind advice formation that audiences do not possess (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). Such disparities could lead to lower perceptions of personal accountability or self-accountability depending on whether agents feel better able to successfully justify advice to audiences or to themselves.

Despite this disparity, anticipated regret and perception of personal accountability share a further commonality in terms of potential impact on cognitive effort. For example, individuals are motivated to avoid or reduce the unpleasant emotional state of regret and anticipation of this emotion can serve as a predictive threat that warns individuals to invest greater cognitive effort into avoiding the repetition of past mistakes (Mandel, 2003). Accountability also encourages investment of effort into improving performance so that negative appraisals and punishment can be avoided (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Tetlock, 2002). Both factors involve anticipatory thinking, a form of sensemaking that assists with explaining events and developing future expectancies (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). This future-oriented form of sensemaking allows individuals to decide which aspects of the environment to monitor, to cope with greater uncertainty and ambiguity, and prepare for action (Klein, Snowden, & Pin, 2011).

As both accountability and anticipated regret stem from a sense of responsibility and seek to reduce mistakes, it is argued that a relationship will exist between the two. As a workplace stressor that can be unpleasant to experience (Hall et al., 2007), accountability may influence anticipated regret by increasing disparity between potential and desired end states. In this way, risk would not only directly impact on anticipated regret, but also indirectly with accountability acting as a mediator. However, it should be noted that the methodology design
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

of current research only allows analysis to draw associations between factors rather than direct causation. It is therefore hypothesised that a significant positive relationship will exist between perception of personal accountability and anticipated regret across advice points (hypothesis four).

Importance appraisals are also central to formulating concise advice so that Incident Commanders are not overloaded by information as this would prevent advice being utilized effectively (De Bruijn, 2006). If too much information is provided, pertinent advice can become lost amongst less relevant advice or can be viewed as meaningless which may lead future advice to be ignored (Wildavsky, 1988). Importance beliefs are key to evaluating trade-offs between conflicting attributes of choice options (Shanteau, 1980), and searching for information relevant to decisions (Aschenbrenner, Bockenholt, Albert, & Schmalhofer, 1986), both of which are necessary for judging the priority and relevance of information. Although it may not always be clear beforehand which advice is most relevant, Negotiator Coordinators must nevertheless judge advice importance so that Incident Commanders can attend to and comprehend this advice.

Advice importance denotes a sense of responsibility because of the unique knowledge possessed by Negotiator Coordinators. In believing advice to be important to the incident, these advisors denote value in its potential to impact on the situation. Where advice has the potential to influence a situation there is a responsibility to provide it. As such Negotiator Coordinators will share responsibility and accountability for what occurs as a result of putting judgments and advice into action. Thus, as advice importance increases so too should responsibility and accountability (Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007). This increase in importance and responsibility would also influence perceptions of anticipated regret by emphasising the potential impact advice may have on end state. It is therefore proposed that significant positive relationships will exist between advice importance and both accountability (hypothesis five), and anticipated regret (hypothesis six).
7.2 Method

Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of methodologies employed and so only brief details are given to facilitate readers’ understanding. A suicide intervention TDS was developed in conjunction with a group of experienced Negotiator Coordinators from Kent, MPS and West Mercia police services. Overall, 75 participants were presented with numerous visual and audio feeds which together formed the suicide intervention scenario. This scenario was designed to manipulate risk by increasing threat to lives across advice points which was checked and verified by a pilot panel and a gold standard group. Across the 5 advice points measures of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance were taken using a 10-point likert scale (where 1 = not at all and 10 = very). Brief details of the scenario narrative are provided below.

Advice Point one

Participants received a telephone call from the Incident Commander giving brief details about the incident and asking for advice. Two female students dressed in gothic attire were sighted standing on the edge of the roof of a tall University building. There was little indication of risk at this point; but given the limited information provided, uncertainty would be high.

Advice Point two

Participants were introduced to the scene and informed that the students refused to speak to police officers, including the negotiation team, and would not come away from the edge of the roof despite being asked to do so. Risk increased as a result of the continued lack of communication and uncertainty about students’ motivations for being there.

Advice Point three

One of the students spoke to negotiators but only to ask for water. The Incident Commander requested advice with regard to this issue. This advice point was identified as a wicked problem because the expert panel could not agree on a course of advice and the police service does not provide guidance on this issue. Therefore, there was no clear or definitive answer to this question and participants had to rely solely on their own judgment and experience in formulating advice. Risk continued to increase because students’ motivations had still not been identified due to the lack of communication.
Advice Point four
One of the students fell from the rooftop and died. The Incident Commander was frustrated and told participants that he did not think they were helping the situation. Death in police custody would be investigated post-incident, thus participants became certain that scrutiny would take place in relation to all aspects of incident management, including negotiation. This death further provided an indication that students had been motivated to harm themselves, so risk posed to the remaining student increased.

Advice Point five
The sister of the deceased student made an emotional plea to be allowed to assist negotiators to communicate with the remaining student. The Incident Commander referred the decision to participants to make. Again, the issue of using a third party intermediary was not clear as no definitive police guidance exists in relation to this issue. Participants had to rely solely on their judgment of the situation and experiences to provide advice. The remaining student still refused to communicate with negotiators, posing further risk in light of the previous death.
7.3 Results

The following section firstly presents analysis of the impact of risk on accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance (hypotheses one, two and three) followed by relationships between these three internal factors across the course of the simulated incident (hypotheses four, five and six). Where ANOVAs were used to test hypotheses, omega squared ($\omega^2$) values were calculated to provide an estimate of the proportion of the total variance explained by changes in the simulation (such as increased risk) across advice points. In comparison to other measures of variance such as eta squared, $\omega^2$ provides a less biased measure of magnitude of effect (Fowler, 1985). Consequently, rather than being restricted to the magnitude of effect within a current sample, it provides a better estimate of the treatment effect in a population.

7.3.1 The impact of risk on accountability, regret and importance

Table 8 and Figure 5 below display mean and SD values for perceptions of personal accountability, anticipated regret, and advice importance. As the scenario progressed, participants felt more accountable for their advice, anticipated feeling more regret should the incident reach a negative resolution and believed advice to be increasingly more important to the resolution of the incident. Mean ratings across advice points were highest for importance, followed by accountability and anticipated regret. Standard deviation values decreased slightly across advice points suggesting that perceptions varied less as the incident unfolded.

Table 8

Mean and standard deviation values for accountability, regret and importance ratings across advice points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Advice Point</th>
<th>1 Initial Call</th>
<th>2 Arrival on Scene</th>
<th>3 Water Request</th>
<th>4 Student Death</th>
<th>5 Sister's Plea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

To establish whether a pattern existed within ratings of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance across advice points, one-tailed non-parametric Spearman’s correlations were conducted. Findings showed substantial to very strong significant correlations between accountability ratings across the 5 advice points, indicating a pattern between advisors that felt more accountable at advice point one and those that felt more accountable at points two, three, four and five. The same consistent relationship was also present for anticipated regret and advice importance, although correlation values for regret were higher indicating greater consistency in feelings of regret across advice points. Overall, these results demonstrate consistent differences in the extent participants felt accountable, anticipated feeling regretful and rated the importance of advice across the course of the simulation. Results of this analysis are displayed in Table 9 below. Further analysis was also conducted to establish whether relationships existed between policing or negotiation experience and accountability, but no significant results were found.
Table 9
Correlations in accountability, regret and importance ratings across advice points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Advice point</th>
<th>2 Arrive on Scene</th>
<th>3 Water Request</th>
<th>4 Student Death</th>
<th>5 Sister’s Plea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>1 Initial Call</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Arrive on Scene</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Water Request</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Student Death</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.64**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret</td>
<td>1 Initial Call</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Arrive on Scene</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.81**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Water Request</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td>.80**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Student Death</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.96**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1 Initial Call</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Arrive on Scene</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Water Request</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Student Death</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.61**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .0001

To establish whether perceptions of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance significantly altered across advice points as risk to life increased, 3 repeated measures ANOVAs (1 x 5) were conducted. Mauchly’s test indicated the assumption of sphericity had been violated for accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance ($\chi^2(9) = 43.19, p < 0.001; \chi^2(9) = 126.69, p < 0.001; \text{and} \chi^2(9) = 35.77, p < 0.001$ respectively), therefore multivariate tests are reported ($\varepsilon = .79; \varepsilon = .55; \text{and} \varepsilon = .83$ respectively).

Results showed a significant difference in perception of personal accountability ($F(3.16, 227.66) = 23.08, p < 0.001, \omega^2 = .15$), anticipated regret ($F(2.20, 162.59) = 23.17, p < 0.001, \omega^2 = .07$), and advice importance ratings ($F(3.23, 253.74) = 20.32, p < 0.001, \omega^2 = .14$) across the five advice points. Following the criteria stipulated by Kirk (1996), $\omega^2$ values for accountability and importance correspond to large effect sizes, the $\omega^2$ value for regret corresponds to a medium effect size. Situational changes within the simulation therefore had a visible effect on changes in perceptions of accountability, regret and importance.

To determine where significant differences lay between advice points Bonferroni post hoc tests were conducted. For accountability, advice point one was significantly lower and advice point five significantly higher than all other advice points, but mid-advice points two, three and four were not significantly different from one another. For anticipated regret, ratings for advice point one were significantly lower than all other advice points; advice points two and three, and four and five were not significantly different to one another two and three were significantly lower than four and five. Importance ratings for advice points one, two and three
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

and for four and five were not significantly different to one another. But advice points one, two and three were significantly lower than four and five. Therefore, in support of hypothesis one and hypothesis two, perceptions of personal accountability and anticipated regret increased as the simulation progressed and risk grew. Advice importance only significantly peaked when the simulation reached a climax and risk was high, partially supporting hypothesis three.

7.3.2 Relationships between accountability, regret and importance

To examine relationships between accountability, anticipated regret, and advice importance across advice points, Spearman’s correlations were conducted. Results of this analysis are reported in Table 10 below.

Table 10
Correlation values for accountability, regret and importance ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Advice Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Initial Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability/Regret</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability/Importance</td>
<td>.52***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret/Importance</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; ***p < .001

Accountability and anticipated regret

Hypothesis four postulated that there would be a significant positive relationship between accountability and anticipated regret across advice points. This hypothesis was not supported, as correlations were only found to be significant at points two (arrival on scene), three (water request) and four (student death) and the strength of these associations was only low. It was therefore possible for accountability to increase independently of anticipated regret.

Accountability and advice importance

Hypothesis five stated there would be a significant positive relationship between accountability and advice importance across advice points. This hypothesis was supported as this significant positive relationship was present across all 5 advice points with strength of association varying between substantial and very strong. Thus, the more important participants believed advice was to the successful resolution of the incident the more
accountable they felt for this advice. This provides support to the suggestion that perceptions of accountability were in part based on uniqueness of knowledge and experience and the potential to influence the situation.

**Advice importance and anticipated regret**

Hypothesis six stated there would be a significant positive relationship between advice importance and anticipated regret across advice points. As with accountability and regret, this hypothesis was not supported as a significant correlation was only present at advice points one and three and strength of association was only low. It was therefore possible for advice importance to increase independently of anticipated regret.
7.4 Discussion

This chapter sought to advance analysis from previous chapters by examining relationships between accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance, and the impact of risk on these internal factors. Findings indicated that in line with hypotheses one and two, Negotiator Coordinators perceived themselves to be significantly more accountable and anticipated feeling more regretful as the incident progressed and threat to life increased. Hypothesis three was partially supported as perceptions of the extent to which advice was important to the incident did increase across all advice points, but this difference was only significant at latter points when risk was particularly high. In support of hypothesis five, importance and accountability were significantly positively related across advice points such that as perceptions of importance increased so too did accountability. However, hypotheses four and six were only marginally supported as anticipated regret was only significantly related to accountability at points two, three and four; and to importance at points one and three. These findings support the proposal that accountability perceptions are not static, but alter as a consequence of changes in situation over time (Frink & Klimoski, 2004). The relevance of findings and potential avenues for future research are discussed below.

7.4.1 Risk influences accountability, regret and importance

The finding that perceptions of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance significantly increased across advice points indicates that these three factors are not static but alter as a result of situational changes over time. The significant increase in accountability suggests that appraisals of risk may not only affect forecasting of the potential incident outcome, but also consequences of this outcome for advisors post-incident. This notion was supported by feedback received from the SME and expert panel who noted that increases in risk would make advisors more aware of the potential for performance to be formally appraised by others post-incident. Accordingly, the student death at advice point four represented the point at which participants knew they would be required to formally account for advice to the organisation, the IPCC and potentially to a Coroner’s Court.

The increase in anticipation of regret across the incident provides support to the argument that growing risk heightens the disparity between forecasts of potential end state and desired end state. This increase in risk reduced the likelihood that the incident would reach a desirable outcome free from harm. Indeed, after the death of a subject at the fourth advice point it
became impossible for this desirable outcome to be achieved. Furthermore, knowledge and advice was only perceived to be significantly more important toward the latter end of the incident which suggests that Negotiator Coordinators may believe advice has a greater potential impact on the incident when risk is high. In general, accountability (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), anticipated regret (Craig, 2008) and importance (Barlas, 2003) have all been linked with greater investment of cognitive effort, and so it is possible that when threat to life increased, these advisors were more motivated to invest cognitive effort into formulating advice.

However, it should be noted that although manipulation checks were performed to ensure Negotiator Coordinators would perceive threat to life as increasing across the simulation, measures of risk were not taken from participants across advice points. Interpretation of these findings is therefore speculative as analysis cannot directly compare the extent perceptions of risk influenced accountability, regret and importance. It is possible that other factors such as increasing level of involvement, progression of events toward a climax, or uncertainty may also have influenced these changes. Developing research within naturalistic contexts can be difficult, particularly in novel areas, and part of the value of research is highlighting limitations and identifying ways to improve methodology. Suggestions for overcoming limitations identified are therefore discussed further below.

### 7.4.2 The consistent relationship between importance and accountability

The significant positive relationship between importance and accountability was present across all advice points regardless of changes within the simulation narrative. Thus, the more important participants believed advice to be, the more accountable they perceived others would hold them for this advice. This finding supports the suggestion made by Van Swol and Ludutsky (2007) that when advisors believe information they possess is important and differs to information possessed by the decision maker, perceptions of accountability and responsibility will increase. In addition to directly influencing accountability, risk (and other unidentified situational factors) may therefore indirectly influence accountability through impacting on advice importance.

These findings also indicate that Negotiator Coordinators’ perceptions of accountability are in part based on the uniqueness of knowledge and experience and how this may contribute toward a situation. It may be that importance denotes a greater sense of involvement and
influence as advice becomes tailored to the situation. Accountability may, in part, arise out of tailoring advice and the belief that it has greater potential to influence the situation or out of the perception that others would view advice to be a causal factor of the outcome. Accordingly, possessing specialist knowledge with the potential to influence a situation can instil a sense of responsibility and accountability. Analysis within the previous chapter found differences in strategies used by Negotiator Coordinators to formulate judgments and decisions demonstrated by their beliefs about the purpose and use of policy. Some advisors noted that policy served as a tool for justifying judgments and decisions. It is possible that for these advisors following policy represents a mechanism for reducing perceptions of accountability because by doing so advice is not solely based on unique knowledge and experience. Future research may seek to clarify the relationship between level of knowledge and perception of accountability by comparing differences in perspectives between novices and experts.

7.4.3 The inconsistent relationship between accountability and regret

Although analysis of police practitioners’ subjective perspectives in Chapter 3 indicated that accountability could lead to anticipation of regret, the relationship between these two factors was found to be inconsistent. Accountability and anticipated regret were only significantly related at mid advice points (two, three, and four) when Negotiator Coordinators had arrived on scene and the two subjects were refusing to communicate with negotiators. The pattern in these two factors differed with accountability significantly increasing across advice points whilst anticipated regret reached a peak at the fourth advice point after the death of a subject. Although it is not possible to provide conclusive explanations for these mixed results, particularly for null results, tentative explanations are put forward to suggest potential directions for future research focus.

Relationships between these two factors may have been present at mid points because situational stimuli such as risk affected perceptions of accountability and anticipated regret in a similar manner by increasing responsibility. However, the death of a subject at advice point four created a peak in regret, potentially because this negative event was irreversible and so the ability to reach the optimal desirable outcome was no longer available. Conversely, accountability may have continued to increase because this death made it evident that an investigation would be conducted post-incident. With one subject still at risk, Negotiator Coordinators still had a responsibility to continue and there was still potential for performance
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

to face further external scrutiny. In this respect, situational factors such as risk may moderate relationships between accountability and regret. The continued increase in accountability was paralleled by a shift in Negotiator Coordinators’ attitudes toward the situation after the student death causing some to be distracted by external audiences and post-incident evaluations rather than remaining solely focussed on what was occurring within the incident. For example, in advice provided by advisors at this point comments included ‘inform Force Duty Officer, Duty ACC [Assistant Chief Constable], duty professional standards branch, referral to IPCC’, ‘There will now follow an investigation on behalf of the Coroner, IPCC, and criminal court into the circumstances of this incident’ and ‘This has to be carefully logged and considered due to accountability of all concerned’.

Overall, these findings suggest that accountability and anticipated regret can alter independent of one another. The responsibility component of anticipated regret has been directly linked to self-accountability (Passyn & Sujan, 2006), but current findings support the notion that internal and external appraisals of accountability can differ (Reb & Connolly, 2010). As previously noted, external audiences do not have direct access to an agent’s thought processes and so are reliant on the advisor’s justifications and available situational information to judge performance (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). Differences may therefore occur between what advisors can justify to external audiences and what they justify to themselves. It may be that there is a difference in the regret one anticipates feeling as a result of self-accountability and the regret anticipated for being held accountable by others. As discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, this has implications for motivational goals.

For example, if Negotiator Coordinators anticipate feeling regretful about a potential loss of life the most appropriate strategy to adopt is accuracy, providing optimal advice driven by the goal of minimising risk to life. Conversely, if Negotiator Coordinators anticipate feeling regretful about facing potential scrutiny for this loss of life they may seek to minimise regret by adopting self-preservation strategies such as conformity to policy. It is beyond the remit of this research to test whether there are differences between the regret individuals anticipate in relation to risk posed to others compared with self. However, future research could examine these differences by asking participants to rate the regret they would experience if their actions caused harm to others versus themselves and analyse whether the two ratings related to different motivational goals and decision strategies.
7.4.4 The inconsistent relationship between importance and regret

Similar to accountability and anticipated regret, the relationship between importance and anticipated regret was inconsistent, only reaching significance at advice point one and three. A tentative explanation is put forward to generate potential avenues for future investigation. At this initial advice point information presented was vague preventing advisors from developing a clear situational model. The expert panel noted that risk was at its lowest as there was no indication the two students intended to cause harm. At advice point three there was uncertainty about the motivations of the students as they refused to communicate, and there was uncertainty about whether to provide water as this issue is not covered by police guidance. It may be that when clarity is low regarding the specific situational model and how it may develop, the extent advice is perceived as making a fairly low risk situation worse has a similar impact on appraisals of both advice importance and anticipated regret. This may lead to risk aversion in those seeking to avoid altering the status quo of a situation.

7.4.5 Limitations

As previously highlighted, whilst risk appears to play a role in influencing accountability, regret and importance, it is possible that these factors were also influenced by increasing engagement and immersion in the TDS, or progression of events toward a climax. Accordingly, the longer participants engaged with the TDS, the more immersed they may have become causing them to experience similar emotions and cognitions to operational settings. In this instance, increases in accountability, regret and importance would occur by virtue of engagement with a task and investing cognitive effort rather than risk per se. To some extent, the impact of risk could be separated from immersion by altering the TDS design and narrative so that risk does not continually increase as the incident progresses but fluctuates across the scenario. Participants could be asked to rate their perceptions of both risk and immersion as the TDS progresses to determine whether differences occur between the two. In addition to implementing measures of risk, such replications should develop a greater number of measures for each factor to provide more detailed measures.

Furthermore, changes in perceptions of uncertainty or the origins of this uncertainty may have altered relationships by preventing participants from developing situational models that would allow them to predict the influence of advice on outcomes. Indeed, although the pilot panel stated that uncertainty remained relatively consistent across the scenario, the origins of this
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

uncertainty changed. This could have altered the influence of risk by making it difficult to assess the level of threat posed to life. Future research should seek to clarify such issues by developing control conditions that progress through the same stages but keeping either risk or uncertainty constant. It would also be advantageous to alter control so that causation may be established between factors. It is acknowledged that this can be difficult to achieve when examining issues in naturalistic contexts because increasing control can sometimes compromise fidelity and ecological validity. These are on-going considerations for researchers working within applied fields.

Finally, as this research was conducted with Negotiator Coordinators using suicide intervention as the TDS model, caution is recommended in generalizing findings to other settings, including other areas of policing. Negotiation differs from other forms of policing as the purpose is not to investigate crime, but to encourage subjects to alter behaviour by using persuasive communication techniques rather than use of force. Consequences for making mistakes in crisis incidents can lead to loss of life as subjects are often in volatile and irrational emotional states adding another dynamic that is not present in all areas of policing or all organisational settings. Whilst comparable relationships may exist between accountability, importance and regret in other settings, the interplay between these factors may differ depending on environmental dynamics.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to identify factors that influence advisors’ perceptions of accountability as this knowledge will contribute toward understanding dynamic relationships between decision makers, advisors and audiences, and how accountability influences cognitive processes. Current analysis suggests that, amongst other situational factors, risk to life may influence perceptions of accountability, anticipated regret and advice importance. The direct relationship between accountability and importance indicates that uniqueness of knowledge and its potential to alter the situation increase responsibility and accountability for providing advice. The inconsistent relationship anticipated regret shared with both accountability and advice importance indicates that risk and other situational factors moderate these relationships. Figure 6 below displays the proposed relationships between variables. However, this model is based on tentative conclusions and requires further research to clarify complex relationships.
Examining relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

Figure 6. Relationships between risk, accountability, regret and importance

Key
- Circle: Belief (stable/ pre-existing)
- Diamond: Perception (dynamic/changing)
8. THE IMPACT OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON MOTIVATIONAL GOALS AND ADVICE QUALITY

The previous chapter highlighted that accountability perceptions can alter across the course of an incident paralleling changes in risk and perceptions of ability to influence the situation. This final research chapter advances analysis by examining relationships between accountability, motivational goals, and advice quality. The central argument is that accountability can directly and indirectly influence the quality of advice provided by altering strength of motivation for self-preservation. Analysis of relationships between accountability, motivational goals, and advice quality provides a fundamental step in understanding judgment and decision making in highly pressurised naturalistic settings. Identifying factors that influence police judgments and decisions is important for improving performance and minimising risk to public safety.

8.1.1 Advice quality in negotiation contexts

Before discussing the potential impact of accountability on motivational goals and advice quality, it is pertinent to clarify what is meant by the term ‘advice quality’. Research suggests that decision makers are more likely to seek out and utilise advice from advisors they trust (Sniezek & Van Swol, 2001) and who possess expertise relevant to the area of interest (Yaniv & Kleinberger, 2000). Indeed, within crisis situations Negotiator Coordinators’ advice is sought because these advisors are specially trained and possess more comprehensive negotiation knowledge and experience than the Incident Commander. This creates an expectation that the quality of advice provided will be high in terms of utility for developing effective strategies that minimise risk to members of the public. Decision makers are sensitive to change in advice quality and whilst a good reputation may be difficult to gain, it is easily lost when quality decreases, leading poor advice to be quickly discounted (Yaniv & Kleinberger, 2000).

Consequently, Negotiator Coordinators must ensure advice is of a high standard for aiding strategy development and reducing risk to public safety, but also to maintain a positive reputation and avoid negative performance evaluation. The automatic investigation of deaths that occur in police custody means negotiation advisors can find themselves having to account for advice post-incident to audiences with the power to exact consequence, such as the IPCC.
Advice is also evaluated at the time of being provided by the Incident Commander who must be vigilant in ensuring that decisions are not based on poorly formed judgments. Failure to provide relevant information and judgements (error of omission), providing information and judgments that are irrelevant or unsuitable (error of commission), or failure to provide advice in a timely fashion can all have consequences for the running of an incident and performance appraisals.

As previously discussed, it is inappropriate to base performance measures on outcomes because this fails to consider the context in which judgments were made and that factors beyond these cognitive processes can influence outcome (Dekker, 2011). Analysis of advice quality is therefore based on comparisons between Negotiator Coordinators responses and those of an expert panel in relation to the same simulated scenario. Providing a robust measure of advice quality relies on two measures: suitability and relevance. Firstly, whilst a variety of negotiation strategies exist reflecting the dynamic nature of crisis incidents, advice must be tailored to the situation to prevent unsuitable strategies being implemented as these may negatively impact on subjects’ behaviour. For example, it may be inappropriate to use family members as third party intermediaries if the subject has a hostile relationship with these individuals. Secondly, negotiation advice must be concise and relevant to minimise the potential for Incident Commanders to become overloaded by information (De Bruijn, 2006). Incident Commanders are responsible for managing the whole incident and so process inordinate amounts of information. Overload could lead pertinent advice to be lost amongst irrelevant information or viewed as meaningless which could cause future advice to be ignored (Wildavsky, 1988). Optimal advice should therefore contain all of the judgments and information essential to strategy development within a particular situation (suitability) without any irrelevant information (relevance).

8.1.2 Accountability and motivational goals

Analysis of police perspectives in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 indicated that accountability could influence judgments and decisions by altering motivational goals. Motivation refers to a set of energetic forces that determine the form, direction, strength and duration of behaviour (Pinder, 1998), thereby affecting the amount of cognitive effort invested and where this effort is directed (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Whether self-generated or instigated by others, goal setting is a key feature of motivation, identifying objectives that effort and attention will be directed toward (Grant, 2008). As previously noted, attention and cognitive capacity are
limited, thereby restricting an individual’s ability to focus on multiple tasks and goals at once (Arami et al., 2010). Given the limitations to attention and cognitive capacity, Negotiator Coordinators must be selective in the information and goals they focus on to ensure advice provided is relevant to the situation.

Overall, research finds that dividing attention between various tasks and goals requires greater cognitive effort and can reduce information processing capacity (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Focussing on task-relevant information allows employees to use available resources in the most efficient and effective manner which can improve workplace performance (Rushall, 1995). Whilst performance is improved when focus is directed toward task relevant information, it is reduced if focus is distracted by factors irrelevant to the task (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005). Furthermore, NDM research finds that this process of gathering relevant information, referred to as situation assessment (Elliott, 2005), is vital for developing a mental model of the problem and how it may be solved (Mogford, 1990). Continued situation assessment enables individuals to develop SA, thereby allowing them to forecast how judgments, decisions and actions would influence a situation (Endsley, 1995). Negotiator Coordinators should therefore maintain focus on relevant information within the situation to develop an accurate mental model of the situation and how judgments and advice may influence it.

The overarching purpose of crisis negotiation is to save lives by reducing risk. It is important for Negotiator Coordinators to be motivated by the goal of accuracy so that attention is directed toward situational information and providing advice pertinent to the particular situation in an attempt to minimise risk to public safety. However, research suggests that when accountability mechanisms are perceived to be unfair or illegitimate (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), as when driven by an unsupportive blame culture (Dekker, 2008), accountability may encourage self-preservation. Evaluation of police perspectives in Chapter 3 highlighted the presence of an unsupportive and blaming environment within policing. Additionally, analysis of Negotiator Coordinators’ accountability beliefs in Chapter 6 found that many believed accountability could encourage self-preservation and focus on factors beyond the incident - ‘it can cause you to be risk averse, especially in high profile incidents where life is at risk and there is a possibility of a coroner’s court or Inquiry’. As perceptions of accountability increase, advisors may become more motivated by the goal of self-preservation and formulating advice to protect them from blame. Accordingly, it is argued that a significant
positive relationship will exist between accountability perceptions and strength of motivation for self-preservation across advice points (hypothesis one).

Furthermore, if Negotiator Coordinators become motivated by the goal of self-preservation, attention may be distracted by factors beyond the realm of the situation such as post-incident appraisals. This additional goal of self-preservation would conflict with the goal of accuracy by compromising attention focus. Being increasingly motivated by self-preservation may lead Negotiator Coordinators to miss relevant information which would prevent them from developing an accurate situational model, thereby compromising ability to accurately predict how advice may influence the situation. Consequently, advisors reduced ability to forecast the influence of advice on a situation could negatively affect their ability to generate advice that is suitable for the particular situation. They may also struggle to distinguish between information that is relevant or irrelevant to the situation. It is therefore hypothesised that a significant negative relationship will exist between motivation for self-preservation and advice quality, both in terms of relevance and suitability (hypothesis two).

8.1.3 Accountability and advice quality

Research in both experimental (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999) and organisational settings demonstrates the influence that accountability can have on judgment and decision making (Ferris et al., 1995; Hall et al, 2007; Hochwarter et al., 2007). Within organisational literature, accountability is viewed as a workplace stressor because employees can perceive performance evaluation to be threatening (Hall et al., 2003). A vast body of literature demonstrates the negative impact higher levels of stress have on task performance, compromising ability to remain solely focussed on task relevant information and activities (for a review, see Kavanagh, 2005).

Accountability may not only cause individuals to worry about performance evaluations and punishments, but also choosing cognitive strategies for advice formation. Negotiation advice is formulated in environments characterised by risk, uncertainty, and time constraint, where large quantities of information must be processes, not all of which will be complete or reliable. Although conscious normative processing is more effective for paying focussed attention to a few attributes (Dijksterhuis, 2004), it can lead to poorer decisions than heuristic strategies under naturalistic conditions (Raby & Wickens, 1994), particularly experience driven heuristics based on recognition strategies (Klein, 1989). Unlike unconscious heuristics,
normative strategies only work well when all relevant information can be considered which is not always possible under high-pressured naturalistic settings (Dijksterhuis, 2004). But adopting heuristic strategies makes it difficult to provide justifications other than intuition (Smith & DeCoster, 2000), which is problematic when required to account for judgments and decisions. Accountability may create additional pressure by placing individuals in a difficult position of selecting between normative strategies that are hindered by contextual constraints or being unable to provide substantial justifications. Blame culture and lack of support may further serve to increase the salience of these threats and therefore stress experienced.

Generally, stress theories posit an inverted U-shaped relationship between stressors and performance (Gardner & Cummings, 1988). This parabola relationship shows that as stress increases so too does performance up to a certain point where it peaks and declines with further stress increase (Selye, 1974). Although not consistently demonstrated, this inverted U-shaped relationship between stress and performance has received considerable empirical support (Beschera & Grandjean, 1979; Champoux, 1992; Gardner, 1986; Janssen, 2001; Xie & Johns, 1995). Given that accountability can act as a stressor it is hypothesised that a significant curvilinear relationship will exist between perceptions of personal accountability and both advice suitability and relevance across advice points (hypothesis three).
8.2 Method

Methodological approaches were discussed in detail within Chapter 5; therefore only brief details are given to facilitate readers’ understanding. The suicide intervention simulation contained five points at which Negotiator Coordinators were asked to provide advice in relation to information provided. They were also asked to indicate on a 10-point likert scale (where 1 = not at all and 10 = very) how accountable they felt and how much advice was motivated by the goals of saving lives (accuracy) and self-preservation.

As previously noted, there are two aspects to advice quality, relevance and suitability. Advice relevance was calculated by dividing the number of pieces of advice that matched the gold standard by the total number of pieces of advice provided at each advice point and converting it into a percentage. This score therefore represents the proportion of advice that matches the gold standard taking into consideration the amount of advice that does not match this expert response. Advice suitability reflects the number of pieces of gold standard advice contained within participants’ advice. The total number of pieces of advice provided at each advice point was also included in analysis to allow a distinction to be made between the quantity of advice provided, how much of it was suitable and the proportion that was relevant. A reminder is given that due to advice point three being identified as a wicked problem by the expert panel it has been removed from advice quality analysis.
8.3 Results

Analysis examines whether advice motivations and advice quality alter across advice points, followed by relationships between accountability, motivational goals and advice quality (hypotheses one, two, and three).

8.3.1 Changes in motivational goals and advice quality across advice points

Mean and SD values are displayed in Table 11 and Figures 7 to 9 below for motivational goals and advice quality. Strength of motivation for saving lives was much greater than self-preservation across advice points. While motivation for saving lives and self-preservation increased across the simulation, advice quantity, suitability and relevance decreased. Standard deviation values for saving lives decreased across advice points indicating greater homogeneity in the extent participants were motivated to save lives as the incident progressed and risk increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice Point</th>
<th>Save Lives</th>
<th>Protect Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Initial Call</td>
<td>8.67 2.10</td>
<td>4.69 2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Arrive on Scene</td>
<td>9.21 1.61</td>
<td>5.53 2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Water Request</td>
<td>9.76 0.59</td>
<td>5.61 3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Student Death</td>
<td>9.85 0.49</td>
<td>5.61 3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sister’s Plea</td>
<td>9.85 0.49</td>
<td>5.61 3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Mean and standard deviation values for advice quality scores and advice motivation ratings

Figure 7. Mean ratings for advice motivations across advice points
The impact of accountability on motivational goals and advice quality

Figure 8. Mean advice quantity and advice suitability scores

Figure 9. Mean advice relevance scores across advice points
Using repeated-measures ANOVAs, analysis examined changes across advice points in strength of motivation for saving lives (1 x 5) and self-preservation (1 x 5); and advice quality in terms of quantity (1 x 4), relevance (1 x 4) and suitability (1 x 4).

**Motivation to save lives**

Mauchley’s test indicated the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2 (9) = 178.20, p > .001$, therefore multivariate tests are reported ($\varepsilon = .50$). Results showed a significant difference across advice points, $F (1.99, 136.98) = 16.14, p < .001, \omega^2 = .16$, which corresponds to a large effect size. Post hoc analysis revealed that motivation to save lives was significantly lower at advice point one and significantly higher at point five than all other advice points; advice points two and three were significantly lower than four. Generally, participants became increasingly motivated by the goal of saving lives as the incident developed and risk increased.

**Motivation for self-preservation**

Mauchley’s test indicated the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2 (9) = 51.91, p > .001$, therefore multivariate tests are reported ($\varepsilon = .70$). Results showed a significant difference across advice points, $F (2.78, 203.16) = 7.52, p < .001, \omega^2 = .03$, corresponding to a small effect size. Post hoc analysis revealed that motivation for self-preservation was significantly lower at advice point one and significantly higher at point five than two, three, and four. Advice point three was significantly lower than two and four. Overall, self-preservation significantly increased, particularly after the death of a student at advice point four.

**Advice quantity**

Results showed a significant difference across advice points, $F (3, 222) = 30.07, p < .001, \omega^2 = .41$, which corresponds to a large effect size. Post hoc analysis revealed that significantly more advice was provided at advice point one and significantly less was provided at point five than points two and four. The amount of advice provided significantly decreased across the course of the incident.
The impact of accountability on motivational goals and advice quality

Advice relevance

Results showed a significant difference across advice points, \( F (2.66, 196.65) = 15.19, p < .001, \omega^2 = .003 \), which corresponds to a very small effect size. Post hoc analysis revealed that participants provided a significantly greater proportion of relevant advice at advice point one and significantly smaller proportion of relevant advice at point five compared to points two and four. Overall, the proportion of relevant advice provided decreased as the incident developed.

Advice suitability

Mauchley’s test indicated the assumption of sphericity had been violated, \( \chi^2 (5) = 46.65, p > .001 \), therefore multivariate tests are reported (\( \epsilon = .70 \)). Results show a significant difference across advice points, \( F (2.74, 202.55) = 54.56, p < .001, \omega^2 = .52 \), which corresponds to a large effect size. Post hoc analysis revealed that participants provided significantly more suitable advice at point one and significantly less at point five than points two and four. Thus, the amount of suitable advice provided significantly decreased across the course of the incident.

However, despite findings being significant, it is noted that only a small proportion of variance was explained by changes occurring within the TDS narrative across advice points for motivation for self-preservation and advice relevance. Therefore, caution should be taken in interpretation.

8.3.2 Relationships between accountability, motivational goals and advice quality

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between each factor across advice points. Spearman’s rho values are reported in Table 12. Analysis found that some relationships were unique to each advice point, suggesting the influence of situational factors such as risk. These unique relationships are discussed below.
Table 12
Correlation values for accountability, motivational goals and advice quality across advice points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice point</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Save Lives</th>
<th>Protect Self</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Initial call</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save Lives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Arrive on scene</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save Lives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Water request</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save Lives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Student death</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save Lives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sister's plea</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save Lives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; n. a. = not applicable

Advice point one

At this initial advice point there was a significant positive relationship between advice suitability and both advice quantity and relevance. However, there was a negative relationship between advice quantity and relevance. This suggests that the more advice Negotiator Coordinators provided, the more of this advice was suitable, but they also provided a greater proportion of unsuitable information. This is indicative of being less able to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. There was a moderate association between accountability and motivation to save lives indicating that when risk was generally low, those Negotiator Coordinators that felt most accountable were also more motivated to save lives.

Advice point two

The same association between advice quantity, suitability and relevance was present at this advice point, again suggesting difficulties with distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant
information. Accountability was substantially correlated to motivation for saving lives when risk was still relatively low. However, in a change from the previous advice point, a small positive association was found between the motivation for self-preservation and advice relevance. This finding is in opposition to hypothesis two and indicates that the more Negotiator Coordinators were motivated by the goal of protecting themselves the greater the proportion of relevant advice they provided.

**Advice point three**

The moderate positive relationship between motivation to save lives and accountability still remained. Accountability was still not positively correlated to self-preservation, in opposition to hypothesis one.

**Advice point four**

The same relationship between advice quality, relevance and suitability continued to be present at this fourth advice point. However, the relationship between accountability and motivation for saving lives was no longer present. Instead, there was a small positive association between accountability and advice quantity. Thus, after the death of a student when risk was high, the more accountable Negotiator Coordinators felt the more advice they provided. Whilst providing more advice meant providing more suitable advice it also meant delivering more unsuitable information.

**Advice point five**

At this final advice point, there was a strong positive relationship between advice suitability and relevance and a moderate positive relationship between advice suitability and quantity. There was no longer a relationship between advice quantity and relevance. Thus, the more advice Negotiator Coordinators provided, the more of it was suitable, and the more suitable advice provided the greater proportion of it was relevant. Again, there was a small positive association between accountability and advice quantity. However, there was also a small positive association between accountability and self-preservation and a small negative relationship between accountability and advice relevance. This indicates that when risk was high, the more accountable Negotiator Coordinators felt, the more they were motivated to protect themselves. Consequently, they provided more advice but the proportion of this advice that was relevant was smaller. In support of hypothesis one, feeling more accountable appears
to have prevented Negotiator Coordinators from discriminating between relevant and irrelevant information.

8.3.3 Relationships between accountability, advice quantity and relevance

At each of the four advice points, two-step hierarchical regression with advice quantity, relevance and suitability as the dependent variables was used to determine whether accountability significantly predicted advice quality, and whether a quadratic or linear function provided a better fit. The relationship between accountability and advice suitability was non-significant across all advice points and relationships between accountability and both advice quantity and relevance were only significant at certain advice points. Only significant results are reported below.

For advice quantity scores, results of analysis indicated that a quadratic function of accountability was a better fit than a straight line at advice point four (linear → quadratic, significant $R^2 = .15$, $F(1, 72) = 12.50$, $p = .001$). The overall regression was significant, $R^2 = .15$, $F(1, 73) = 6.26$, $p < .01$. This function, which is shown in Figure 4, illustrates a curvilinear relationship such that as accountability increased so too did advice quantity up to a certain point and then it decreased. Accountability explained 15% of variance in this model representing a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988).

For advice relevance scores, results of analysis indicated that a quadratic function of accountability was a better fit than a straight line at advice point one (linear → quadratic, significant $R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 71) = 6.98$, $p = .01$). The overall regression was significant, $R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 72) = 4.88$, $p < .01$. This function, shown in Figure 5, also illustrates a curvilinear relationship with increase in accountability leading to a greater proportion of advice relevance up to a certain point and then to a decrease. Despite this quadratic model significantly contributing to the ability to estimate values for advice relevance, only 12% of variance was explained by accountability which represents a small effect size. A quadratic function was also a better fit than a straight line for relevance at advice point four (linear → quadratic, significant $R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 72) = 4.65$, $p = .03$). However, the overall regression was non-significant, $R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 73) = .27$, $p > .05$.

At advice point five, a linear function of accountability was a better fit than a quadratic function (linear → quadratic, non-significant $R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 72) = 6.29$, $p = .43$). The overall regression was significant, $R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 73) = 8.91$, $p < .01$. This function, shown in Figure
6, illustrates that as accountability increased the proportion of relevant advice provided significantly decreased. But accountability only explained 12% of variance in this model representing a small effect size.
8.4 Discussion

This analysis investigated relationships between accountability perceptions, motivational goals and advice quality within a group of trained and operational police Negotiator Coordinators across the course of a suicide incident. It was argued that accountability would directly impact on advice quality and indirectly by altering the strength of motivation for self-preservation. Overall, hypotheses one (significant positive correlation between accountability and strength of motivation to protect oneself), hypothesis two (significant positive relationship between strength of motivation to protect oneself and advice quality), and hypothesis three (significant curvilinear relationship between accountability and advice quality) received partial support within certain advice points. As a novel approach to examining the impact of accountability on performance within naturalistic settings, results suggest a complex picture in which environmental feedback and interpretation of situation influence relationships. The relevance of these findings is discussed below.

8.4.1 Patterns in motivational goals and advice quality

Paralleling findings from the previous chapter that found a significant increase in accountability perceptions across the course of the incident, analysis found a pattern in the extent advisors were motivated by the goals of saving lives and self-preservation. As motivation has been linked with cognitive effort (Latham & Pinder, 2005), this provides some support for the suggestion made within Chapter 7 that increases in accountability, anticipated regret and importance would encourage greater investment of cognitive effort. Conversely, advice quantity, relevance and suitability all significantly decreased across advice points suggesting that despite the increased motivation to save lives, this did not consistently improve advice quality. Across advice points one to four, a relationship was found to exist between advice quality and quantity that the more advice provided, the more suitable advice was given but the lower the proportion of this advice was relevant. As providing irrelevant advice has potential consequences for advice to be utilised effectively, this could have negative consequences for the development of negotiation strategies within crisis situations. Although it could be argued that decrease in quality resulted from a loss in motivation across the course of the TDS, the significant increase in motivations indicates that this is unlikely to be the case.
8.4.2 Motivational goals

Negotiator Coordinators’ motivation for saving lives was higher than self-preservation across the course of the incident indicating that these advisors were motivated to protect members of the public. As this is the central goal of crisis negotiation, it is a positive sign that officers were increasingly motivated by this goal as risk to lives increased. However, as situational risk increased so too did motivation for self-preservation which indicates that as the potential for the situation to reach an irreversible negative resolution increased, Negotiator Coordinators perceived that it would be increasingly necessary to protect themselves from potential negative appraisals. Given that motivation influences attention focus (Latham & Pinder, 2005) and that performance becomes less effective when attention is divided from the task (Beal et al., 2005; Meijman & Mulder, 1998), this increased motivation for self-preservation may affect the ability of officers to focus on relevant information without being distracted by irrelevant information. Although in opposition to hypothesis two, no significant negative relationship was found to exist between motivation for self-preservation and advice quality, there was a significant decrease in advice quality, both for relevance and suitability, across all five advice points. Whilst the relationship between self-preservation and advice quality was not direct it is possible that an indirect relationship exists with attention focus and ability to develop an accurate mental model of the situation playing a mediating role.

Motivation to save lives was positively related to accountability during the first three stages of the scenario which suggests that when accountability pressure was generally lower, those Negotiator Coordinators that felt more accountable also felt more motivated to provide advice that would save lives. Although these advisors had higher accountability perceptions, accountability levels were still lower than latter stages and so represented intermediate levels. In line with research on stress and performance (Janssen, 2001; Xie & Johns, 1995), current findings suggest that intermediate levels of accountability may improve performance by encouraging officers to invest effort into implementing strategies that manage this pressure and prevent attention from being distracted from the task. Yet when accountability levels were high at latter stages, accountability no longer encouraged this motivation for accuracy, but instead encouraged motivation for self-preservation which has the potential to directed attention away from the task to worrying about post-incident evaluation mechanisms.
8.4.3 Accountability and advice quality

Accountability was only directly related to advice quality at advice points one and five, and only in terms of relevance, but not suitability. Thus, the influence of this workplace stressor on performance was related to ability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information rather than ability to generate suitable information. At the initial advice point this relationship between accountability and relevance was curvilinear such that increases in accountability led to a greater proportion of relevant advice up to a certain point, after which relevance decreased. However, at the latter advice point, this relationship was linear with increases in accountability leading to decreases in relevance. Whilst a conclusive explanation cannot be put forward, it is tentatively argued that general levels of accountability pressure may explain these relationships. At earlier stages in the scenario, accountability was generally low whereas toward latter stages this pressure was high. The linear relationship at the final advice point may have resulted from accountability pressure being too high to allow advisors to successfully cope with this psychological stressor in conjunction with other situational constraints.

Additionally, at this latter advice point accountability was no longer related to the motivation of saving lives, instead being linked with the motivation to protect oneself. Thus, after the death in police custody when accountability levels were generally high, those that felt most accountable also felt more motivated to protect themselves but were less able to distinguish between advice of most and least relevance to the situation. It may be that the increase in evaluation pressure distracted attention focus from the task on to the need to protect oneself. In line with evidence that suggests the importance of situation assessment for developing a mental model of the situation (Mogford, 1990), this distraction in attention focus may have prevented Negotiator Coordinators from developing a mental model of the situation and forecasting the potential influence of advice on this situation (Endsley, 1995). This could explain why those individuals that felt most accountable and most motivated by self-preservation were least able to make a distinction between relevant and irrelevant advice. Providing irrelevant advice may actually be counterintuitive to successfully justifying advice and could therefore compromise performance appraisals.

As a workplace stressor it may be that when perceptions of personal accountability are at their highest Negotiator Coordinators focus on providing advice they believe will protect them, and so accountability influences the way advice is constructed. This finding provides some
support to the proposal of Dekker (2008) that when accountability mechanisms are perceived to be driven by a culture of blame and lack of support, accountability encourages individuals to protect themselves rather than focus on the incident. Within Chapter 6, some Negotiator Coordinators recognised the potential for accountability to make them risk averse as they sought to provide advice that would protect themselves. The amount of advice provided generally decreased across the course of the simulation despite advisors receiving more situational information. This may indicate that Negotiator Coordinators only provided advice they thought could be justified or that they were less able to construct an accurate mental model of the situation. However, these suggestions are speculative and require further investigation to clarify relationships. Level of risk and uncertainty are also likely to have compromised advisors’ abilities to develop a mental model of the situation which would influence advice quality (Endsley, 1995). Indeed, this conclusion supported by the finding that advice quality significantly decreased across advice points as risk increased.

Whist accountability was linked with advice relevance at both extreme ends of the spectrum; significant relationships were not established between these factors at mid advice points despite the significant increase in accountability pressure and significant decrease in advice quality. As is the case within real crisis situations, there were many unidentified factors in this simulation that may have potentially affected these relationships. Indeed, Riketta and Landerer (2002) highlight that many factors within workplace settings may moderate or mediate the relationship between accountability and performance due to the complexity of these environments. One such factor that may buffer the impact of stress on wellbeing is coping styles. Within Chapter 6 it was identified that Negotiator Coordinators possessed different beliefs about the way accountability influences performance and it may be that these beliefs serve as a stress buffer. Unfortunately, limited participant numbers within each belief group prevents in-depth analysis from being conducted to examine this issue. Likewise, accountability is just one form of stress present within workplace environments; as previously highlighted, negotiation advice is constructed in highly challenging environments where other factors may cause stress such as competing demands and time pressure. It may be the amalgamation of stress experienced from various sources that influenced attention focus and performance rather than any individual stressor. In this sense, accountability may be viewed as a tipping factor providing additional psychological stress to pressure experienced from other factors within crisis situations. Whether or not accountability influences performance would depend on stress experienced from other sources.
It is also possible that risk may directly and indirectly alter relationships between accountability, motivational goals and advice quality. Accordingly, where risk to lives and general levels of accountability are low, those feeling most accountable would be more motivated to provide advice to save lives and consequently more suitable advice. However, when risk and general perceptions of accountability are high, those feeling most accountable would be more motivated to provide advice that protects them. But because risk is high, ability to forecast is compromised and consequently advice is less relevant. Accordingly, whereas low-risk situations facilitate reductions in commission of error through elevated accountability, high-risk situations may facilitate increased commissions of error as accountability levels increase. It is possible that accountability may cause greater cognitive effort to be invested into tasks, but lack of organisational support may encourage this effort to be directed toward self-preservation rather than task completion creating increased risk aversion. The influence of accountability on advice quality is not uniform, but depends on the interplay between a myriad of environmental factors, not all of which have been identified within this research.

8.4.4 Limitations

Given that much of analysis was based on correlations and sequential analysis and only small proportions of variance were accounted for, results should be interpreted cautiously. The large proportion of variance left unexplained further indicates that factors unidentified within analysis may influence relationships between accountability, motivational goals and advice quality. For example, the TDS was designed to increase accountability using involvement, requiring Negotiator Coordinators to tailor advice to the incident. Whilst these factors were examined using a pilot group, due to limited time to conduct research with participants, measures of involvement, risk and uncertainty were not taken across advice points. Thus, it is not possible to determine the extent perceptions of these factors influenced advice but this would be a fruitful avenue for future research. Furthermore, whilst advice provided by an expert panel represents the optimal approach, this does not necessarily mean all advice that did not match this standard is equally irrelevant. There may be a spectrum that ranges from sub-optimal through to harmful. Distinction was not made between this additional information and advice but future inquiry would benefit from examining this issue as it would advance understanding of the impact accountability has on advice formation.
8.5 Conclusion

Taken as a whole, research findings suggest that intermediate levels of accountability may be beneficial for formulating high quality advice, particularly in terms of relevance. However, low and high levels of accountability lead to poorer advice quality by affecting Negotiator Coordinators’ abilities to filter out irrelevant information. Advice quality is at its best when accountability encourages advisors to be motivated by the goal of saving lives rather than self-preservation. In this respect, self-preservation may act as a mediator between accountability and advice quality. However, situational factors such as risk are also likely to moderate relationships by altering ability to build situational models and forecast potential outcomes. Figure 10 below displays suggested relationships between factors, however further research is required to confirm relationships identified throughout this analysis.

![Figure 10](image_url)

**Key**
- Belief (stable/ pre-existing)
- Perception (dynamic/ changing)
- Action (cognitions)
9. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Overall, this thesis was developed to provide an overview of the impact accountability has on police judgments and decisions in critical incident contexts. Research was designed to address this goal by integrating experimental and naturalistic methods and theories from TDT, ODM, and NDM paradigms. A combined approach was taken because explanations of the impact that accountability has on judgments and decisions have thus far failed to balance experimental control with contextual factors. As discussions in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 highlight, current theories may either be overly simplistic or unable to separate the impact of accountability from myriad other factors. Consequently, accountability research has been unable to generate an integrated socio-cognitive model that explains the impact of both stable organisational and dynamic situational factors on cognitive processes and performance. The purpose of this thesis was to advance theoretical development using a framework that examined complex situational factors whilst maintaining some control.

The context of policing in critical incidents was chosen because these environments are characterised by risk, both to public safety and personal wellbeing, and police actions can potentially increase as well as decrease this risk (Hall, Grieve, & Savage, 2009). Furthermore, such incidents can attract attention from numerous audiences including victims’ families, the public and media, leaving officers open to widespread scrutiny and influencing long-term community perceptions of policing. Accountability pressure is likely to be salient in these situations because stakes are high and numerous audiences seek to evaluate police performance. As Ask and Granhag note (2005), understanding psychological underpinnings of police judgments and decisions along with factors that influence them is important for improving performance and reducing risk. Consequently, understanding the potential impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions is a valuable avenue for improving public safety. As findings of research have already been examined in detail within each chapter, the following section discusses key findings, integrating them into a socio-cognitive model of the potential impact accountability may have on police judgments and decisions in critical incident contexts.
9.1 Key findings and practical implications

As discussions in Chapter 1 highlighted, accountability is a social mechanism that seeks to improve performance by encouraging agents to adopt critical thinking strategies and cognitive effort in forming judgments and decisions (Boin et al., 2005). Within organisations such as the police service, accountability also serves the purpose of securing trust from audiences internal and external to the organisation by displaying transparency in performance, identifying mistakes and preventing reoccurrence (Gerber & Mendelson, 2008). Overall, findings of this thesis support previous research that shows the form accountability takes (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999) and the organisational culture accountability mechanisms exist in (Reason, 1997) influence performance. The impact that accountability has on judgments and decisions is influenced by a combination of stable organisational and dynamic situational factors that alter emotions and motivational goals.

Due to the novelty of this research area, subjective police perspectives were used to identify the accountability environment practitioners perceive policing to be conducted in and how this can influence judgments and decisions. Conclusions drawn from this qualitative analysis have been central to generating hypotheses and interpreting quantitative data generated to test hypotheses (Yardley & Bishop, 2008). Data within this thesis originates from three separate sources: 22 police focus groups; a vignette study conducted using SIOs; and a suicide intervention simulation using Negotiator Coordinators. Overall, findings indicate that stable factors such as organisational culture can shape the form accountability takes, how it is viewed and the influence it has on performance in dynamic situations. The following section discusses three key issues addressed within this research: the role of organisational culture; dynamic situational factors; and performance.

9.1.1 The role of organisational culture

This thesis has linked findings from TDT and ODM paradigms indicating the influence organisational culture and external audiences can have on the form accountability takes. As Reason (1997) notes, one of the most important organisational factors for minimising errors and mistakes is safety culture which can only be achieved if organisations encourage employees to report errors and mistakes. However, employees are more likely to report mistakes when they feel supported by the organisation and believe it promotes a just rather than blame culture.
General discussion

(Akselsson et al., 2009). In order to understand the impact of accountability on cognition it is therefore important to identifying both organisational culture and the form accountability takes. This issue was examined in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 by analysing the subjective perspectives of police practitioners in relation to the various ways accountability manifests itself and how this can influence judgments and decisions.

As previously discussed, just culture organisations evaluate judgments, decisions and actions based on the context they were made in and the knowledge and information available at the time (Dekker, 2009). They differentiate between mistakes made based on good intentions and those resulting from gross negligence, intentional violation and destruction. The former are viewed as honest mistakes that identify points of learning for the organisation and its employees whereas the latter are treated as culpable acts that warrant punishment (Akselsson et al., 2009). Accordingly, within a just culture employees are discouraged from committing wilfully negligent acts but should not fear being blamed for unintentional errors. Conversely, blame culture does not make this distinction but seeks to identify and punish culpable agents for negative outcomes following the person centred belief that errors are the result of an agent’s failings which can be prevented by punishment (Dekker, 2008; Lee & Harrison, 2000). Blame culture thus encourages outcome focussed accountability based on the belief that the worse an outcome was the more mistakes must have been committed. This approach is subject to hindsight bias, encouraging negative outcomes to be attributed to agents’ failings rather than systemic flaws (Dekker, 2011).

Analysis of police perspectives in Chapter 3 revealed the widespread view that policing was characterised by an unsupportive culture of blame, perpetuated by audiences internal and external to the organisation. Supporting the view of Frink and Klimoski (2004), police believed performance to be influenced by formal and informal mechanisms instigated by audiences internal and external to the service. Practitioners noted that blame culture encouraged outcome focused accountability as audiences sought to assign blame and punishment for sub-optimal outcomes. However, rather than being disparaging of the concept of accountability, they were dissatisfied with the form elicited by the underlying blame culture. Outcome accountability was perceived to be illegitimate and unfair because it failed to consider the difficult context judgments and decisions were made in and that some factors were beyond direct control, as the NDM literature highlights (Elliot, 2005; Lipshitz et al., 2001). These findings supported
experimental research as police highlighted the frustration caused by unfair and illegitimate performance appraisals which lowered morale despite police wanting to perform effectively (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Tyler, 1997). As morale is linked with investment of cognitive effort (Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006), blame culture has the potential to negatively affect judgments and decisions by reducing effort invested.

Overall, police perceived the unsupportive blame culture prevented learning by creating reluctance to report mistakes due to apprehension over potential blame and punishment. This supports the argument that blame culture is counterintuitive to preventing mistakes because it generates fear of reporting and lack of trust in fairness of performance appraisals (Sharpe, 2003). Practitioners also believed blame culture encouraged motivation for self-preservation which could distract attention from the task onto avoiding blame and punishment. Again, this suggestion followed the organisational perspective that blame culture can reduce accuracy by increasing evaluation anxiety and motivation for self-preservation (Dekker, 2011). It also supported findings of experimental research that indicate illegitimate, outcome focussed accountability can lead to biases such as conformity by encouraging motivation for self-preservation rather than accuracy (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). Finally, police noted that lack of support and motivation for self-preservation could lead to reduced creativity and increased risk aversion. This was in line with Anderson’s (2002) rational-emotional model that links risk aversion with the goal of reducing the unpleasant emotion of regret created by responsibility for negative outcomes. Findings indicated the potential for organisational culture to alter the way police view accountability mechanisms and subsequently motivational goals adopted.

This conclusion was additionally supported by analysis of Negotiator Coordinators’ stable accountability beliefs in Chapter 6. This chapter highlighted that not all officers view accountability to influence judgments and decisions in the same way. The combination of expectations and motivational goals may influence cognitive strategies adopted within critical incidents. For example, officers that indicated the organisation was supportive and fair noted being focused on the goal of saving lives and invested greater cognitive effort into formulating judgments and decisions that were accurate and suitable for the situation. Officers that perceived accountability to have a negative impact viewed it to encourage self-preservation and to distract attention from the situation. They noted the potential for this to encourage the use of inflexible
and overly risk averse strategies such as conformity, which could manifest itself in reluctance to deviate from organisational policy. However, officers that believed accountability negatively impacted on judgments and decisions but were determined to remain driven by the goal of saving lives rather than self-preservation noted adopting the strategy of remaining focused on the situation, minimising attention directed toward accountability within an incident.

Overall, analysis of police perspectives indicated that although many officers perceive the organisation to be characterised by an unsupportive blame culture, this view is not shared by all. There may be numerous reasons for differences in beliefs and perspectives such as variation in experience or interpretation of experience with accountability mechanisms. Beliefs may also be affected by individual differences such as political skill, “the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives” (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004, p. 311). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a definitive explanation for causes of differences but analysis highlights the potential for beliefs about organisational culture to affect motivational goals and use of cognitive strategies within a critical incident.

Overall, qualitative analysis supported and integrated findings from traditional and organisational research indicating that when police view the organisation to adopt a supportive and fair approach to accountability, they are more trusting of appraisal mechanisms and less likely to be motivated or distracted by self-preservation in an incident. Conversely, when police view the organisation to adopt an unsupportive and blaming environment, they are less likely to trust appraisal mechanisms, more likely to be motivated and distracted by self-preservation and may adopt overly risk averse strategies.

9.1.2 Dynamic situational factors

Integrating literature from NDM with ODM and TDT, quantitative research examined accountability in two dynamic situations: a major crime investigation and a crisis situation. Analysis in Chapter 4 highlighted the relative difficulty of managing performance appraisals in high profile serial murder investigation. Overall, officers viewed themselves to be significantly more capable of managing investigative tasks they had more control over as investigation managers compared to perceptions of external audiences beyond direct control. Thus, managing
external appraisals can be one of the most challenging aspects of policing within critical incidents such as murder investigations. Research was unable to provide definitive conclusions for why external perceptions were more difficult to manage. However, as critical incidents can attract widespread attention and scrutiny from various audiences, being able to effectively manage this attention is important for facilitating trust and support from key audiences (Hough & Roberts, 2004). Officers may be placed under additional pressure if they feel unable to effectively manage these perceptions. This research indicates the importance of teaching officers to manage external perceptions and pressures associated with them in addition to investigative skills. This may be achieved by using simulations that create similar emotional, cognitive and environmental pressures to those experienced in real critical incidents (Raybourn, 2006).

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 provide a case study of accountability in crisis situations. Following findings from qualitative analysis that indicated the potential for accountability to create risk aversion and regret (Anderson, 2002), Chapter 7 examined relationships between risk, accountability, anticipated regret and importance. Findings indicated that as threat to life increased, so too did perceptions of the extent officers would be held accountable, how regretful they would feel if the incident reached a negative outcome and appraisals of the influence personal input had on the incident. Supporting Frink and Klimoski’s (2004) model was the finding that accountability is not static but alters across the course of an incident as the situation changes. This indicates that perceptions of risk may not only relate to threat to public safety but also threat to officers based on potential performance evaluations.

In line with suggestions made by Van Swol and Luditsky (2007), accountability was significantly related to importance across advice points indicating that ability for judgments and advice to influence a situation may create a sense of responsibility and accountability. In line with the action affect (Zeelenberg et al., 2002), the more judgments and advice are tailored toward influencing a situation and reducing risk, the more accountable officers may feel for this advice. Following arguments presented by Anderson’s (2002) rational emotional model, officers may attempt to reduce feelings of responsibility and accountability by providing advice that maintains the status quo or follows organisational policy as this reduces the need to base advice on unique knowledge and experience.
Despite analysis of police perspectives indicating that accountability could lead to anticipation of regret, this emotion was not consistently related to accountability or importance. As previous research links regret with self-accountability (Passyn & Sujan, 2006), these findings support the suggestion that internal and external appraisals of accountability and responsibility can differ (Reb & Connolly, 2010). Audiences do not have direct access to an agent’s internal processes and so there may be a difference between what agents can justify to themselves and to others. As analysis of Negotiator Coordinators’ accountability beliefs in Chapter 6 indicated, it is also possible for disparity to exist between regret anticipated in relation to risk to public safety and regret anticipated based on threat to self as a result of potential blame.

This may have implications for motivational goals. For example, anticipated regret can act as a predictive threat that encourages individuals to invest greater cognitive effort and careful planning into judgments and decisions (Mandel, 2003). However, it can also encourage individuals to adopt risk aversive strategies in an attempt to reduce this unpleasant emotional state. It is possible that anticipation of regret in relation to loss of life may encourage accuracy strategies with advice being tailored to the situation because reducing risk to public safety would be the most appropriate strategy for reducing this emotion. However, if regret is also anticipated in relation to potential blame and punishment, self-preservation may encourage risk aversive strategies such as conformity because successfully justifying judgments and decisions could be viewed as an appropriate strategy for reducing blame and punishment. However, these suggestions are speculative as it was not possible to analyse them within this thesis.

9.1.3 Performance

The final stage of analysis examined relationships between accountability, motivational goals and performance within Negotiator Coordinators. Overall, as risk to lives and accountability perceptions increased, so too did motivations for saving lives and self-preservation. However, suitability, relevance and quantity of judgments and advice provided decreased across the course of the incident. The more advice officers provided, the more irrelevant information was given in addition to information suitable to the situation. This has consequences for the utility of advice within an incident as Incident Commanders would be required to sift through irrelevant information to find relevant advice. In line with NDM research, this finding suggests that despite
receiving more information across the course of the incident, officers were unable to develop an accurate mental model of the situation which prevented them forecasting the potential influence of advice on the situation (Endsley, 1995). Ability to develop an accurate mental model may have been affected by increasing risk as this can compromise the ability of individuals to predict how their actions may affect a situation (Elliott, 2005). It is possible that accountability and motivational goals may have influenced this process also by altering attention focus.

Attention and cognitive effort have limited capacity (Arami et al., 2010) and motivational goals direct where attention is focussed (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Directing attention toward task relevant information improves performance, whereas directing attention toward task irrelevant information hinders performance (Beal et al., 2005). Consequently, if officers are motivated to reduce risk to public safety they should be more likely to remain focussed on the situation and information that is relevant to achieving this goal. However, motivation for self-preservation could distract attention from relevant information onto considering ways to avoid blame and punishment. Findings indicated that at earlier stages within the simulated incident when accountability pressure was generally low, there was a positive relationship between accountability perceptions, motivation for saving lives and advice relevance. However, at the final stage of the incident after the irreversible loss of a life, accountability pressure was generally high and there was a positive relationship between accountability and motivation for self-preservation, but a negative relationship with advice relevance.

Relationships between accountability, motivation for self-preservation and performance were not present at mid-advice points indicating that situational factors (such as risk) or individual factors may influence these relationships. However, analysis provides some support for the notion that accountability influences motivational goals and that when accountability encourages motivation for self-preservation, performance may be compromised (Dekker, 2011; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Thus, the combination of risk and accountability may influence motivational goals and subsequent performance by altering attention focus, ability to build accurate mental models and discriminate between relevant and irrelevant judgments and information. Consequently, low-risk situations may facilitate reductions in commission of error through elevated accountability, whereas high-risk situations may facilitate increases in commissions of error as accountability levels increase. These findings further support the conclusion that the impact accountability has
on performance is not uniform, but depends on the interplay between environmental and internal factors, not all of which have been identified within this research.

**9.1.4 Implications**

Overall, findings of this analysis indicate that perceptions of stable organisational culture influence officers’ views of the form accountability takes. These views may affect judgments and decisions within a dynamic situation by altering perceptions of situational risk, regret, self-preservation and attention focus. It is possible that accountability does encourage greater cognitive effort to be invested into tasks, but lack of organisational support may lead this effort to be directed toward self-preservation rather than accuracy. Overall, officers are less likely to feel threatened by blame when they perceive the organisation to be supportive and performance appraisals to be fair and legitimate compared to unsupportive, unfair and illegitimate. Within a dynamic incident, lack of threat to self may prevent officers from experiencing regret in relation to potential blame but should not reduce regret associated with loss of life. Therefore, constructing and forecasting the potential influence of judgments and decisions is more likely to be driven by the goal of reducing risk to public safety rather than self-preservation. When officers are not distracted by self-preservation, their attention focus should remain within the incident facilitating the development of a more accurate mental model that facilitates judgments and decisions that are more relevant to the situation. Being focused on accuracy without considering self-preservation should also facilitate flexible cognitive strategies based on officers’ beliefs about what will be optimal within the situation rather than what is easier to justify post-incident.

As police highlighted, audiences external to the service also play a role in altering the culture and performance of policing. Therefore, suggestions for improving performance must consider the complex, political environment in which policing is conducted. Facilitating optimal performance and reducing risk to public safety requires the police service and external audiences to develop a safety culture that emphasises the importance of learning over punishment. This requires a widespread change in attitude toward errors and mistakes, accepting that they will occur but can only be minimised if a reporting culture is encouraged. This also requires facilitating an environment in which officers do not feel threatened by prospective blame and punishment and so are not encouraged to be motivated by self-preservation (Dekker, 2011). It is acknowledged
that achieving a safety culture can be difficult because of the influence and expectations external audiences have over accountability processes, but there are positive signs that the service is attempting to develop such a culture. This research demonstrated that some police practitioners felt the organisation had attempted to remove the blame culture. Indeed, over the last decade the service has encouraged the use of tools such as 10KV to facilitate anonymous reporting and candid discussions for improving policing. This demonstrates that the service recognises the importance of learning and that punishment is not always appropriate.

Figure 11 below presents a model of the influence accountability may have on judgments and decisions within critical incidents. It is important to note that data used to develop this model was collected from a variety sources and so interpretation of the model should consider the potential for different environmental factors within critical incidents to affect relationships between factors in different ways. Therefore, it is acknowledged that this model requires further examination to clarify relationships between factors.
Figure 11. The impact of accountability on judgments and decisions in high risk incidents

Key
- Belief (stable/pre-existing)
- Perception (dynamic/changing)
- Action (cognitions)
9.2 Limitations and future research

Each data chapter within this thesis has already discussed the limitations of research and so the current section will provide an overview of the most pertinent limitations and how future research may improve upon them. As Chapter 2 highlighted, the development of this research altered due to problems with access to participants. Part of the value of developing any body of research is in identifying methods for improvement as this assists future research development. Consequently, in addition to placing boundaries on interpretation of research, limitations also provide a useful tool for subsequent research.

Firstly, although this thesis has found some interesting relationships between environmental and individual factors; much of the analysis conducted has been sequential and correlational due to the research design. Consequently, this body of research cannot determine causality, but provides a model that identifies relevant factors and highlights how they may relate to one another. This model may be used as a framework for developing subsequent research that examines strength of relationships between factors and whether one factor influences another or whether they are interrelated.

Secondly, whilst integrating aspects of experimental and naturalistic paradigms allowed explanations to consider the role of environmental factors whilst controlling some extraneous variables, not all extraneous factors have been identified or controlled. For example, standardisation of materials delivered to participating officers allowed comparisons to be made between officers. However, inability to control or measure some environmental and individual factors such as level of involvement, risk and uncertainty prevented research from clarifying their role within critical incident judgment and decision making. Future research could increase clarification using a combination of two approaches. Firstly, participants could complete more in depth scales that ask them to rate perceptions of risk and uncertainty, level of involvement and the extent advice has been tailored toward the situation. Secondly, simulation narrative could be redesigned to develop scenarios where risk does not continually increase or coincide with uncertainty and involvement but fluctuates.

Furthermore, in Chapter 6 it was not possible to directly link accountability beliefs with measures of accountability perceptions, regret, motivational goals, and performance due to limited participant numbers. Different beliefs identified were also based on limited data obtained through a questionnaire design rather than in-depth interviews that could clarify origins of beliefs. It is possible that these beliefs exist along a spectrum rather than as
distinctly separate constructs. Future research may seek to use larger participant numbers to test a scale that measures strengths of beliefs so that comparisons may be made between stable beliefs and dynamic perceptions. However, it should be noted that as negotiation is a specialised area of policing, accessing larger numbers of officers would be difficult.

An interesting avenue that arose within this thesis was the potential difference between perceptions of risk to public safety and risk to self and how both may influence regret and motivational goals. This research did not specifically ask participants to rate perception of risk to public safety or self. Due to the limited time allowed for conducting research with participating officers, the number of scales presented throughout the simulation had to be kept to a minimum. It was also important that officers were not overwhelmed by numerous scales. Future research should seek to clarify these issues by altering scales presented to participants. It is also important to note that by asking officers to rate their perceptions of accountability, regret, importance and motivation, this may have drawn participants’ attention to these issues which could have altered perceptions of these factors. However, it was not possible to measure these factors without asking officers to provide ratings. Interpretation of results must take this issue into consideration.

It is also important to remember that the case study used within this thesis focuses on advisors that are responsible for formulating judgments rather than decisions. Although judgments play an influential role in decision making, it is possible that the final stage of implementing an option into action and the additional accountability and responsibility associated with this cognition may alter the influence of accountability on cognitive processes. Similar research could be conducted using police officers responsible for making decisions rather than providing advice so that comparisons could be made.

Finally, it is also worth noting that this body of research is largely based on simulations and vignettes. It is unlikely that research access would be granted to such situations given the high stakes and the potential for research to interfere with police performance. Consequently, simulations and vignettes represent the most appropriate method of measuring these issues but it is still necessary to consider that the interplay between factors may alter within real critical incidents. Research within this thesis has the added support of police perspectives obtained through focus groups, some of which were conducted in relation to real critical incidents which provide support for some of the conclusions made.
9.3 Conclusion

Overall, this thesis used a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine the impact of accountability on police judgments and decisions in critical incidents. Analysis indicated that the impact accountability has on performance is influenced by perspectives of organisational culture driving accountability mechanisms and level of risk present within a critical incident. Performance is more likely to be improved when the organisation and audiences external to it provide a supportive environment than when they perpetuate a blame culture. When officers perceive the organisation provides a supportive environment with fair performance appraisal mechanisms they are less likely to be distracted by the goal of self-preservation. This may allow them to direct greater attention focus to information within the incident which can facilitate the development of a more accurate mental model, thereby improving the ability to forecast future outcomes. Given that perspectives about organisational culture can potentially influence the impact accountability has on performance, future research should seek to identify individual and environmental factors that influence these beliefs.
REFERENCES


References


References


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References


References


APPENDIX A

MAJOR INVESTIGATION VIGNETTE NARRATIVE AND SKILL SORTING TASK
DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give your own views in filling in this questionnaire without taking views from others. The questionnaire normally takes between 20 - 30 minutes.

- This questionnaire is anonymous.
- All information will be treated confidentially and will only be used for research.
- We are looking for general trends, NOT analysing individuals’ responses.

YOU ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE (IN WHOLE OR IN PART) AND YOU MAY WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY AT ANY TIME.

If you have decided to take part, please make an ‘X’ mark in the box

I have read the instructions and would like to take part

(If you do not wish to take part, please just return the blank questionnaire to the person who gave it to you)

SEASON ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please fill in all questions electronically, save the document and send (as an attachment) to:

l.j.alison@liverpool.ac.uk

1. Gender: 2. Date of Birth: 3. Ethnicity:

4. Rank of Office: 5. Length of Service:

6. Police Force:

7. Have you ever been involved in any aspect of a high profile or complex police investigation (for example, murder case, child abduction, terrorist incident, siege event)?

8. If you answered yes to the above question, and if you feel comfortable doing so, please briefly indicate the nature of the event(s) and your role in it:
SECTION TWO: DECISION-MAKING

Please imagine you are the SIO assigned to the following case:

Rodney Bellamy has made a complaint to you about a local health authority. Specifically, he gives an account of how his 68 year old father, Ralph, died. He notes that his father had been given high levels of Digoxin. Although this is an appropriate medication for individuals with heart conditions, it was at an unusually high dosage. Rodney tells you that he had insisted that the hospital administration send records and samples for toxicology reports. You speak to the hospital and they tell you that a 43 year old male nurse named Charles Atwill had ordered Digoxin. However, he'd requested it for patients under his own care, not for Bellamy's father, and Atwill had cancelled the orders. The medical centre concluded that there was no evidence with which to confront Atwill, although the drug was clearly missing. No further action was taken.

Several months later, other patients begin to suffer from high levels of drugs in their systems, and Marcus Steven, a toxicologist and executive director, warns police that there may be a poisoner on the staff. He had spotted a cluster of at least four cases and reports this to you and the local health authorities. Stevens stated that inappropriate levels of Digoxin have been used, sometimes lethally and in other cases where patients had been narrowly saved. Hospital officials resisted his analysis, and had even complained about Steven to the local health department, saying he had rushed to judgment and was pressuring them unduly.

Despite these protestations, you decide to further investigate Atwill and realise that thirteen months after the death of Bellamy, preliminary investigation finds that Atwill had worked at ten different institutions in sixteen years. You discover that nearly 10 years ago, a coroner in another constabulary had told several officials that he believed there might be an “angel of death” operating at a local hospital. The coroner had examined the death circumstances of a 78-year-old patient, Omar Schramm, and he’d been fairly certain the man had been murdered. Schramm had succumbed to a fatal dose of Digoxin, but his condition had not warranted getting the drug. Although an internal investigation was conducted, it was inconclusive. Atwill had already gone. He’d moved on to another hospital, St. Luke’s, nearby.

In 2002, a nurse at St. Luke’s had reported Atwill’s suspicious behaviour. It turned out that seven St. Luke’s nurses were collectively prepared to warn hospital administrators and the police about Atwill. They believed he was killing patients because, in June 2002, they had found opened and unopened packages of drugs improperly placed in a bin, and had seen Atwill leaving the rooms of patients who then expired. Atwill was pressed about this so he resigned and moved on. A pathologist, Dr. Mihalakis, made a comprehensive investigation, but in March 2003, he issued a report indicating that after reviewing 67 cases, he had no proof of criminal activity “in which prosecution was the appropriate course of action.” The hospital administrators did notify the Board of Nursing about Atwill’s unprofessional conduct, with no identifiable result. Still, no bodies had been exhumed for an exhaustive analysis, few autopsies had been performed for the records, and no one had interviewed Atwill. By then, he was already at work at Somerset Medical Centre (having lasted only 18 days at another institution nearby).

Atwill is now under arrest for the murder of Ralph Bellamy. He is suspected of injecting a lethal dose of Digoxin, which he had obtained by altering computer records of hospital drug supplies. He is pending police interview.

Now, read through the following scenarios carefully and, by typing in the box next to each, indicate whether you think you would be Very Good (VG), Good (G), or Fair (F) at dealing with each scenario. **NOTE:** You can only use 4 VG’s, 10 G’s, and 4 F’s. For example, if you think you would be VG at scenario ‘A,’ you would put ‘VG’ in the box (it may be easier to reduce the size of your page so you can see the whole table at the same time).
### Appendix A

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Dealing with Bellamy’s son, who vents his anger at you for ‘neglecting’ his father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Justifying your decision to the Chief Constable regarding not investigating Atwill further after Bellamy’s initial complaint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Not being distracted from your responsibilities by tasks that other members of staff should be carrying out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Managing the media where they appear to be ahead of the investigation. For example, by televising interviews with potential victim’s family members who have yet to make official statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Organising the potentially overwhelming flood of information from the media, your staff, the families of potential victims and the health service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Prioritising the following demands: The health services’ urgent request for a briefing report, victims’ families requesting to speak to you, and speaking to other potential victims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Ensuring that all relevant parties are ‘kept in the information loop’ throughout the investigation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Reassuring the local community during the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Dealing with competing demands from the media, the community, the Health Authorities, and ACPO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Maintaining morale where it is apparent that some staff are no longer working collaboratively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Boosting morale where some team members perceive they have already failed in ‘allowing’ Atwill to stay at large for so long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Dealing with staff members who remain confused about the nature of their role, despite being assigned their responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Improving inter-agency communication, where, despite several previous attempts, you still need additional information from several Health Authorities, social services and hospitals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Speaking to a victim’s family after a member of the investigating team leaks sensitive information regarding the victim to the press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Choosing between several conflicting pieces of advice from external advisors on how to interview Atwill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Justifying your strategy where journalists have heavily criticised the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Dealing with certain newspaper headlines stating that police are principally to blame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Dealing with the long term effect this case may have on the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Of the four VG’s you have indicated, please specify which scenario you would be best at. [ ]

2. Of the four F’s you have indicated, please specify which scenario you would struggle most with. [ ]
APPENDIX B

TACTICAL DECISION SCENARIO SCRIPT
**Appendix B**

**Turn 1: Audio of a telephone call**
The purpose of this was to simulate the first call received by the participant where they would be informed of the unfolding incident. Realistically the participants cannot see the incident for themselves and so have to rely on the description given. A picture of a telephone was displayed on the screen and this was accompanied by the sound of a phone ringing and then a voice saying the following:

“Hello, I understand that you are a negotiator coordinator. I’m Sergeant Jones. I’m standing in as duty officer for today and I’ve copped a right one. I’ve got two students sitting on the roof of a building. They’ve been here for about three hours now. The first calls were from people passing by who thought they might be graffiti artists but it now appears they are sitting there and they have caused no damage. I’m worried in case one of them falls or jumps so I’ve stopped people walking near that part of the building. They’re all aged about 18 or so and dressed in dark clothing. One of my PCs says they might be Goths you know into gothic music and culture and things like that. A bit dark and scary really. Anyway I’ll hold everything like this until you can get here. What do you advise me to do in the meantime?”

**Turn 2: First steps at scene**
The next scenario simulated the situation where the participant would have arrived on scene. They were able to see for themselves that there were two females, dressed in gothic clothing, standing by the edge of a flat roof apparently looking over the side of the building. In the distance, but clearly visible, was a large gothic church. The incident commander is close up and in shot and is wearing a bright yellow reflective police jacket. His shirt is open necked and he is not wearing a hat. He gives the appearance of being an operational officer rather than the image of an office bound member of staff. He said:

“Hi. They’re still up there. I forgot to mention to you that one of my officers has tried to engage them in conversation. They told him to go away. Um, we don’t intend to rush them, we’d like you to negotiate with them please. After that we’ll have them assessed by paramedics for any medical needs. What’s your negotiation strategy?”

**Turn 3: Request for water from the subjects**
In this scenario a request for a drink of water was made. Many police negotiators have experienced this. There is no definitive reason for it as it will relate to the different circumstances encountered on each occasion. It may be that stress has left the subject with a dry throat, or that the subject is trying to fill time, or see what they can get if they ask. In the scene, negotiators are now deployed and one of them relays the request to the duty officer:

Negotiator - “Hiya I’m Karen. I er we are trying to talk to the students but they’re just but they’re just not talking back to us at the moment they’re not even speaking to each other. I don’t know what the problem is. Er one of them has turned round and asked for water, I told them we can’t make that decision but we’d come back and ask. What do you think?”

Incident Commander - “Well I can’t see the problem. What harm will that do?”
Turn 4: One of the girls dies
The fourth input provided is in two parts. In the first part it can be seen that there is now only one girl standing on the roof and she appears to be looking more intently at the ground below. The negotiator says:

“Boss did you see that I don’t know what happened. We’ve not said anything to spook them. Um I think they must of just slipped or fell or something. The others didn’t push them or I’d seen it”

The second part is played after a very short break which allows for the reality of the incident commander having had a meeting with the paramedic staff present. Within this there is also a questioning comment directed towards the participants questioning the amount of assistance that they are actually providing:

“I just seen that. The paramedics are saying they can see the body. They haven’t approached it yet but it’s lifeless. Looks like it’s obviously dead. She’s fell from the roof head first. It was like an Olympic diving contest. To be honest with you I don’t think you are helping the situation. What are we gonna do now?”

Turn 5: The dead girl’s sister offers to help
In critical incidents involving negotiators, interlocutors in the form of a relative, friend or representative (such as a lawyer or medic) are often volunteered, offered, and in some instances used. Every negotiator has received training on the use of third party intermediaries (TPIs). In an instance such as this, with two subjects, it is highly likely that a TPI would have come forward. In Turn 5, therefore, the incident commander introduced the TPI:

Incident commander - “So there you are. This is the dead girl’s sister. Tell him who you are.”

Dead girl’s sister – “Hi I’m Jane. I’m Becky’s sister. I know that we weren’t very close but I really loved her and I’m family. I think it’s pointless somebody else dying when I can help. I really want to help please let me help because I can’t go through the rest of my life knowing that I could have done something and haven’t done it.”

Incident Commander - “So you gonna use her or not?”
APPENDIX C

VERBAL BRIEFING SHEET
Verbal Briefing

Study Title: The impact of accountability on advisors decisions in critical incidents.
Name of Researcher: Sara Waring, Sean Cunningham

To start
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this exercise.

The exercise will take the form of showing you a series of 5 short video vignettes. Following each film you will be invited to answer a series of questions on the laptop computers supplied. You will see that each question is timed on the screen. This will ensure that the exercise will take no more than one hour.

You are asked to answer the questions from the perspective of a Negotiator Coordinator or negotiator advisor to an Incident Commander.

Please answer all questions as you would in a live situation.

The incident is one that you will have been trained for or may even have encountered in your policing or private lives. If at any stage you wish to stop taking part then please feel free to stop writing. Just because you have started the exercise does not mean you are obliged to finish it. You may leave the exercise immediately or wait until all have finished and leave at the end.

At the conclusion of the exercise, we will be available to answer any questions you have or will discuss anything you have seen or written. There is also independent support available for you whose contact details are on the information sheet. A panel of officers, each with over ten years of negotiation experience have also completed this scenario. We will provide you with their collective responses once you have completed the exercise to allow you to personally evaluate performance.

The results will be collated and published as part of an academic paper for the University of Liverpool. You will be able to obtain the collective results by contacting me (business cards to be handed out) or through your regional representative at the National Negotiators Group. There will be no individual feedback. Your contribution will be anonymous to the research team.

Before we commence I ask that you read the information sheet you have just been provided and if you agree to take part then sign the consent form and we shall collect these before we start.

At Conclusion:
Thank you very much for taking part. Before you leave, please feel free to ask questions.
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: The impact of accountability on advisors decisions in critical incidents.
Name of Researchers: Sean Cunningham and Sara Waring

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Here is some information to help you decide whether or not to take part. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with friends and the researcher if you wish. Ask if there is anything you do not understand or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1. You may or may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in the study. However, information obtained during the course of the study may help us to increase our understanding of the use of negotiators in crisis incidents.

2. It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be able to retain this information sheet and a copy of the consent form. Even if you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

3. This study will involve you watching a series of short films on a sensitive issue and then providing your responses to specific questions. Your responses will be anonymous. The information you provide will be completely confidential. No personal data about you will be disclosed to anyone.

4. The collective questionnaire results will be made available to all participants via their Force Negotiator Co-ordinators and through the National Negotiators Group at the completion of the study.

5. Complaints should be addressed through Professor Alison on L.J.Alison@liv.ac.uk to the Research Governance Officer in Legal Services (ethics@liv.ac.uk, 0151 794 8920). Information provided should include the study name or description (so that it can be identified), the principal investigator or student investigator or researcher, and the substance of the complaint.

WHO CAN TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

You are only eligible to take part in the study if you have attended a regional negotiators course or the National Negotiators Course and have deployed as a negotiator to at least one live incident.

If you have any questions about this study or your eligibility for it then please do not hesitate to ask the lead researcher, Sara Waring.

Email: s.waring@liverpool.ac.uk
Tel: 07749948155

Once you have taken part you can obtain independent support from Adrian West, Forensic Clinical Psychologist on 07983 720226

This project is being supervised by Professor Alison who can be contacted upon L.J.Alison@liv.ac.uk and on 0151 794 6707.
APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title: The impact of accountability on advisors decisions in critical incidents.

Name of Researcher: Sean Cunningham, Sara Waring

Please tick boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

3. I understand that none of my personal details will be recorded and that my responses are anonymous.

4. I understand that I will be asked to provide responses to a situation from the perspective of a negotiator coordinator based on my training and experience as a qualified Hostage and Crisis Negotiator.

5. I understand that in order to take part in the study I must be a qualified Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiator and have deployed to at least one live incident.

6. I understand that data supplied by me can be removed at my request at any time after my participation.

7. I agree to take part in the study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

1 copy for participant, 1 copy for researcher