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'We Call it Getting Your Eye In': Policing Sexual Harassment on the London Underground Through the Lens of Haraway's Situated Knowledges and Cyborgs

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This article explores police perspectives of sexual harassment on the London Underground. Drawing on 15 semi-structured interviews with the British Transport Police this article demonstrates how the police a) use their 'situated knowledges' to make sense of the dynamics of the London Underground and seek out offenders within the network, often without a report of harassment; and b) engage with technologies in order to (re)construct incidents of sexual harassment so that they can be investigated. The article argues that the BTP occupy a 'soft cyborg ontology', and claims the implications this has on epistemologies and methods of policing as significant. As well as permitting new insights into the procedures of policing sexual harassment on public transport, it contributes a critical perspective to the role of technology in police culture, practice and methods.

KEY WORDS: sexual harassment, situated knowledges, cyborgs, technology, police culture, British Transport Police, London Underground

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment as a pervasive societal issue has received significant attention in academia (MacKinnon 1979; Bowman 1993; Vera-Gray and Fileborn 2018). Its occurrence on public transport has also been given increasing attention (Chowdhury 2022; Ceccato and Loukaitou-Sideris 2022; Kacharo et al. 2022). There is also research that explores the 'type' of sexual offences that commonly occur on public transport, such as groping, frotteuring, leering and stalking (Gekoski et al. 2015; Lewis et al. 2021), and work that considers how the mobile nature of transit spaces significantly impacts experiences of victimhood (Ceccato et al. 2021; Korn 2018; Lewis et al. 2021). Yet despite this, there is limited work that explores how incidences

of sexual harassment are policed within public transport spaces. At a time when police culture and practices are under intense public, political and academic scrutiny, an analysis of how these institutionalized approaches manifest and operate is of critical importance.

Existing work has highlighted that police and criminal justice practitioners understand and 'make sense' of sexual violence differently to victims or citizens (Saunders, 2012; Jordan 2004; Campbell 1995) and crucially how this impacts responses (Carrillo 2021). This article develops a critical insight into *how* these differing, institutional knowledges are constructed *within* the police. To do so, the concepts of police culture, situated knowledges (Haraway 1988), mental mapping, technologies and cyborgs have been operationalized to analyse 15 in-depth interviews with members of the British Transport Police. This article establishes that the cognitive, corporeal and digitized process of policing sexual offences can be understood as a combination of information gathered by technologies and humans, and made sense of by humans from a situated, partial standpoint. I argue that this forensic analysis of BTP practice in a specific area reveals the *soft cyborg ontology* of the police, and claim the implications this has on epistemologies and methods of policing as significant.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Police culture and the construction of police knowledge

Reiner (1985) describes police culture as values, norms, perspectives and craft rules. Whilst there appears to be emerging consensus that police culture is in transition (Workman-Stark 2017) and that what it means to be a police officer and 'do policing' has changed over time (Silvestri 2017; Reiner 2010; Bacon 2022), there are aspects of police culture that were identified in early works that continue to be seen as significant (Loftus 2009; Brown and Silvestri 2020). One of the defining characteristics that is said to dominate police culture is that of a 'cult of masculinity' (Reiner 2010; Westmarland 2001) or a police 'brotherhood' (Sanders et al. 2022), with more recent work drawing attention to how this continues to manifest as a hostile work environment for female officers (Brown and Silvestri 2020; Cunningham and Ramshaw 2020; Hasan 2021). Importantly, the notion that the police is an arena where 'masculinity contest culture' (Workman-Stark, 2021; Glick et al. 2018) is rife, holds particular relevance when considering the policing of sexual offences.

As a historically male dominated organization where work was perceived to involve danger, physicality and force (Reiner 2010), women in the police were often seen as more suited to 'specialist work' with vulnerable women and children (Silvestri 2017). Walklate (2001) describes this as 'feminized policing', whilst others discuss how the policing of sexual offences is perceived as 'gendered work' (Rabe-Hemp 2008; Workman-Stark 2017). In short, the policing of sexual offences has often been considered as a specific type of police work that goes against the norms of traditional police culture (Westmarland 2001), requiring a particular, situated, gendered knowledge. However, it has been highlighted that the operational approach of delegation of sexual offences to female officers is problematic in an organization that remains male-dominated, as it is likely to impact the processes and outcome of responses to sexual violence (Carrillo 2021; Yalley and Olutayo 2020).

Holgersson and Gottschalk (2008) describe the work of police officers as knowledge intensive. Therefore, it is important to consider *how* knowledge is constructed and which knowledge claims are privileged within this environment. Fielding (1984) describes police officers as having a specialized and situated body of knowledge built from experience, that is then drawn upon and applied to specific situations. Terms such as 'familiarity knowledge', 'tacit knowledge' (Schon 1983; Holgersson and Gottschalk 2008) and 'craft expertise' (Hargreaves 1999; Rowe et al. 2016) are all types of knowing that are applicable here. Within this paradigm of thought, there is a recognition of both the learned and situatedness of police officers' knowledge of crimes that occur within particular spaces.

Something that is largely missing from police culture literature is the role of technologies- not simply the use of technology in policing, but how it contributes to and is woven into the fabric of police ontologies and epistemologies which make up the very foundations of police culture. Moving forward, it is significant to remember that an officer's knowledge and how they perceive and police space and crime is constructed, learnt and situated within a specific culture and environment, and is implicated significantly by technologies.

Hot spots and mental maps

There is an abundance of literature that explores the spatial aspects of crime (Brantingham and Brantingham 1991; Cohen and Felson 1979). Much of this focuses on how environmental factors and spatial characteristics have a significant impact on the location in which a crime is committed, leading to a recognition that crime is highly concentrated in terms of place, which in turn informs police practice and allocation of resources (Kindynis 2014; Chainey et al. 2022). This is the core idea around crime 'hotspots', which are defined as areas that have a 'higher than expected level of criminal activity' (Ratcliffe and McCullagh 2001, 331).

It is worth considering here that, as well as allowing for more space and time specific policing, 'hot spot' information also informs police perceptions and understanding of a space. Brantingham and Brantingham (1981, 93) use the term 'cognitive mapping' to describe 'the process by which people acquire, remember and use information about their environment.' This notion has also been termed 'mental mapping', which is defined by Holloway and Hubbard (2001, 48) as '...each individual's knowledge of their surroundings in a way that is useful to them and the type of relationship they have with their environment'. It is clear then, that whilst mental maps are subjective, they are often formed partially through collective understanding, and, within a policing context, connected to cultural constructions of crime and space (Kindynis 2014).

The subjective yet collective nature of 'mental maps' has been employed along gendered lines to understand women's perceived and actual spatial behaviour (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2014); gendered fear of COVID-19 (Broche-Perez et al. 2022) and women's geographies of fear (Koskela and Pain 2000; Fanghanel 2016). However, little work to date has examined the subjective nature of police officers' mental maps, and where this does exist, it is generally with a focus on racial or classist bias (Cankaya 2020). Yet the need to acquire and utilize local knowledge is a traditional component of policing (Fyfe 1991). Loftus (2009) discusses how the officers she observed on patrol had intricate knowledge of their respective areas, something that was considered amongst officers as being 'street wise'. Holdaway (1983) highlights the significance of territoriality in the police and how they perceive particular spaces or 'grounds' as their own. Indeed, police culture acts as a lens through which officers conceptualize the urban (Evans et al. 1992; Fyfe 1991). Fyfe (1995) also highlights how mental maps allow officers a set of expectations as to what constitutes normal activity in a particular area, and how best to police it. Paperman (2003) briefly considers how policing of the Paris metro is based heavily on the types of behaviour that can be anticipated. The ability of the police to perceive deviations in behaviour is an observational competency, built up from a knowledge of the space and the 'normal' behaviour that occurs within it.

As Kindynis (2014) iterates, mapping of all kinds has become increasingly intertwined with the digital, impacting how we perceive and interact with urban spaces. Officers' mental maps of the London Underground and how they police sexual offences are entangled with the technologies that regulate the space and those that move through it. Exploring this process dismantles the idea of cognitive, corporeal and digitized knowing as bifurcated and demonstrates the significance of a symbiotic, cyborg-esque approach to policing.

Technologies

A wide range of technologies now play a significant role in policing (Brookman and Jones 2021). CCTV has long been considered as a valuable tool in deterring or reducing crime (Webb and

Laycock 1992; Lai et al. 2019), reducing fear and making people feel safer (Loukaitou-Sideris 2014; Ceccato 2020). Furthermore, the presence of CCTV is said to encourage those who have been victimized to report crimes (Welsh and Farrington 2003). Less, however, is written on how it is used by the police as an investigative tool (with the exception of Brookman and Jones 2021), despite a recognition of the role of digital forensics in police procedures (Tully et al. 2020; Horsman and Sunde 2022). The use of CCTV in the investigative process of sexual offences on the Underground is noteworthy. As explored in the findings of this article, it significantly impacts how the officers quite literally *see* victims and offenders, and subsequently make sense of and police incidents.

Norris and Armstrong (1999) describe how CCTV operators rely on normative behavioural codes of conduct specific to the spaces they are surveying in order to recognize deviance. Furthermore, 'operators utilize their already existing understanding of who is most likely to commit crime' (Norris and Armstrong 1999, 119). This highlights the significance of a situated knowledge built on past occurrences within a particular space. Whilst it is important to recognize the utility of CCTV in the investigation of crime, it is equally essential to consider the direction of visual flow: what and who is being watched, and by whom. As Walby (2005, 193) notes: 'CCTV cameras involve a relationship of power between the watcher and the watched'. The way in which what is seen is interpreted and given meaning (by the police) is significant, as Haraway (1988, 585) states 'vision is *always* a question of the power to see' and 'translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial' (589). The way in which videos depicting criminal activity are (re)interpreted by officers is done so through the lens of institutionalized knowledge and discourse. In the context of this article, the occurrence of an individual, corporeal experience of sexual harassment or assault inevitably takes on a mutated form as it is observed through technologies and reconfigured to make sense from a crime fighting standpoint.

Another relatively recent technology that constitutes part of the BTP investigative procedure and informs police knowledge of offender movements, is 'smart card' data. Transit systems across the globe have introduced smart cards as a form of payment and the information that can be garnered from these is significant (Bagchi and White 2005). Haggerty and Ericson (2000, 616) go as far as considering that the information they can provide creates 'data-doubles'. Research has explored the functionality of smart card use on public transport in order to understand travel patterns (Smith et al. 2013) and Bagchi and White (2005, 465) consider how 'transport providers can 'construct' the trips that people make over the course of the day or longer and examine travel behaviours...'. Despite the use of smart card data for understanding travel patterns, there has been little academic research that explores how such data is used in police investigations to ascertain the movements of suspects and victims.

This article explores how these technologies are operationalized and contribute significantly to the collective knowledge BTP have of sexual offences in the Underground. It discerns that information gathered through surveillance is not observed and interpreted by passive, objective recipients, but by officers who possess their own mental maps and perceptions of the space, situated within a police culture. Fyfe et al. (2015) recognize that police work is carried out within a complex web of structural and situational contingencies, and the information, or knowledge that is gathered is given meaning by cognitive agents. It is at this juncture between technologies, cognitive spatial processes and culturally situated subjects that Haraway's (1991) concepts of the cyborg and situated knowledges (1988) can expose the nuance of police understandings and practices.

Situated knowledges and cyborgs

In order to analyse the empirical material presented in this article, and progress insights into police culture and the policing of sexual harassment in public transport, Donna Haraway's feminist concept of 'situated knowledges' will be used. In her essay *Situated Knowledges* (1988, 590) Haraway states: 'There is no single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many

dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions'. Rather than claiming that one (oppressed) group of people hold an objective vision or truth of reality, situated knowledges claims that all knowledge is partial and situated. It retains the feminist notion of critiquing knowledge claims and how they are justified (Hartsock 1981), whilst permitting a consideration for the situated-ness of each observer within a political, historical and social context. The concept of situated knowledge allows an insight and critique as to how sexual harassment is known to the police and consequently managed and investigated. By critiquing objective knowledge claims (as can often be presented from an authoritative perspective), it recognizes that knowledge is always situated, relational and engaged (Smith 1987). Importantly, it exhibits how this police knowledge and subsequent action is mediated through technologies.

Haraway's (1991) concept of the *cyborg* will be used in the analysis to depict the reconcilia-tion of cultural, tacit and technologically mediated police understandings of sexual harassment. Haraway posits that we are all ontologically and materially cyborgs. That is, we are hybrids of machine and organism'. As Lapum *et al.* (2012) consider, in contemporary society it is difficult to observe where humans end and machines begin, as the cyborg has become part of the fabric of our everyday realities.

Existing and new technologies intimately restructure policing methods and subsequently police knowledge. Much of the literature considering the use of technology focuses on the value and risks (Ariel et al. 2016; McGuire 2021; Szocik and Abylkasymova 2021; Sandhu and Fussey 2021) of these technologies and how they threaten or improve modes of policing. My aim here is not to advocate for the role of technology, nor argue that it is dehumanizing, in this case, to the experience of sexual harassment. Rather, by demonstrating the already embedded role and symbiotic relationship of technologies with corporeal and tacit policing, the application of Haraway's cyborg grants the opportunity for ontological considerations. This allows for an advancement on debates surrounding police culture, police knowledge and the policing of gen-der-based violence.

The concept of a cyborg ontology has been effectively used to demonstrate the role of tech-nology in person-centred healthcare practices and the value of acknowledging this reality and the impact it has on interactions with patients (Lapum *et al.* 2012). Yet despite the increas-ing use of and dependence on technology, this approach has yet to be applied to the police. Subsequently, I argue below that the BTP occupy a *'soft cyborg ontology'*. I use the term 'soft' pur-posefully to express the existing embeddedness of technologies in BTP policing (rather than a sharp and dramatic shift towards a forced increase in new technologies); as well as to distinguish between the relatively moderate use of technology by BTP. This is in comparison to, for exam-ple, the use of robotic AI replacing human officers to manage high risk situations (Szocik and Abylkasymova 2021; Kostavelis and Gasteratos 2017). As will be explored below, this 'softness' allows space for officers' expert tacit and corporeal knowledge to be preserved in police practice. This nods to what Lampum *et al.* (2012, 277) describe as a 'relational kinship between human and machine', where boundaries and borders between machine and human become blurred. It is this cyborg-esq hybrid of knowledge, mediated through body, mind and technologies that forms BTP's ontology and way of knowing and policing sexual harassment.

METHODS

This research adopts a relatively conventional approach to methods, consisting of 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with members of BTP. This choice of method was framed by an interpretivist epistemology that allowed for an exploration into the subjective nature of officers' understandings of sexual harassment on the London Underground. Based on the premise that knowledge is constructed in the context of individual histories and social interaction

(Schwandt 1994), Haraway's *Situated Knowledges* (1988) was operationalized throughout the research. It has been paramount in deconstructing the processes that ultimately culminate in the authoritative knowledge and voices of police officers, thus making its situatedness visible.

Academics have written of the ways in which the nature of police research has changed over the years (McLaughlin 2006), with an increase in focus on how research maps on to the police's strategic priorities and agenda (Lumsden and Goode 2016). Lumsden and Goode (2016) consider that one of these changes is that much research has moved from being 'on' the police, to 'for', and 'with' the police and that studies on the police run the risk of researchers acting as 'servants of power' (Burawoy 2004 Brown (1996, 180–6) outlines types of research investigators with regards to the police. With this in mind, I should also note my own positionality. My investigative position fell under 'outsider outsider': '...professional academics who undertake research on behalf of academic institutions...individuals who are independent of and do not receive funding from the police service.' This 'outsider' perspective permitted an approach to interviews that was removed from the institutionally situated knowledge analysed in this article.

Participants were recruited through two gatekeepers (with whom rapport was built over three years) who provided an initial contact list of individuals with some form of expertise in the policing or managing of sexual offences on the London Underground. Ten participants were uniformed officers of varying rank, and five were civilian members of BTP staff. Five employees were female and ten were male. 14 were white-British, and one was Asian-British. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 min, were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Analysis and coding of the police interviews were conducted after a conceptual framework revolving around knowledges, space, time and technologies had been formulated. Therefore, coding took on a focused approach, predominantly split into two themes: the pro-active policing of sexual offences and the investigative aspect of policing sexual offences. It is around these core themes that the findings and discussion that follow below are organized.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, how the police come to 'know' and map sexual harassment on the Underground will be explored. Then this article will analyse how the police use their intimate knowledge of the space of the Underground in order to detect offenders based on their spatial behaviours. Following this, the investigative process of sexual offences will be detailed, looking at the procedure, how information is gathered and interpreted through technologies, the limitations and disjunctures in knowledge that occur throughout the process, and how the police construct 'success stories'. Lastly it will conclude with a discussion of how police knowledge is culturally situated and technologically mediated, revealing a 'soft cyborg ontology' that significantly impacts on the policing of sexual harassment on the London Underground.

POLICE CONSTRUCTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

Cognitive knowing and digitized mapping of sexual offences

The recognition of the frequency of sexual offences on the London Underground alongside high-profile media campaigns led to a significant increase in reporting by victims (Solymosi et al. 2017). This increase has permitted BTP to create a substantial knowledge base of where and when (reported) offences occur on the network. As one Detective Inspector (3) stated, the increase in reporting allowed BTP to be 'smarter' about how the issue is policed.

It is important to establish the sequence of events that occur once a report of unwanted sexual behaviour has been made, as this constitutes the creation of data and consequently police

knowledge around sexual offences. It also allows an insight into the trajectory of the report of an incident of sexual harassment. We can immediately apply Haraway's (1991) cyborg, a 'flesh-technology-information amalgam'. Firstly, it allows an analysis of how, as the information travels through varying technologies, the incident or experience becomes increasingly 'decorporialized' (Haggerty and Ericson 2000) or 'bodiless' as it is transformed through an authorized interpretation of events. Additionally, Haraway's cyborg allows for a consideration of how, despite the technologically mediated nature of this knowledge, it is then allocated to a cognitive, culturally situated, investigating officer. Essentially, the process of policing sexual offences is a hybrid combination of information gathered by technologies and humans, and made sense of by humans: it is cyborg in its very nature.

Through the interviews with BTP members, the following sequence of events was established. An initial report of unwanted sexual behaviour is made (by phone call or text) to the BTP control room. Only if the report meets the crime recording standards (does it amount to a criminal activity?), is it then logged as a crime. Here, the initial report is immediately appropriated by an organizational 'crime-fighting' perspective and assimilated into a system that has the potential to disregard or marginalize particular incidents, potentially leading to what Haraway (1991, 159) terms a 'doctrine of experience'. This instantly negates a holistic view of sexual harassment on the Underground, as officers' expertise is only developed by investigating incidents that fall within organizational standards.

Once a report has been established as a crime, the control room drops each incident into a queue for the Sexual Offences Unit (SOU) via Niche, a centralized crime recording system used by BTP. Using this tool, intelligence officers have a daily review of the crimes that have occurred, and consequently, each 'job' must then be allocated to an officer for investigation. Importantly, the raw data collected on Niche is also available for intelligence officers and analysts to do 'back-end searches'. This means setting up parameters and allowing data to be pulled that provides a 'numbers perspective' as to how many offences have occurred in certain locations at particular times. It is using this technology that analysts at BTP turn 'a numbers perspective' into visual representations (in the form of graphs and charts) to illustrate trends and spatio-temporal hotspots. Whilst this technologically generated information is regarded as highly valued and integral to the BTP knowledge base, one officer (7) stated:'we always already know what it's going to say, where and when it's happening most. These locations and hot spots of sexual offences are built up over time, not measured overnight'. This highlights how officers negotiate their own learnt knowledge of the space on top of 'official' statistics. One DI (2) described this as a 'loop' process, whereby officers carry out their work based on this information, whilst also continually feeding their own experiences of patrols of the spaces back into the system. This collation of information works in conjunction with officers' 'craft' knowledge, and they continually map on to one another, constituting how sexual harassment is known to BTP. This is not extraordinary police practice, yet it poses ontological and epistemologically concerns. The police simultaneously see the map as collated by their own knowledge *and* as something separate and objective. The 'soft' use of technology is so embedded here that: 'there is no fundamental, ontological separation in … formal knowledge of machine and organism, or technical and organic' (Haraway 1991, 220).

Understanding these technological arrangements is important. To render the mapping process and its product scientifically neutral resonates with Kindynis' (2014) concerns around criminology's 'epistemological inadequacy' in its objectification of crime maps. As highlighted by the officer and DI above, these 'hot spot' maps are comprised of the digitisation of officers' own knowledges. Yet despite this awareness of the process, once in translated into 'graphic-textural' form (Kindynis 2014) these maps are later reflected on by the officers themselves as objectified evidence. This illustrates how the spatio-temporal nature of sexual harassment on

the Underground is known to the police through a cyclical 'cyborg-esque' process whereby the amalgamation of data gathered and interpreted through technologies and officers' own cognitive maps interconnect and the latter *becomes* the former. It is this process that defines areas that have 'high levels' of offences and consequently informs decisions as to where and when to 'pro-actively' police the network. The following section will explore what BTP know about *how* offenders perpetrate sexual offences within this environment, and how they use this knowledge in order to proactively police the London Underground.

Policing sexual offences: Space specific corporeal competency

What is termed the 'proactive arm' of the sexual offences unit consists of teams of plain-clothed officers, who, on a twice-daily basis during morning and evening rush hours patrol 'hotspots' on the network. With regards to knowledge production, the fact that they are plain-clothed is highly significant (Paperman 2003). The observational power that is permitted to officers in plain clothes allows for the accumulation and production of knowledge about how offenders act before, during and after sexual offences are committed.

It is within this realm that officers' bodies become operational tools (Westmarland 2017; Keesman 2021) and they develop and employ 'corporeal expertise' (Boyer 2005) or 'corporeal competency' (Brown and Dilley 2011). The tactics used by plain-clothed BTP officers are highly space-specific, based on the rhythmic attributes and concurrent social behaviours that are expected within that space: 'They will blend into the crowd and fit in, watching for people who aren't travelling from A to B' (Detective Chief Inspector). The notion of managing visibility (Paperman 2003) was recognized by members of the proactive team. As one DI (1) stated: 'we have to accept that we act differently and then we can be spotted so you've got to check your own behaviour as well as trying to look for others'. Becoming competent at managing visibility requires an intimate knowledge rhythms of the space. This links back to the idea that detailed knowledge of a space is a central and valued concept of policing (Loftus 2009; Fyfe 1991; Holdaway 1983). However, it does challenge what might be considered as 'corporeal competency' within a police setting. When considering the role of the body in policing, both traditional (Klockers 1985; Waddington 1999) and contemporary police culture literature (Westmarland 2017) have focused on the value placed on the highly masculinized trait of physical strength. Yet here, within the setting of the Underground, whilst the body is an integral policing tool, physical strength holds little value as officers delicately respond to their environment in order to adjust and use their bodies to manage visibility through space-specific corporeal expertise.

Visibility is significant, as BTP officers repeatedly refer to offenders on the network acting in a contrasting way to 'normal' commuters:

> The thing to look out for is the unnatural behaviour… if you've got someone like stepping back and walking up and down, that's like, and if they don't get on the first train, they're acting, you're here for a different reason to everybody else and everybody else's reason is to get from A to B as quickly as possible. So, they do stand out, they don't fit in. (Detective Inspector 2)

A lack of movement is in contrast to the normative flow of the network, and therefore it creates a suspicion for officers who are highly alert to behavioural differences. As one officer (9) stated 'we're looking for individuals who seem to be going nowhere'. In fact, there is such a continual construction of and comparison to the normal way of acting on the London Underground network that this has turned into a formal policing procedure. The subtle nature of this knowledge links to what Paperman (2003) terms 'interpretive competencies', or what a number of BTP officers called 'getting your eye in'. As an officer (14) described: 'Getting your eye in comes in, which is you spot the behaviour that's not right. So, you don't spot the offender from a

description, you're looking for what stands out, what's different'. He details these movements more specifically in relation to a particular incident:

> There's one guy stood a foot and a half behind everyone else, and he's not looking at the announcement board, he's not looking at the direction of the train, he's not with anyone, he's not checking his phone, he's not lost, what's he doing? And it's that, why does he stand out above the baseline and what's different about him? And it's something as subtle as that, him being a foot back behind, that's all, it's out of place.

This observation led to the confrontation of a man who followed a young girl on to a carriage, who, once the officers pulled him off the train (before an offence was committed) it transpired had his penis out of his trousers, covered by his briefcase. This also demonstrates how an officer's situated knowledge permits a particular way of knowing that can lead to intervention. Through a consolidation of information gathered from previous reports (understood through technologies), familiarity of the space through observation (permitted due to corporeal competency), and a perception of offender micro-movements, this forms the knowledge base upon which officers proactively police sexual offences on the Underground. In comparison to the 'investigative arm' which is discussed below,

These tacit and corporeal ways of knowing demonstrate that technology is not yet the dominant mode of policing in this context. It challenges claims that policing has become 'operationally dependant' or overly reliant on technologies with officers unable to think outside of technological norms (McGuire 2021). This pro-active method of policing may well constitute as 'intelligence-led' (Maguire 2000), but it is an intelligence that is empirically gathered by watching bodies and operationalized through the bodies of officers: it reveals the 'softness' of BTP officers cyborg ontology.

INVESTIGATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

The process of investigating reports of sexual offences

In a criminal investigation 'the narrative the police construct ties people, places, objects and phenomena together in a plausible chronology that provides details as to what happened and a degree of explanation as to why' (Innes 2002, 682). Once an incident of sexual harassment is reported, it is (re)constructed into a crime to be investigated and potentially punished. This process is undertaken by what is often referred to by BTP as the 'reactive' or 'investigative' arm of the Sexual Offences Unit. Following a report of a sexual offence, a particular process takes place in order for officers to be able to (re)construct the before, during and after of the incident at hand. The way the information is gathered and interpreted has been established over time, through interaction with embedded technologies, within a particular police culture, and it is in this context that it has been established what counts as knowledge (Haraway 1988). The process structure is significant, therefore, as it reveals the information officers have access to and how they 'make sense' of the incident within a criminal justice setting (Saunders 2012).

The report most commonly comes in through text or phone call to the control rooms, and is passed on to the Sexual Offences Unit and allocated to an investigating officer. The details of the occurrence come in the form of a 'very short blurb, the modus operandi or what happened. But they're generally pretty rubbish, like victim on Central line train, man rubbed himself against them' (DI 3). The first port of call is to contact the victim and arrange to take a statement or their account of the events, with the aim of collecting enough information (location, time, offender description) in order to be able to request the relevant CCTV footage. As Holgersson and Gottschalk (2008, 369) consider:

> A police officer must have the ability to let the victim tell his story in a way that seems best to the victim, at the same time as he gets enough information to be able to make a judgement of what has happened.

The officer must balance taking a victim centred approach (Clark 2003; White and McMillan 2021) (demonstrating emotional competency, empathy and patience), prioritizing the victim's story and version of events, whilst also holding the knowledge that for the case to progress (through technological channels) specific details are needed in order to obtain this evidence. The human and machine elements are clear here as the hybrid nature of the policing process is revealed: the 'soft' and 'successful' human interaction with the victim is a prerequisite to accessing and utilizing 'crime fighting' technologies.

One of the key components of the investigative process is that of CCTV footage. As the below officers detail, once what is presumed to be the correct footage has been accessed, the investigating officer must locate the offender:

> There's an art to it... And we call it 'getting your eye in'. It takes a bit of time to get your eye in... The cheat when you're doing CCTV is if you know that the victim and the suspect were together at some point on CCTV then that's straightforward, you call the victim and say can you send me a photo of you, and then I find you and I find them. (Officer 8)
>
> You can try and work on a description but it's quite tricky because what you'll probably get is a white male, with a bit of stubble, in a blue suit at Bank station at half 7 in the morning. Could be anyone. So then when you're getting your eye in comes in which is you spot the behaviour that's not right… you're looking for what stands out. (Officer 11)

As Haraway (1988, 583) states, there is no passive vision: '...all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific ways of seeing...' Here, the victim is also being watched, drawing attention to the power that is possessed by those who are watching (van der Meulenn and Heyen 2016). This also links with what Coleman and McCahill (2011, 13) discuss as using digital technologies for 'accruing information from bodies, gestures, traits'. Here, women's bodies become, to use Haraway's language (1991, 206), 'objects of knowledge' and their experiences are digested through technology, known only to officers once they have passed through a digital lens.

Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969, 93) consider how it is important to realize that measuring people against their surrounding is an essential part of police activity. Here, the body, and how it moves, is turned into a flow of information (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). This links back to what was highlighted by the proactive patrols, where not conforming to the rhythms and expected mobile behaviours of the space are a cause for suspicion, and how these are understood by 'expert' officers. It shows that whilst CCTV footage is often given 'factual status', it does not provide an 'absolute truth' (Brookman and Jones 2021, 2) but is interpreted and manipulated for purpose. Again, this exemplifies the 'cyborg-esque' nature of policing, whereby corporeal movements and actions are watched, understood, disassembled and reassembled through a technological filter by a situated officer. These practices show the assimilation and blurring of machine/human boundaries and permit a critical consideration of the ontological and epistemological implications technologies (in this case CCTV) have on police knowledge of sexual harassment and how it is policed.

'Every report builds a picture': The limitations and successes of policing sexual offences from a situated cyborg perspective

At any point in the investigative process, there are hurdles and pitfalls at which the investigation can come to a premature end. A number of officers explained, how from their standpoint, this is

often due to a disjuncture or difference in perceptions of sexual harassment on the Underground between the police and victims, and what is needed or useful in an investigation. The police hold a contextualized understanding of the criminality of these actions, and an awareness of the information that is required, as well as the need for speed and efficiency in order to collect evidence. A number of officers expressed frustrations towards the information that victims provided them with when reporting. The transitory nature makes it difficult for victims to remember, for example, which train they were on. In their study of crime on the London Underground, Newton et al. (2014) highlight how victims of theft in transit often have imprecise knowledge of where an incident occurred, causing difficulties in recording and mapping offences. As one staff member (15) stated: 'a general member of the public won't think about the BTP policing pattern' (significantly, the public also do not occupy the same cyborg ontology as the police). One officer (11) expressed his frustrations:

> We get jobs sometimes where people ejaculate on women's clothing, they get off the train and they're like oh god. And I don't know why, but people wash their clothing, and I don't know what goes through their minds. I'm blinkered because I'm the police but surely you'd be thinking I want to solve this, I'll keep that, but they wash it. I don't know what they're thinking... You've got the DNA! Why are you washing it, come on, give us a chance!

As a police officer his immediate reaction is to construct an incident into a crime, as something that can be solved. This highlights a pragmatism that is seen as a major characteristic of police culture (Reiner 2010; Cockcroft 2020). However, the application of Haraway's cyborg offers further insight into what constitutes 'police culture' and this reaction. This 'pragmatism' is situated and derived from a 'soft cyborg ontology', where officers have access to certain technologies that invisibly recraft the very meaning and value of a bodily, biological substance into to an 'object of knowledge' or evidence.

Other officers expressed frustrations around victims reporting an offence, but not wanting to 'take it further', whether this be immediately, or further down the line of the investigation:

> A lot of people seem to think that once they've reported it that's the end of their involvement and once you explain the process a lot of people say oh well I don't want to give a statement I only wanted to report it, but they believe that you can do something...I mean you can identify a trend in offences and maybe identify that you've got somebody out there, but to actually take the matter through to arresting and prosecuting somebody, without the victim it's not going to happen. (Officer 9)

This shows that the police have knowledge of the process of the criminal justice system that most victims are unlikely to possess. It also draws attention to another way in which the police hold a particularly situated perspective that is significantly mediated by access to technology and data. Using Niche (the centralized crime recording system) BTP officers have access to data that permits them to collate information and have a broader picture by linking incidents based on reports:

> One thing I'll say we're very good at is linking offenders. We've got our own intelligence analysts who will feed key words…bright orange trainers, not many people are going to have orange trainers so if you sort of put that into the system and two victims have mentioned bright orange trainers then it's fair to say, I mean people are creatures of habit, people will travel between point A and Point B and back again generally so there's something you can look at. And things like hair, things that don't change. There are different ways to identify

series linked offenders. And that is something we're doing very well at the moment. (Detective Inspector 1)

This is knowledge that the police are privilege to that can lead to catching an offender that has committed multiple crimes. Yet whilst the police construct narratives out of women's individual stories and portray them retrospectively as a collective, women who are victims of a sexual offence often perceive their experience as an individual, solitary incident, rather than located within a web of concurring events. Often, they are likely unaware that the police have constructed a 'data double' (Haggerty and Ericson 2000) of their experience for broader investigative purposes. This can be linked to what Haggerty and Ericson (2000, 606) conceptualize as the 'surveillant assemblage', which they describe as 'abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows. These flows are then reassembled into distinct 'data doubles' which can be scrutinized and targeted for intervention.' Henceforth, in their investigations the police are then primarily dealing with a de-corporealized 'data-double', rather than the embodied, physiological and emotional victim who reported the offence. This process, that leads to a distorted 'cyborg-esque' understanding of the experience of the offence, poses the risk of police working within a technologically mediated procedural structure rather prioritizing the 'real' and complex needs of the victim.

As Workman-Stark (2017) considers, culture impacts which stories get told. When, during interviews, officers were asked to recall a 'successful' investigation, four officers spoke of the same case- this has been (re)constructed below.

At a central station, a woman witnessed a man taking photographs up a schoolgirl's skirt on the escalator. When she confronted him, he ran away. She reported the incident to TfL staff at the station who contacted BTP. After gathering information from the witness on the time, location and man's appearance, CCTV was requested, granted and used to identify the man tapping out of the system using an Oyster Card. This data was then requested from TfL, and, as the card was registered, they were able to identify the man. A house, phone and computer search was conducted and an arrest was made. In custody, the man admitted to the accusation, and further admitted to having thousands of indecent images stored on his laptop. This led to a sentence of 4.5 years.

The policing of sexual offences by BTP is directed by the knowledge that is available to them. It is a situated perspective located within and guided by a police culture of 'crime fighting' and heavily mediated by technologies. The desire for arrests and prosecutions creates certain trajectories that are followed once a report of an offence has been made. The course of investigations and the analysis of information available is undertaken by situated agents and therefore the route taken and desired outcome is often formulated by the investigator. What is particularly interesting here is that the story told is one in which there is a seamless dyadic symbiosis between corporeal policing and the use of machines, so interdependent that the boundary between them is the term becomes intangible. The terms 'like clockwork' and 'a well-oiled machine' come to mind.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of technology in police culture: Acknowledging soft cyborg ontologies

This article has shown how the BTP make sense of and police sexual offences on the London Underground network. By applying Haraway's concepts of situated knowledge and cyborgs, this article contributes to the following areas of academic interest: It discerns how police knowledge is partial and subjective; it contributes to a limited body of literature that critically and creatively explores the role of technology in policing; and finally, it calls for a recognition of the police themselves as occupying a 'soft cyborg ontology', arguing that doing so can forward

understandings of police-machine relationships, and introduce technology as imperative of recognition when considering modern day police cultures and practices.

Police knowledge as a whole is still produced primarily by an accumulation of officers' tacit understanding and corporeal expertise, augmented with various technologies. The production of this knowledge is situated within a value-laden, organizational culture that inevitably distorts and regulates which experiences of harassment are investigated and mapped. The entire 'mapping' process that has been scrutinized here challenges the notion of crime maps as symbolic of scientific objectivity (Ferrell 2009) and demonstrates the situated and cyclical nature of their production. By showing how institutionalized approaches manifest and operate this article also acts to dismantle ideas of authoritative police knowledge as neither illegitimate nor totalizing. The police know sexual harassment, not through personal bodily experience, but through other's appropriate experiences and technological processes. Employing the concept of the 'cyborg' has contributed to a vastly understudied area exploring how technology is embedded in police practice, as well as illustrating how these technologies pose epistemological concerns if subjective knowledges are masked as 'objective' digitized data.

As the boundaries between human and machines, physical and virtual continue to blur and overlap, the implications for policing more broadly are significant. Indeed, consideration has been given to the potentially harmful impact that technology and automation may have on the future of policing (McGuire 2021). Simultaneously, the police and policing practices are under intense public, political and academic scrutiny, and yet debates around police culture remain surprisingly stagnated. The acknowledgement of technology as part of the very fabric of the police's ontological and epistemological standpoints opens exciting avenues for new developments. By introducing the term 'soft cyborg ontologies' I have aimed to demonstrate that there is in fact, no boundary here between the 'human' police officer and the 'machines' that are 'used' to police. These entities do not simply overlap, they have become enmeshed. As Haraway (1991, 220) argues that 'there is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, or technical and organic'.

I have explicitly stated that this article is neither arguing for or against the use of technologies in policing, rather that accepting a 'cyborg ontology can facilitate an understanding of the contextualized, embodied and relational spaces of technology' (Lapum et al. 2012, 286) and that they play an intrinsic role in shaping police knowledge and police culture. As the use of technology increases and becomes more visible through practices such as body worn cameras, facial recognition software and the use of big data, policing will visibly transform (or mutate) into a 'high-tech-facilitated social relation' where 'fresh sources of power' (Haraway 1991, 207) are produced alongside the manifestation of new hegemonic ways of knowing. It is in this climate, where there is a risk of technological totality being equated with 'gold standard' intelligence, that cyborg politics is significant in its advocacy for multiple meanings and human pollution. A 'soft' cyborg ontology is one that retains space for the messiness and complexity of human experience, particularly that of victimization, within technologically mediated police cultures, practices and methods.

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