Research article

Toward a more comprehensive analysis of the role of organizational culture in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This article draws on a report prepared for the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Palmer et al., 2016) to develop a more comprehensive analysis of the role that organizational culture plays in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, where institutional contexts are taken to be formal organizations that include children among their members (referred to here as "youth-serving organizations"). We begin by integrating five strains of theory and research on organizational culture from organizational sociology and management theory into a unified framework for analysis. We then elaborate the main paths through which organizational culture can influence child sexual abuse in youth-serving organizations. We then use our unified analytic framework and our understanding of the main paths through which organizational culture can influence child sexual abuse in youth-serving organizations to analyze the role that organizational culture plays in the perpetration, detection, and response to child sexual abuse in youth-serving organizations. We selectively illustrate our analysis with case materials compiled by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and reports of child sexual abuse published in a variety of other sources. We conclude with a brief discussion of the policy implications of our analysis.

1. Introduction

Child sexual abuse is prevalent, injurious to its victims, and morally offensive to the general public in most contemporary societies. The majority of child sexual abuse occurs in the family or the surrounding community (Stoltenborgh, van Ijzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011), but a significant minority occurs in institutional contexts; that is, formal organizations that incorporate children among their members (Euser, Alink, Tharner, van Ijzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2013; Shakeshaft, 2004). Formal organizations are collections of people engaged in sustained social interaction coordinated by at least a rudimentary horizontal and vertical division of labor in pursuit of one or more common objectives. Psychologists and sociologists understand formal organizations to be "strong situations," in that they consist of structures and processes that can override individual predispositions and shape member attitudes and behavior (Pfeffer & Davis-Blake, 1989). Formal organizations that incorporate children as members include organizations whose primary purpose is caring for children (e.g., schools, sports clubs, juvenile detention centers, and foster homes) and those for which caring for children is tangential to their primary purpose (e.g., religious organizations). We refer to both types of organizations here as "youth-serving organizations."

This article draws on a report prepared for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to develop a more comprehensive analysis of the role that organizational culture plays in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts (Palmer, Feldman, & McKibbin, 2016). Prior theory and research on the role that organizational culture plays in child sexual abuse in these contexts does not benefit from recent scholarship on organizational culture in organizational sociology and management theory (hereafter, "organization theory"). Our analysis proceeds in four steps. First, we define child sexual abuse for the purpose of our inquiry. Second, we integrate divergent strains of theory and research on organizational culture from organizational theory to develop a unified framework for analysis. Third, we elaborate the main paths through which organizational culture can influence child sexual abuse in formal organizations. Fourth, we apply our integrated organizational culture framework and our understanding of the main paths through which organizational culture can influence child sexual abuse in formal organizations to analyze the role that organizational culture plays in the perpetration, detection, and response to abuse in youth-serving organizations. In addition, we selectively illustrate our analysis with case materials compiled by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Appendix A) and reports of child sexual abuse published in a variety of other sources. We conclude with a brief discussion of the policy implications of our analysis.

2. Defining child sexual abuse

Following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, we define child sexual abuse as:

… any act that exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography (Bromfield, 2005). It includes child grooming which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

We understand this definition to include both the abuse of children by adults (referred to here as "adult-child" abuse) and the perpetration of sexually harmful behavior against children by other children (referred to here as "sexually harmful behavior by other children"), where the terms "adult," "child," and "children" are understood to be socially constructed (varying over historical time and across societies) and legally operationalized (varying from one jurisdiction to another). We explicitly acknowledge the existence of sexually harmful behavior by other children, because such behavior is prevalent in institutional contexts. In their international literature review of child sexual abuse in residential care facilities, Timmerman and Schreuder (2014) found that almost half of the instances of abuse involved perpetrators who were peers of their victims. Further, in their report on child sexual abuse in Australia between 2008 and 2013, Bromfield, Hirte, Octoman, and Katz (forthcoming) found that between 62% and 89% of allegations of abuse occurring in institutional contexts reported to the police in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Western Australia involved a perpetrator who was under 18 years of age.

3. An integrated framework for the analysis of organizational culture

Giorgi, Lockwood, and Glynn (2015) present a comprehensive review of theories of culture found in organizational theory. Their review identifies five different conceptualizations of culture: values, stories, frames, toolkits and categories. Values are what people "prefer, hold dear, or desire." Stories are "verbal or written narratives with causally linked sequences of events" that convey meaning. Frames are "filters or brackets that delimit what we pay attention to." Toolkits are "sets of stories, frames, categories, rituals, and practices that actors draw upon to make meaning or take action." Categories are "social constructions or classifications that define and structure the conceptual distinctions between objects, people, and practices" (Giorgi et al., 2015: 5–7).

We think all five conceptualizations of culture identified by Giorgi et al. are useful in understanding the role that organizational culture can play in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Further, we think all five can be integrated into an overarching framework for analysis, in which organizational culture is understood to possess both content and form. Cultural content consists of assumptions, values and beliefs, and norms that distinguish appropriate from inappropriate attitudes and behaviors in an organization. Assumptions are shared understandings about the categories that objects, people, and practices in an organization occupy (e.g., in a boarding school, whether students are considered trustworthy) and the frame according to which action in an organization unfolds (e.g., whether a boarding school is considered first and foremost a place of learning or a business and thus whether teachers' relationship to students is that of mentor or service provider). Values and beliefs are shared understandings about what constitutes virtuous or unscrupulous attitudes or behaviors in an organization (e.g., whether or not it is good for boarding school teachers to monitor students' attitudes and behavior closely). Norms are shared understandings about what one should or should not think and do in an organization (e.g., whether or not boarding school teachers should socialize with students). While organizations' assumptions, values and beliefs, and norms often closely align with one another, they can diverge.

Cultural forms consist of artifacts and practices that convey cultural content in an organization. Artifacts are the identifiable units in which cultural content is conveyed. They can be material, such as the desks, chairs, and accessories in an organization's offices. For example, organizations that employ "open office" designs convey the assumption that social interaction in the organization is equalitarian. They also can be immaterial, such as the jargon, stories, and songs that an organization's members use and share. For example, organizations that employ jargon that refers to customers in a demeaning way may convey the assumption that they are appropriate targets of exploitation. Immaterial artifacts such as jargon may leave material traces, such as when jargon is used in email

correspondence. Practices are recurrent patterns of social interaction that convey cultural content, sometimes through the incorporation of artifacts. For example, after-work socials, during which organization-specific jargon may be used, convey the norm that co-workers should develop friendships with one another.

Our integrated analytical framework assumes that cultural content and forms often emerge spontaneously in organizations, as members go about their assigned tasks. But it allows that cultural content and forms also can be intentionally marshaled and even manufactured by powerful actors in support of their strategic objectives.

4. The paths through which organizational culture can influence child sexual abuse in institutional contexts

4.1. Finkelhor's four preconditions model

We use Finkelhor's (1984) highly influential model of factors that lead perpetrators to abuse children across multiple settings as a starting point to specify the main paths through which organizational culture can influence the perpetration of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Finkelhor's model identifies four preconditions that must be present in order for persons to perpetrate child sexual abuse: 1) perpetrators must possess a motivation to abuse children or a child, 2) they must overcome internal inhibitors against acting on that motivation, 3) they must surmount external inhibitors to acting on that motivation, and 4) they must transcend victims' resistance to being abused.

Further, Finkelhor's model stipulates that each of the four preconditions for abuse is comprised of social, in addition to psychological factors. For example, Finkelhor theorizes that a male perpetrator's motivation to abuse children is partly a function of his immersion in a cultural milieu in which masculinity is associated with male domination and power in sexual relationships, his overcoming of internal inhibitions against acting on his motivation to abuse is a function of social toleration of sexual interest in children, his overcoming of external constraints against acting on his motivation to abuse is a function of lack of social support for mothers, and his overcoming of victim resistance to acting on his motivation to abuse is a function of the availability of sex education for children (1984: 56). We think organizational culture constitutes a social factor that can influence each of Finkelhor's four preconditions in institutional contexts.[1]

4.2. Applying Finkelhor's four preconditions model to institutional contexts

Applying Finkelhor's four preconditions model to institutional contexts requires addressing the question of whether or not perpetrators enter the organization with preexisting motivations to abuse, an awareness of those motivations, and having overcome internal inhibitions against acting on those motivations. Prior research suggests that perpetrators of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts can be grouped into one of three categories in this regard (Lanning & Dietz, 2014).

Some people who abuse children in institutional contexts enter these contexts possessing a motivation to abuse children (Finkelhor's first precondition), having an awareness of that motivation, and having overcome internal inhibitions against acting on that motivation (Finkelhor's second precondition); hereafter, referred to as possessing a "predisposition" to abuse children. Organizational culture can influence the opportunity that such people have to abuse children in institutional contexts, where opportunity is a function of the likelihood that children will succumb to abusers' overtures (Finkelhor's fourth precondition) and the likelihood that abusers' overtures will go undetected and unpunished (Finkelhor's third precondition). Persons who are predisposed to abuse children will abuse children when they think that it is likely that children will succumb to their abusive advances and it is unlikely that their abusive behavior will be detected and punished. Indeed, there is evidence that persons who are predisposed to abuse children explicitly seek out organizations with vulnerable children and weak external constraints (Colton, Roberts, & Vanstone, 2010). Further, there is evidence that persons who are predisposed to abuse children will be more likely to do so when and where they believe the risk of detection is minimal (Auriol & Brilon, 2014).[2]

Other people who abuse children in institutional contexts enter these contexts possessing a motivation to abuse children, but lacking an awareness of this motivation. These individuals discover their motivations to abuse children and find ways to overcome internal inhibitions against acting on those discovered motivations after entering the organization. Organizational culture can influence the likelihood that such persons will discover their underlying motivation to abuse children, the likelihood that they will find ways to overcome internal inhibitions against doing so, and the likelihood that they will have the opportunity to abuse children in institutional contexts.

Still other people who abuse children in institutional contexts enter these contexts lacking a motivation to abuse children. These individuals develop the motivation to abuse children or a specific child and find ways to overcome inhibitions against acting on their motivation to abuse after entering the organization. Organizational culture can influence the likelihood that such persons will develop a motivation to abuse children or a specific child, find ways to overcome internal inhibitions against abusing children, and have the opportunity to abuse children in institutional contexts. The possibility that people only discover or develop the motivation to

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[1] Finkelhor's model is not without critics (c.f., Ward & Hudson, 2001) and alternatives (Hall & Hirschman, 1992; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). But it is unique in its determined focus on the social context of child sexual abuse, which is the reason we embrace it here.

[2] The studies cited in this article vary greatly in methodological orientation, from large sample quantitative empirical to small sample (in some instances, single case study) qualitative designs. These methods each have their strengths and weaknesses. Large sample quantitative empirical studies allow for hypothesis testing, but generally are not amenable to fine-grained investigation and theory development. Small sample qualitative studies are amenable to fine-grained investigation and theory development, but do not allow hypothesis testing.

abuse children or a specific child *after* joining an organization is consistent with evidence that the opportunity to sexually abuse children is highly correlated with the proclivity to abuse children (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), which itself is consistent with evidence that opportunity to enact a behavior is one factor regulating the motivation to pursue it (Nadler & Lawler, 1977). It is also consistent with understandings of the etiology of other boundary violating sexual behaviors, such as therapist-client sexual relationships (Simon, 1995).

5. The influence of organizational culture on child sexual abuse in organizations

Below we discuss cultural content that can facilitate the perpetration of child sexual abuse, impede the detection of abuse, and undermine the response to abuse in youth-serving organizations. For analytic purposes, we sometimes make reference to specific types of cultures (e.g., "macho cultures" or "sexualized cultures"). We recognize, though, that organizational cultures typically represent unique amalgams of different types of cultural content (e.g., unique combinations of macho and sexualized cultures) and that their content can change over time.

5.1. Cultural understandings of gender differences

The cultures of youth-serving organizations often contain content pertaining to their members' gender identities. In contemporary societies, youth-serving organizations tend to contain "patriarchal" content that includes the assumption that men are inherently active (i.e., capable of knowing and acting in their own interest) while women are passive; the value that this difference between men and women is good; and the norm that this difference should be enacted. These cultural elements allow men greater opportunity to act and assign men's actions greater significance (Butler, 1993). Reflective of this, research shows that in mixed-gender groups, women are afforded fewer opportunities to speak and women's words are given less credence (Hancock & Rubin, 2015; Zimmerman & West, 1996). When a youth-serving organization's culture features these patriarchal cultural elements, it undermines effective response to child sexual abuse. Instances of child sexual abuse in organizations are typically detected by lower-level workers, who must make credible reports about the abuse to persons above them in the organization's hierarchy in order to trigger effective response. However, in most contemporary societies men tend to fill upper-level positions in organizations, while women tend to occupy lower-level positions (Weinger, 2015; Wilson, 2009). As a result, many detected instances of child sexual abuse fail to trigger robust institutional responses simply because they are observed by women and communicated to men (Green, 2001; Parkin & Green, 1997).

Further, the cultures of some youth-serving organizations contain "macho" content, which represents an extension of patriarchal content. Macho cultures feature the assumption that men and boys are powerful, active, and competent, rather than passive, helpless, and victimized and include the norm that men and boys should eschew self-concepts that acknowledge weakness, helplessness, and victimization. Macho cultures also embrace the assumption that boys are naturally aggressive and innately driven to dominate their peers. Thus, when boys behave aggressively towards their peers in such cultures, adults understand their behavior as 'just boys being boys'. Macho cultures may even showcase the value that boys' aggressive and dominating behavior towards peers is good, because it is assumed beneficial to group functioning. Macho cultures also value tolerance of harsh treatment, because it is assumed indicative of strength and maturity. Finally, macho cultures include the belief that same-sex sexual relationships are deviant (Hartill, 2005, 2009; Mendel, 1995). Macho organizational cultures are expressed in a variety of ways, including physically aggressive posturing, verbally aggressive communication, and the use of homophobic taunts (Parkin & Green, 1997).

Boys may be more prone to perpetrate sexually harmful behaviors and men may be more prone to perpetrate sexual abuse when they are embedded in macho organizational cultures. In macho cultures, men and boys are assumed to be aggressive and their aggressive behavior is valued, and sexual abuse and sexually harmful behaviors are forms of aggressive behavior. Macho cultural content has been linked to boys' sexually harmful behavior (Green & Masson, 2002; Hartill, 2009; Parkin & Green, 1997). Macho cultural elements may have facilitated an instance of organized adult-child abuse in the Oakland, California (USA) Police Department, where several officers sexually abused a teenager whom they knew to be engaged in transactional sex. After preliminary investigations, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf attributed the abuse to the police department's "toxic, macho culture" (Associated Press, 2016). Further, boys embedded in macho cultures may be more inclined to withhold information about their own abuse. In macho cultures, boys who are victims of abuse may understand themselves to have been either inappropriately passive and/or partly responsible for their abuse. Further, when they are the target of an adult male's abuse or another boy's sexually harmful behavior, boy victims may understand their partial responsibility to be symptomatic of sexual deviance (Green, 2001; Hartill, 2005; Mendel, 1995). Hartill (2009) describes an instance in which an adult male perpetrator secured a boy victim's silence by threatening to tell the boy's peers that he was homosexual. Finally, boy victims of abuse may understand their abuse, insofar as it constitutes harsh treatment, to be something that should be stoically and silently endured.

What is more, third party observers of abuse who are embedded in macho cultures may be disinclined to respond to boys' sexually harmful behavior. In macho cultures male aggression is considered natural or even exemplary. Thus, third party observers may consider boys' sexually harmful behavior unworthy of suppression. This appears to have been the case at Geelong Grammar School in Victoria, Australia, where groups of boys treated individual peers in sexually harmful ways. There, teachers considered boys' sexually harmful behavior towards peers to be natural and victims' exposure to such behavior to be beneficial to their development, describing it as 'good for the soul' and as 'toughen(ing) you up' (Mckenzie-Murray, 2015). Parent and Bannon (2012) contend that macho cultural elements and their association with sexually harmful behavior is particularly evident in boys' sports organizations.

Finally, the cultures of some youth-serving organizations contain "rape" content, which represents an extension of macho content. Rape cultures feature the assumption that men and boys possess strong sexual impulses, while women and girls possess weaker sexual

drives. They also feature the belief that men and boys' pursuit of sexual gratification is good, whereas women's and girls' submissiveness is virtuous (Butler, 1993; Powell, 2008). Indeed, men and boys are assumed to be sexually willing, eager, and aggressive and behavior consistent with these assumptions tends to be valued and considered normative (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005; Sills et al., 2016). Rape culture elements may facilitate the sexual abuse of girls by men and sexually harmful behavior directed at girls by boys (Pringle, 1993). Men and boys embedded in such cultures view the aggressive pursuit of sexual gratification as natural, good, and normative. And the aggressive pursuit of sexual gratification by definition entails the satisfaction of sexual desires without consummate consent on the part of the objects of men and boys' sexual desire.

Rape culture elements may have facilitated an instance of sexually harmful behavior at Saint Paul's School, an exclusive college-preparatory boarding school in Concord, New Hampshire (USA). There, students participated in an informal annual ritual in which boys competed with one another to obtain the greatest number of sexual encounters with their female classmates. This cultural practice may have conveyed the assumption that girls are sexual objects to be acquired and the belief that it is good to acquire as many of these objects as possible. Such cultural content may have increased the likelihood that some boys' sexually acquisitive encounters with girls would be non-consensual, as appeared to have been the case in one highly publicized incident (Bidgood, 2015).

5.2. Cultural understandings pertaining to intimacy and affection

The cultures of youth-serving organizations also often contain content pertaining to the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between adults and children and the enactment of behavioral expressions of such relationships (e.g., touching, hugging, kissing, sharing of confidences, etc.). The cultures of some youth-serving organizations feature the assumption that intimate and affectionate relationships and behavioral expressions of these relationships are integral to the fulfillment of staff role expectations (Mones, 2014; Parent & Demers, 2011). Specifically, in some sports clubs it is considered necessary for coaches to have physical contact with athletes, including contact with athletes in various stages of undress (Hartill, 2009). For example, in some of the Australian swimming clubs that were the subject of a Royal Commission case study, the coach role appeared to include giving massages to athletes before or after competition (Case Study No. 15). Similarly, in some sports it is considered necessary for coaches to develop intimate psychological relationships with athletes (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001). For example, in gymnastics, coaches may think it appropriate to enquire about and even exert control over an athlete's wake time, bed time, diet, and associates, all of which might be thought to affect athletes' ability to conform to the sport's rigorous training regimen. Cultural content supporting intimate interaction between adults and children may be rooted in perceptions of practical necessity. For example, in some sports clubs it may be considered necessary for coaches to share rooms with athletes in overnight stays because the club or parents cannot afford alternative overnight accommodation.

In addition, the cultures of some youth-serving organizations feature the assumption that the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between children and adults and the enactment of behavioral expressions of such relationships are indicative of exemplary fulfillment of staff role expectations (Colton et al., 2010; Shakeshaft, 2004). For example, in childcare centers, supervisors and parents may consider physical displays of affection towards children to be indicative of desirable staff member concern for children. This appears to have been the case at the Caringbah Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) facility in New South Wales, Australia. The Caringbah Staff handbook for its Holiday Adventures Program advised childcare workers, "You are doing a good job when … your children are always hanging on you, holding your hand, or asking for piggyback rides" (Case Study No. 2, 28).

When the cultures of youth-serving organizations endorse the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between adults and children and the enactment of behavioral expressions of such relationships, it may increase the likelihood that adults who are not aware of their motivation to abuse children will, through developing intimate and affectionate relationships with children and enacting behavioral expressions of such relationships, discover their latent sexual interest in children. It may also increase the likelihood that adults who are not motivated to abuse children or a child will develop the motivation to do so. Thus, Cense and Brackenridge (2001: 70–71) consider the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between coaches and athletes in sports clubs 'athletic risk factors' for child sexual abuse.

Further, when the cultures of youth-serving organizations endorse the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between adult staff and children and the enactment of behavioral expressions of these relationships, it can undermine the ability of even vigilant organizational members to identify perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Adult child sex abusers often enact intimate and affectionate relationships with children as part of a self-conscious effort to "groom" them for abuse. The enactment of such relationships and grooming more generally can be accomplished through a variety of tactics, such as performing favors, providing gifts, and sharing confidences with victims, all of which are designed to gain the trust of victims, victims' guardians, and other possible protectors in the environment, as well as to gauge victims' propensity and ability to resist perpetrators' advances (Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989). When cultures endorse intimate and affectionate relationships between adults and children, perpetrators' grooming activities may appear normative. This appears to have been the case at the Caringbah OSHC facility described above, were Jonathan Lord sexually assaulted twelve children. One of Lord's co-workers, Danielle Ockwell, testified that she saw Lord engaging in behavior that many would consider indicative of grooming. But she did not report his behavior because she did not perceive it to be inappropriate in the OSHC context. Ms. Ockwell testified that she saw a child on Lord's lap for most of the afternoon but did not tell anyone because, "She understood that there should not be unnecessary touching between staff and children, but she did not consider that children sitting on laps constituted unnecessary or inappropriate touching" (Case Study No.2, 63).

5.3. Cultural understandings pertaining to the sexual character of behavior

The cultures of youth-serving organizations also sometimes contain content pertaining to the sexual character of their members' behavior. Cultures sometimes feature norms that authorize sexualized behaviors, that is, behaviors that appear to have unambiguous sexual connotations. For example, the use of gender-stereotyped language, the viewing of advertising and music videos that sexualize women and girls, and the watching of pornography are frequent practices in some youth-serving organizations. Cultures also sometimes feature the assumption that interaction among organizational members is inherently sexual in character; that is, motivated by sexual impulses or designed to convey sexual intentions. For example, in some youth-serving organizations dress, posture, and physical contact are interpreted as having sexual connotations. Cultures where sexualized behaviors are normative and where behaviors are assumed to have sexual connotations are sometimes referred to as 'sexualized' (Rush & La Nauze, 2006). Even the cultures of organizations that provide services to very young children can be sexualized, featuring sexual exploration games such as 'doctor', the use of sexual words, and overt reactions such as giggling to hearing such words (Lindblad, Gustafsson, Larsson, & Lundin, 1995).

Children who are embedded in sexualized cultures may develop the motivation to pursue sexual relationships with peers, which can be harmful. Some report that sexualized cultures are linked to children's development of sexually harmful behavior (McKibbin, Humphreys, & Hamilton, 2015; Timmerman & Schreuder, 2014). We suspect that adults who are embedded in sexualized cultures also may develop the motivation to pursue sexual relationships with children, which are by definition abusive. Further, we suspect that third party observers who are embedded in sexualized cultures, like those embedded in cultures that endorse the development of intimate and affectionate relationships between adults and children, may find it difficult to distinguish between adult-child interactions that are constituent of grooming and those that are not. Some sexualized adult-child interactions such as hugging or discussing sexual feelings may be constituent of grooming or abuse (Colton et al., 2010; Moulden, Firestone, Kingston, & Wexler, 2010).

Alternatively, the cultures of youth-serving organizations may feature norms that code all sexualized behaviors as inappropriate and contain the assumption that interaction among members is inherently asexual in character. Cultures that feature such norms and assumptions may fail to endorse the discussion of sex-related matters or even code the discussion of sex-related matters as taboo. When this happens, adults and children may lack knowledge of the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate adult-child interaction. Further, adults may be ill equipped to manage their sexual arousal and children may be ill equipped to resist perpetrators' sexual advances.

Ethnographic studies reveal that the staff members of youth serving organizations tend to feel uneasy discussing matters relating to sex, including child sexual abuse, partly because they lack the training needed to do so (Parkin & Green, 1997; Timmerman & Schreuder, 2014). Further, Keenan (2012) contends that the Catholic Church's tendency to eschew and even discourage the discussion of sex-related matters may have facilitated the child sexual abuse perpetrated by priests brought to public attention in the late 1990s. Priests who were not given the opportunity to address sex-related matters had difficulty navigating their commitment to celibacy, which likely ran counter to their biological and socially conditioned sexual desires. Likewise, Catholic children who were not given the opportunity to discuss sex-related matters found it difficult to interpret and resist the sexual abuse perpetrated against them.

Organizational cultures that stifle the discussion of sex-related matters also may impede the detection of abuse and undermine the response to abuse when it is detected. When organizational cultures suppress the discussion of sex-related matters, victims of child sexual abuse may be reluctant to report the abuse because they do not have the language to describe it. Several survivors who were abused at the Winlaton Youth Training Centre in Victoria, Australia testified that they were given little information about sex related matters. For example, survivor BDF testified that when she started menstruating, she "did not know who to see about sanitary care" (Case Study No. 30, 66). In addition, survivor BHE testified that every time she was sent back to Winlaton after running away, she was subjected to sexually transmitted disease examinations, but "was never told why she had to undergo these checks" (Case Study No. 30, 62). Thus, it is no surprise that some Winlaton survivors testified that they had difficulty understanding the sexual abuse perpetrated against them, and had trouble conveying information about the abuse to others. For example, BHE testified that the abuse she experienced at the hands of a social worker left her feeling "confused" (Case Study No. 30, 62). Another survivor, BDC, testified that she did not report the sexually harmful behavior perpetrated against her by other children because she "didn't know what to say or how to say it" (Case Study No. 30, 62).

Finally, when organizational cultures stifle the discussion of sex-related matters, third party observers may be slow to react to signs of abuse that they observe. Signs of abuse, especially grooming, frequently are ambiguous. When organizational cultures endorse the discussion of sex-related matters, third party observers of ambiguous signs of abuse can consult with superiors, peers and subordinates to evaluate their perceptions of potential sexual abuse. But when organizational cultures stifle discussions of sex-related matters, people who witness ambiguous signs of abuse are likely to keep their thoughts to themselves. This tendency has been noted in connection with child sexual abuse perpetrated in sports clubs (Parent & Bannon, 2012).

5.4. Cultural understandings pertaining to violence

The cultures of youth-serving organizations also may contain content pertaining to the use of violence by adults against children, where violence includes psychological pressure and physical force that sometimes constitutes psychological and physical abuse. Specifically, cultures may variably feature the assumptions that children are intractable or even dangerous, and that psychological pressure and physical force are effective means of instruction and control for intractable and dangerous children. Together these two assumptions can form the basis of a penal frame of reference. The use of psychological pressure and physical force that can constitute abuse may have its roots in more general cultural content pertaining to the use of violence. Parkin and Green (1997) report that the

managers of some group homes treat staff in a psychologically and physically abusive fashion. Further, they contend that this leads workers to treat children in their care abusively, which in turn leads children to treat one another in harmful ways. A number of well-researched social psychological processes might underpin the tendency of those who are abused to abuse others, including social learning (Bandura, 1963) and social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954).

The psychological and physical abuse of children can lead to the sexual abuse of children. Statistical evidence indicates that psychological, physical, and sexual abuse often co-occur (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007; Goldsworthy, 2015). Anecdotal evidence indicates that physical abuse and sexual abuse are sometimes enacted as two components of a single strategy to denigrate and punish people (Hersh, 2004). Finally, it seems possible that psychological and physical abuse can evolve into sexual abuse. When a person treats another person unethically, they become desensitized to the guilt that accompanies the pursuit of unethical behavior and they relax the ethical benchmark they use to evaluate their behavior, making them psychologically and cognitively prepared to engage in repeated and increasingly unethical behavior (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008). Thus, when adults psychologically and physically abuse a child, they may become psychologically and cognitively prepared to sexually abuse them in the future.

5.5. Cultural understandings of childhood and children

The cultures of youth-serving organizations typically contain content pertaining to the characteristics of persons categorized as children. Importantly, cultures often contain content pertaining to the trustworthiness of children. When the cultures of youth-serving organizations feature the assumption that children are untrustworthy, staff members may be less likely to believe the reports of children who are victims or third-party observers of sexual abuse. Further, children who are victims or third-party observers of abuse will be less likely to come forward to disclose the abuse they experience or observe because they doubt they will be believed. Children may be reluctant to report abuse when they expect their reports will be disbelieved because they have little to gain, and expose themselves to the risk of retaliation by the abuser and their allies when reporting the abuse. The tendency of children's reports of abuse to be ignored has been observed in schools, where the denials of teachers who have sexually abused children are more likely to be believed than the disclosures of the students who have been abused (Shakeshaft, 2004; Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1994). The possibility of reprisals for revealing abuse manifested at the Geelong Grammar School, where a student who reported abuse perpetrated by a staff member was expelled from the school after discussing the abuse with a peer in contradiction to the admonition to remain silent (Case Study No. 32, 14).

The cultures of youth-serving organizations also often contain content pertaining to the extent to which children should enjoy unrestricted opportunities to speak with other children or adults, especially about matters that might cast adults in a negative light. When the cultures of youth-serving organizations do not support the norm that children should speak freely to other children or adults, children who are victims or third-party observers of child sexual abuse will be less able to disclose the abuse. This was the case at the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Institution for Girls in Hay in New South Wales, Australia. At Hay, girls were prohibited from speaking with one another for more than 10 minutes a day, were required to stay at least six feet apart from each other when in public areas, and were instructed to keep their heads down when walking around the grounds so they could not easily take note of peers in their vicinity. More subtly, several abuse survivors of Parramatta and Hay told the Royal Commission that residents were commanded to speak with staff only when spoken to. Thus, as one survivor testified, unless a staff member asked an inmate whether she had been abused, she could not disclose the abuse (Case Study No. 7, 13).

5.6. The organizational cultures of total institutions

Total institutions are organizations in which members are sharply subdivided into a large managed group and a small supervisory staff; the large managed group is confined to a socially and physically isolated space; and the supervisory staff controls members of the managed group in a comprehensive fashion. Irving Goffman (1961), who provided the definitive analysis of total institutions, identified five types that vary according to their purpose; organizations that care for harmless individuals (e.g., foster homes), organizations that heal harmful individuals (e.g., psychiatric hospitals), organizations that protect society from harmful individuals (e.g., prisons), organizations that pursue work-like objectives (e.g., boarding schools), and organizations that pursue religious goals (e.g., monasteries). We think the first three types of total institution tend to embrace organizational cultures that make them particularly susceptible to the perpetration of child sexual abuse and incapable of effective response to abuse when it occurs.

Cultural content sometimes stipulates extenuating circumstances in which deviant attitudes and behaviors can be considered acceptable. Sykes and Matza (1957) were the first to describe how culturally stipulated extenuating circumstances can endorse deviant attitudes and behaviors. Their study of youth gangs found that, contrary to the dominant theory of the day, the assumptions, values and beliefs, and norms of groups of adolescents engaged in criminal behavior were no different from those of law-abiding citizens. Rather, youth gangs embraced a set of understandings about when deviant attitudes and behaviors could rightfully be invoked. These understandings, dubbed "techniques of neutralization," essentially immunize wrongdoers from the guilt they might otherwise feel after engaging in misconduct. de Young (1988), drawing on Sykes and Matza, analyzed techniques of neutralization in the publications of three organizations that advocated the decriminalization of adult-child sexual relationships. Ashforth, Anand, and Joshi (2004), building on Sykes and Matza, identified six techniques of neutralization that can facilitate misconduct in organizations that we consider here: denial of victim (also referred to as "moral exclusion"); denial of harm; denial of responsibility; social weighting; balancing the ledger; and appeal to higher loyalty. Two features of total institutions that care for harmless individuals, heal harmful individuals, and protect society from harmful individuals lead them to develop cultures that contain techniques of neutralization that can support the psychological and physical abuse of children, which as indicated above in connection with

cultural understandings pertaining to violence, can lead to the sexual abuse of children.[3]

First, the large managed group in these three types of total institution often is composed of members of low status or pariah groups, such as ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, mentally and physically disabled persons, and law violators. The cultures of total institutions such as this are likely to feature the denial of victim, denial of harm, appeal to higher loyalty, social weighting, and balancing the ledger techniques of neutralization. Cultures that feature the denial of victim technique of neutralization contain the assumption that members of the large managed group are morally inferior and thus deserving of any harm done to them by the supervisory staff. Cultures that feature the denial of harm technique include the assumption that members of the large managed group are less than fully human and thus do not fully experience any harm done to them by the supervisory staff. When cultures feature the appeal to higher loyalty technique, members of the supervisory staff believe that their group has higher moral standing than the large managed group and thus that its rights take precedence over the rights of the large managed group. Cultures that feature the balancing the ledger technique of neutralization contain the belief that any wrongdoing perpetrated by members of the supervisory staff against members of the large managed group is compensated for by other good deeds the staff does for the managed group. Finally, cultures that feature the social weighting technique include two beliefs that apply to the supervisory group. First, members of the supervisory staff believe that any wrongdoing perpetrated by them against the managed group is no worse than the wrongdoing perpetrated by other entities against the managed group. Second, members of the supervisory group believe that external entities that might monitor and punish them for wrongdoing perpetrated against the managed group do not have legitimate standing to do so.

We think the five above described techniques of neutralization, when featured in a total institution's culture, offers supervisory staff freedom from guilt that they otherwise might feel when they psychologically, physically or sexually abuse members of the large managed group. As a result, these cultural elements increase the likelihood that members of the supervisory staff will psychologically, physically and sexually abuse members of the large managed group. Several of the institutions that were the subject of Royal Commission case studies and that conform to the total institution ideal type included low status or pariah group members in their large managed group, and the supervisory staff of these institutions appeared to consider these people morally inferior. For example, the Retta Dixon Home included primarily Aboriginal children among its large managed group (Case Study No 17). Further the Children's Welfare Act 1954 (Vic) officially categorized the children confined to the Turana, Winlaton, Winlaton, and Baltara Youth Training Centres as being admitted to the institutions for reasons of being "exposed to moral danger" and being deemed 'likely to lapse into a life of vice and crime' (Case Study No 30, 17). Finally, the staff at both the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Hay Institution for Girls frequently called the girls in their care "nobodies, sluts, and liars' (Case Study No 7, 5) and 'black dogs' and 'prostitutes' (Case Study No 7, 16).

Second, both the supervisory staff and the managed group in these three types of total institutions tend to be bound by a strong norm of obedience to authority. Organizational cultures that feature a strong norm of obedience to authority tend to manifest the denial of responsibility technique of neutralization; that is, the assumption that organizational members have no choice but to yield to the authority of their superiors, even when they are engaged in misconduct. In such instances, subordinate supervisory staff and members of the large managed group tend to believe that they have no alternative but to remain silent when observing instances of child sexual abuse. This appears to have been the case at the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Institute for Girls in Hay. Several survivors of abuse at these institutions testified that they believed lower-level staff members knew about the sexual abuse perpetrated against them, but did not act on that knowledge. One survivor testified that when she reported her sexual abuse to a staff person, that person evinced sympathy but replied: 'I don't know what we can do about it' (Case Study No. 7, 26).

5.7. Cultural content as a resource

The above discussion assumes that an organization's members reflexively adopt its cultural content by virtue of their membership in the organization. But organizational members, especially powerful adults, can use cultural content as a resource to pursue their interests, including their interests vis-à-vis the perpetration, detection, and response to child sexual abuse.

People who are predisposed to abuse children can draw on cultural content in the organization or its environment to facilitate their abuse of children. For example, adults predisposed to abuse children sometimes intentionally expose children in their care to pornographic material, observe whether they react with interest or disgust to the material, and then decide whether to purse abuse of the children based on their reaction to the pornography (Conte et al., 1989; Colton et al., 2010; Moulden et al., 2010).

Further, people engaged in the abuse of children can use cultural content in the organization to impede detection of their abuse. Steven Larkins, chief executive officer of the Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services OSHC in New South Wales, Australia appears to have drawn on cultural content from the Aboriginal community to inhibit the detection of child abuse in which he was engaged. Larkins encouraged staff and board members of the Hunter OSHC to view the Australian Government agencies charged with monitoring them, which were not staffed by Aboriginal peoples, as illegitimate watchdogs (Menzies & Stoker, 2015).

In addition, people can use cultural content in the organization to undermine their organization's or external agencies' response to

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[3] Others have drawn inspiration from Sykes and Matza (1957) to analyze how organizations respond to allegations of culpability for child sexual abuse. For example, Greer and McLaughlin (2013) build on Sykes and Matza generally and Cohen (2001) more specifically to elaborate three ways organizations deny allegations of culpability for abuse when these allegations have been leveled in the context of media induced scandals: literal denial, interpretative denial, and implicatory denial. The focus of this work, though, is tangential to our focus here. First, Greer and McLaughlin focus on how organization' respond to allegations of culpability for abuse, while we focus on the factors that facilitate the perpetration of abuse. Second, Greer and McLaughlin focus on unconscious or conscious tendencies of all organizations exposed to scandals, while we focus on features of cultures that vary from organization to organization.

detected abuse. Catholic Church officials considered child sexual abuse to be a sin, which in church doctrine can be forgiven. Further, they understood child sexual abuse as emanating from a frailty of the soul, which can be healed. These cultural assumptions were used to justify the internal investigation and adjudication of child sexual abuse cases (following Church canon law), and the internal rehabilitation of abusers (in specialized Church affiliated treatment facilities), in lieu of their referral to external legal authorities that were likely to respond more effectively to the abuse (Boston Globe, 2002).

People predisposed to abuse children can even craft cultural content out of whole cloth to facilitate their abuse of children, impede detection of their abuse, and undermine response to their abuse. Frank Beck, the officer-in-charge of three Leicestershire County Council (UK) children's homes, provides an example. Beck developed a therapeutic model for treating children with behavioral problems that entailed returning them to a state of infancy, a version of 'regression therapy,' under the avowed presumption that doing so would surface children's emotional disturbances that were the root of their behavioral problems so that the underlying emotional disturbances could be addressed and manifested behavioral problems resolved. As implemented, Beck's therapeutic model, called for staff to come into contact with children in various stages of undress; in pajamas, diapers, and fully naked as was the case when children were bathed by staff. It also called for staff to provoke children to expressions of anger and, in turn, for staff to physically restrain children who had been so provoked. Such practices are believed to have provided a "cover" for Beck and his staff (some of whom were believed to be pedophiles) to abuse children (D'Arcy & Gosling, 1998).[4]

6. Conclusion

We have analyzed the role that organizational culture plays in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Our analysis indicates that numerous cultural elements can facilitate the perpetration of child abuse, impede the detection of abuse, and undermine the response to abuse in youth-serving organizations. Cultural content pertaining to gender differences, the formation of intimate and affectionate relationships, the sexual character of behavior, the use of violence, the nature of childhood, and the conditions under which unethical behavior is considered acceptable, may influence the likelihood of child sexual abuse and inhibit the detection and response to abuse when it occurs in youth-serving organizations.

Our analysis has straightforward policy implications. It implies that leaders of youth-serving organizations should purge their organizations' cultures of content that facilitates the perpetration of abuse, impedes the detection of abuse, and undermines the response to abuse (e.g., macho or sexualized cultural content). Further, it implies that they should instill in their organizations' cultures content that is antithetical to child sexual abuse; that is, that inhibits the perpetration of child sexual abuse, speeds the detection of abuse, and enhances the response to abuse. Generally speaking, such content features the assumption that child safety is the top priority of every youth-serving organization, the belief that child safety is more important than other youth-serving organization goals (e.g., children's intellectual development or athletic achievement), and norms that members of youth-serving organizations should conform to policies and procedures designed to insure child safety (e.g., that stipulate rigorous screening of job applicants, thorough monitoring of employees, and immediate and consummate follow-up of abuse allegations).

There is, in fact, an extensive literature on organizational cultures that are antithetical to child sexual abuse; referred to as "child safe cultures." For example, Tucci, Mitchell, Holmes, Hemsworth, and Hemsworth (2015: 81–85) elaborate numerous assumptions (e.g., the assumption that it is the "right of each child and young person to safe and trusting relationships"), values and beliefs (e.g., the belief that "communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of children" is good), and norms (e.g., the norm that "staff and volunteers [should] act on any concern raised by children, young people, and/or their parents/carers") that they contend are constituent of child safe cultures. While the proposition that child safe cultures will safeguard organizations from child sexual abuse may seem self-evident, it is yet to be empirically validated. One might be tempted to dismiss this evidential lacuna as simply a function of the fact that researchers have simply not yet attempted to validate this seemingly sensible proposition. But we think such optimism should be tempered by another fact; that attempts to validate the proposition that safety cultures make organizations safer have failed in other fields such as manufacturing, aviation, and nuclear power generation (Cole, Stevens-Adams, & Wenner, 2013). We think there are at least three problems that advocates of child safe cultures face in their effort to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in organizations.

First, implementing cultural change requires attention to the complex processes through which organizational participants come to embrace as their own assumptions about the way the world operates, values and beliefs about what is good and bad, and norms about how people should think and act. Current recommendations on how to implement child safe cultures tend to underestimate the magnitude of this challenge; implicitly viewing the implementation of cultural content as simply a matter of communicating desired content to organizational participants in a clear and precise manner. For example, Tucci et al. (2015) implicitly assume that the formulation of a written policy delineating child safe cultural content is sufficient to affect cultural change, as long as the policy is written collaboratively and in a language that resonates with rank and file workers and volunteers. But the literature on cultural change explicitly assumes that cultural change requires much more than explicit precise communication.

For example, Schein (1985) maintains that leaders' behavior has symbolic significance that plays a crucial role in establishing organizational cultures. And he offers an influential theory which maintains that leaders telegraph cultural content in five ways: 1) by

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[4] This characterization of Beck's stewardship of the Leicestershire County Council children's homes, though, has been contested (Webster, 1999). Some maintain that there are many other such instances of "organized abuse" in organizations such as day care centers, in which powerful persons manufacture cultural content (e.g., satanic beliefs) and practices (e.g., satanic rituals) to facilitate the abuse of children (Finkelhor, Williams, & Burns, 1988). But this assertion has been contested as well (de Young, 2004).

the kinds of people they hire and fire; 2) by the kinds of behavior they reward and punish; 3) by the matters on which they focus their attention; 4) by the way they respond to crises; and 5) by the attitudes and behaviors they exhibit. Further, Schein (1961) draws an analytic distinction between 'training', which imparts rules, techniques and knowledge needed to perform organizational tasks, and 'socialization', which imparts attitudes (in our terminology: assumptions, values and beliefs, and norms) that provide a compelling rationale for embracing the organization's training. And he delineates a three-stage process through which organizations socialize their members: 1) unfreezing, which entails the eradication of internalized attitudes that stand in the way of embracing the organization's training; 2) change, which entails establishing new attitudes that provide a rationale for embracing the training; and 3) refreezing, which entails reinforcing the new attitudes. Hence, in order for leaders to implement child safe cultures in their organizations, they will need to pay close attention to the symbolic consequences of their actions and engage in a concerted effort to alter the day-to-day experiences of those below them in the organization.

Second, there is evidence that cultural content prioritizing safety, however well conceived and effectively implemented, can be crescively eroded via mundane organizational processes. Vaughan (1996) explored the process through which mundane efficiency constraints can undermine an organization's commitment to safety in her analysis of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. She found that economic pressure to meet tight launch schedules caused engineers responsible for Challenger's solid fuel rocket boosters to deviate in small ways from established safe practice. When those deviations did not produce significant negative consequences in the short run, they were incorporated in standard operating procedures and viewed as normative. Moreover, as standard operating procedures were adjusted to allow for deviations from established safe practice, the culture of NASA and its contractors began to shift. Whereas early in the manned space program's history decision-makers operated under the assumption that launches should only proceed if engineers could prove that systems were safe, increasingly they came to operate under the assumption that launches should only be delayed or cancelled if engineers could prove that systems were unsafe. Eventually, the "normalized" deviations from established safe policies led to the catastrophic failure of the Challenger's rocket boosters and the destruction of the shuttle.

The prioritization of child safety in youth-serving organizations may be similarly crescively undermined. The budgets of youth-serving organizations tend to be lean, and the costs of adhering to child safe administrative policies and procedures can be prohibitively high. When this is the case, staff may pursue administrative shortcuts that can jeopardize child safety. For example, child safe organization guidelines typically call for rigorous screening of job applicants, but employee and volunteer turnover in youth-serving organizations tends to be high and unpredictable. As a result, youth-serving organizations often find themselves searching for new employees and volunteers on short notice, which may lead staff to depart from established screening procedures. And over time, such departures, if they do not result in negative consequences such as instances of child abuse, can become the norm. Therefore, in order for leaders to maintain child safe cultures in their organizations, they will need to remain cognizant of the ever-present possibility of cultural drift.

Finally, it is axiomatic in organization theory that organizational cultures are anchored in organizational environments. Organizations tend to evolve cultures that offer solutions to the problems they confront in acquiring and processing inputs, and sourcing outputs, whether those inputs and outputs are products or services (Schein, 1995). Thus attempts to alter a youth-serving organization's culture in ways that reduce the risk of child sexual abuse can undermine the organization's alignment with its environment and possibly its capacity to thrive and serve children. For example, boarding school cultures featuring the assumption that teachers and students are equals, and the norm that teachers should develop intimate and affectionate relationships with students may provide a competitive advantage to schools occupying a particular market niche and even may cultivate attitudes and behavior in teachers that make them more compelling mentors. While our analysis indicates that purging such content from a youth-serving organization's culture can reduce the risk of child sexual abuse and speed the detection of abuse, eliminating such cultural content in favor of content that supports a more impersonal relationship between teachers and students may erode a boarding school's competitive advantage and may even degrade its capacity to serve children.[5] Consequently, leaders who seek to cultivate and maintain child safe cultures in their organizations will need to come to grips with the constraints that their organization's environment places on them in this effort.

Thus, our analysis implies that the leaders of youth-serving organizations should aver to purge their cultures of content that is conducive to child sexual abuse and instill in them content that is antithetical to abuse. But organization theory suggests that this effort will require a complex ongoing struggle in which tradeoffs between child safety and organizational effectiveness must continually be struck and re-struck. We hope this article can serve as a resource to the leaders of youth-serving organizations who must take up this challenge.

Acknowledgments

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[5] The tradeoff between child safety and other youth-serving organization goals is well illustrated by the predicament in which the Prince George's County public school system in Maryland (USA) currently finds itself. In the wake of several high profile child sex abuse cases, the school district rigorously reformed its child safety policies in the 2016–2017 academic year, resulting in nearly 850 employees being placed on administrative leave. But 90% of these cases were eventually deemed not to warrant an official investigation. Further, the administrative leave actions came at a huge financial outlay (nearly $10 million to date), a significant human resource management cost (declining teacher moral and increased turnover), and possibly a decline in teacher effectiveness. One teacher who was put on administrative leave for "kissing a first grader on the top of the head after the girl hugged her" stated that young children expect physical contact and asked, "are you *not* going to hug a 4-year-old who is crying?"

supported by a contract from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Appendix A. Royal Commission Case Studies Referenced in Text

Case Study No. 2: YMCA NSW's response to the conduct of Jonathan Lord.

Case Study No. 7: Child sexual abuse at the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Institution for Girls in Hay.

Case Study No. 15: Response of swimming institutions, the Queensland and NSW Offices of the DPP and the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian to allegations of child sexual abuse by swimming coaches.

Case Study 17: Retta Dixon Home.

Case Study No. 30: The response of Turana, Winlaton and Baltara, Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria to allegations of child sexual abuse.

Case Study No. 32: Geelong Grammar School.

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