Actors, Scripts, Scenes and Scenarios: Key Trends in Policy and Research on the Organisation of Serious Crimes

ADAM EDWARDS[*]

Abstract

The problem of 'transnational organised crime' has become a prominent issue in international affairs over the past two decades. Official constructions of the problem identify threats to public safety resulting from the greater mobility of people and goods across national borders and the exploitation of this mobility by 'organised crime groups' (OCGs). In turn, this has led to the generation of a new genre of policy-oriented learning, the 'threat assessment', which informs and legitimises the cross-border co-ordination of preventive interventions against such groups. This article considers arguments over the conceptual and methodological value of these threat assessments and their central preoccupation with criminal actors. An alternative approach is advanced, concerned with the 'scripts' involved in the commissioning of serious crimes and their facilitating conditions or 'scenes'. This approach can also identify future 'scenarios', providing less certain but more satisficing grounds for anticipating and governing the organisation of serious crimes.

Key words

Transnational organised crime; anticipatory governance; threat assessment; organised crime groups; crime scripts; scenario methodologies

Resumen

El problema de la "delincuencia organizada transnacional" se ha convertido en un tema importante en los asuntos internacionales durante las últimas dos décadas. Las interpretaciones oficiales del problema identifican amenazas a la seguridad pública derivadas de la mayor movilidad de personas y bienes en las fronteras nacionales y la explotación de esta movilidad por "grupos de crimen organizado". A su vez, esto ha llevado a la generación de una nueva disciplina de aprendizaje orientada a las políticas, la "evaluación de amenaza", que informa y legitima la coordinación transfronteriza de intervenciones preventivas contra esos grupos. Este artículo analiza argumentos sobre el valor conceptual y metodológico de estas evaluaciones de amenazas y su preocupación principal hacia los actores criminales. Se plantea un enfoque alternativo, relacionado con los "guiones" implicados en la comisión de delitos graves y las condiciones que los favorecen o "escenas del

[*] Adam Edwards is Reader in Politics and Criminology in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WT, UK. EdwardsA2@cf.ac.uk. His principal research interest is in governance and circuits of power in liberal modes of security.

crimen". Este enfoque también puede identificar "escenarios" futuros, ofreciendo bases para anticipar y gobernar la organización de crímenes graves menos seguras pero mínimamente más aceptables.

Palabras clave

Crimen organizado transnacional; gobierno anticipatorio; evaluación de amenazas; grupos de crimen organizado; guión criminal; metodologías de escenas del crimen

Table of contents

> The problem of organized crime is the concept of organized crime itself, which in turn produces the wrong question for research, which is to ask if "it" is organized in a particular way, whereas the more sensible question is to ask what factors over time shape the ways in which crimes of certain types are organized and who [beyond just the perpetrators] gets involved in them?

(Edwards and Levi 2008, p. 373).

1. Introduction

'Organised crime' is now a major focus for public policy, as exemplified in the United Nations' Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (Edwards and Gill 2003, UNODC 2004) and, in Europe, its prominence on the EU's agenda for creating an 'Area of Freedom, Security and Justice' realized through the 'Tampere', 'Hague' and 'Stockholm' multi-annual programmes and the current 'European Agenda on Security' (European Council 1999, 2005, Council of the European Union 2010, European Commission 2015). In turn, this agenda has generated a whole new genre of policy-oriented learning, the 'threat assessment' of organised crime which endeavours to provide policy-makers with an understanding of current organised crime patterns, in particular concerns about 'transnational' crimes resulting from the greater mobility of people and goods across borders, and to inform the targeting and co-ordination of efforts at prevention (OCTA 2006 and *passim*, SOCTA 2013, iOCTA 2014). In the social science research community, however, the very concept of organised crime remains controversial. Some consider it to be little more than a political construct, used by policy elites in the liberal democracies to depict themselves as primarily the victims of 'alien' threats from a familiar rogues' gallery of organised crime groups (OCG's): 'Cosa Nostra', 'Columbian Cartels', 'Chinese Triads', 'Russian Mafiya' etc. (Woodiwiss 2003, Woodiwiss and Hobbs 2009). Others identify a self-referential bureaucratic politics at play in the construction of organised crime threats as problems of law enforcement implying law enforcement solutions, including innovations in confiscating the proceeds of crime (Sheptycki 2003; van Duyne and Vander Beken 2009).

Counterpoised to the threat assessment industry and its critics, however, is an emerging field of research which focuses analysis on the organisation of serious crimes, including the opportunities for their commission and the social relations which these imply (Edwards and Levi 2008). This analytical shift has generated an energetic research programme concerned with the 'crime scripts' or *modus operandi* employed by criminal organisations to commission different types of crime (Cornish and Clarke 2002, Levi and Maguire 2004), the 'scenarios' which are more or less conducive to the organisation of these crimes (Vander Beken and Verfaillie 2010), the normative, as well as empirical, inquiry into the 'social harms' that qualify certain types of crime as 'serious' priorities for governmental action (Greenfield and Paoli 2010) and the conditions or 'scenes' in which these scripts are played out.

This analytical shift has had an impact on policy trends, partly influencing the European Council's 2006 decision on the remit of Europol (the European Policing agency) to shift the scope of its work from 'organised crime' to 'serious crime' (Dorn 2008). The primary location of this shift in thinking has, however, been in the academy and its pressure on policy-makers, as in the Royal United Services Institute's programme of research on organised crime (RUSI 2014). To place this trend in context and as a precursor to discussing its implications for the policy-research relationship, it is possible to distinguish three other dominant policy trends, each with their own distinctive analytical focus. Table 1 summarises this trend, pointing to a basic dichotomy in policy trends between varieties of actor-oriented thinking on the one hand and a focus on organisational and commissioning processes on the other.

Table 1. Organised Crime Policy Trends and Their Analytical Focus

Trend	Analytical Focus	Policy Exemplars
The Actor-Orientation (1): Conspirators	Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)	Kefauver Committee (1950); US Presidential Commissions on OC (1967, 1986); RICO statute (1970)
The Actor-Orientation (2): Illegal Entrepreneurs	Illicit networks	German BKA\LKA definition of OC (1986)
The Actor-Orientation (3): Poly-Criminals	'Potpourri' of 'threat indicators': OCGs SOCs (Serious Organised Crime areas) CRFs (Crime Relevant Factors) Effects of OCGs + SOCs on EU society	UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000); Annual EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment (2006-2011); EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (2013 – 2017)
Organisation of Serious Crimes: Commissioning	Scripts, Scenes and Scenarios	Approach still marginal and primarily based in the academy, e.g. RUSI (Royal United Services Institute) Organised Crime Programme (2014)

2. Policy trends and their research implications

All of these trends continue to attract support and compete for prioritisation on policy agendas and research programmes. To draw upon a musical metaphor, we can refer to them as *refrains* to suggest that whilst they have been coterminous for much of the history of 'organised crime' as a problem for public policy, some have been louder than others at certain times and in certain contexts. This metaphor helps us understand the contentious quality of this policy issue and the particular cacophony of current policy debate. As indicated in Table 1., it is possible to differentiate key policy trends in terms of the particular analytical focus they privilege and how this leads to the problem being 'framed' in ways that prioritise certain kinds of actors, activities and contexts for policy responses, whilst down-playing others.

2.1. The actor-orientation (1): conspirators

Histories of the definition of 'organised crime' as an official category and focus for policy identify its origins in American law enforcement (Woodiwiss 2003). One of the earliest uses of the concept has been traced back to the 1896 report of the New York Society for the Prevention of Crime into racketeering, gambling and prostitution. Both here, and in the US National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (the Wickersham Commission 1929-31), the problem is defined in terms of the political and economic conditions generating racketeering, including the corruption and collusion of public officials in municipal government (Woodiwiss 2003, Smith 1991). Post-Second World War, however, historians identify a major

shift in policy discourse. 'What' questions about the kinds of crime that were being organised and how they were organised became less important than questions about 'who' was doing the organising, in particular concerns about the influence of foreign career criminals (Smith 1991). Critics of this analytical shift refer to the new concept of organised crime as an 'alien conspiracy theory', epitomised by the proceedings of the 1950 Kefauver Senate Investigating Committee (on 'organised crime in interstate commerce') which was preoccupied with the organisation of criminal conspiracies around ethnic groups, in particular those emanating from the Italian-American community (Woodiwiss 2003). In contrast to the earlier Wickersham Commission, the Kefauver Committee was conspicuously silent about the role of officialdom in the facilitation of criminal enterprises. The now familiar distinction between the 'upper-world' of legitimate commerce and government and the 'under-world' of criminal conspiracies had become enshrined in public policy (Paoli and Fijnaut 2004).

The Kefauver Committee popularised the idea of, 'a nationwide crime syndicate known as the Mafia, whose tentacles are found in many large cities' (United States Senate 1951, p. 131). Mafia imagery subsequently dominated policy discourse in the US, compounded by the notorious testimony of Joe Valacchi given in 1963 to the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, in which he discussed his participation in an Italian-American crime syndicate, 'La Cosa Nostra'. The concept of organised crime as the consequence of ethnically-based syndicates with international connections was given academic credibility through Donald Cressey's contribution to Lyndon Johnson's 1967 Presidential Task Force on Organised Crime. Cressey's (1969) landmark text, *Theft of a Nation*, represented organised crime in the US as a shadow state, mirror-imaging, the hierarchically organised rational bureaucracies of the law enforcement agencies charged with tackling 'it'.

These core aspects of the Cressey model also clarify the purposes of the principal law enforcement instrument that came out of the Johnson Task Force, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupted Organisations (RICO) statute of 1970, to prosecute membership of criminal enterprises involved in predicate offences. The analytical preoccupation with organised crime groups (OCGs) received a 'pluralist' revision in Ronald Reagan's Presidential Commission on Organised Crime, which retained a focus on the threat posed by ethnically-based conspiracies but broadened the scope beyond the Mafia to accommodate the perceived impact of 'Colombian Cartels', the Japanese Yakuza and Russian groups etc. (Potter 1994).

The lineage of the alien conspiracy theory continues through to present representations of 'transnational' organised crime in other regions, particularly in Europe post-Soviet Union, and can be discerned in the EU's threat assessments (see below). Within the American 'home' of the concept of organised crime, however, this theory has been challenged by those arguing that much illegal market activity, particularly in the narcotics markets, operates in a 'disorganised way' and is better conceptualised in terms of marketplace dynamics (Reuter 1983; Naylor 1997).

2.2. The actor-orientation (2): illegal entrepreneurs

Conceptualising organised crime in terms of illicit enterprise has also been a defining characteristic of much European policy activity in relation to organised crime, as epitomised by the definition offered by the German Bundeskriminalamt in 1983:

> 'Organised crime constitutes the planned commission of criminal offences driven by the quest for acquiring profits or powers. Such criminal offences have to be, individually or in their entirety, of major significance and involve the cooperation of more than two participants acting with a common intent for a longer or indefinite period of time on a distributed-task basis:
>
> a) by utilisation of commercial or business-like structures

> b) by application of violence or other methods suitable for achieving intimidation or
>
> c) by exerting influence on politics, the media, public administrations, justice systems, or commerce and industry.'

The analytical concern with enterprise has the advantage of shifting policy change and learning away from the blunt, ethnocentric and potentially bigoted, focus on ethnically-defined groups (without denying that ethnicity and kinship can be employed as resources for organising serious crimes, see below). It accommodates looser partnerships of co-offenders and consequently acknowledges the phenomenon of project crimes arranged by networks of illicit entrepreneurs brought together by 'criminal contact brokers' for the purposes of commissioning particular offences (Hobbs 2001, Klerks 2003). The use of social network analysis to conceptualise and explain such project crimes has become a key focus of academic research, for example on human trafficking (Campana 2016) or gun crime (Oatley and Crick 2015).

Even so, analysis of the structural properties of organised crime problems, in particular their accomplishment through social networks of entrepreneurs, still privileges a focus on particular co-offenders rather than the assemblage of these actors and the necessary resources for organising serious crimes in conditions that are conducive. As a consequence, there is a danger of repeating the reductionist explanation of conspiracy theorists only this time reducing the policy problem to the structural properties of 'the network' of entrepreneurs rather than 'the syndicate' of alien conspirators.

In addition, the looser definition of organised crime as illicit entrepreneurship has attracted criticism for simply adding to the ambivalence of a policy construction that accommodates activities ranging from tax fraud through to drugs trafficking and terrorist activity and actors as diverse as the Italian Cosa Nostra through to youth gangs (Fijnaut *et al*. 1998). Paoli and Fijnaut (2004, p. 41) conclude their history of the concept of organised crime by arguing:

> Its very plurality of meanings, explaining its recent success in world public debate, and making it a catchy label to signify popular anxieties and foster legislative changes, hinders the full transformation of organised crime into a clear-cut legal category. Despite the definitional efforts made by several domestic governments and international organisations, organised crime is still far from meeting the normative characteristics of legal categories and its definitions usually lack both rigorousness and exhaustiveness. It remains a vague and ambiguous catchphrase, the application of which inevitably entails varying – but usually high – degrees of arbitrariness.

2.3. The actor-orientation (3): poly-criminals

One response to this definitional problem has been to replace the search for an all-encompassing definition with evolving content definitions of emerging threats and risks. This approach can be discerned in the United Nation's Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and, more explicitly still, in the European Union's annual Organised Crime Threat Assessments (the 'OCTA'), which commenced in 2006 and concluded in 2011 before being replaced by the current EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (the 'SOCTA'), first published in 2013 covering the 2013–2017 period.

Reviewing the journey from OCTA to SOCTA provides a means of tracing the evolution of thinking about organised crime in elite European policy-making circles over the past decade and, within this thinking, the particular importance of the threat assessment as a new genre of policy-making. The replacement of the EU Organised Crime Situation Reports (OCSR) by the OCTA in 2006 was justified on the grounds that transnational OCGs were outwitting and outflanking the capacities of national police and intelligence agencies and this warranted both a transnational

response from European-wide agencies such as Europol and one that aimed to anticipate and pre-empt, not simply react to, problems of transnational organised crime. In these terms the ambition of the OCTA was to inform the anticipatory governance of transnational organised crime problems and to justify pre-emptive interventions. As such it is a significant shift in governmentality from 'criminal justice', the retrospective detection and prosecution of suspects 'on the facts' of offences already committed, to 'security' and the justification of pre-emptive interventions against suspects yet to offend. Given the gravity of this shift for the politics and jurisprudence of group offending it is worth reflecting on developments in threat assessment and the fitness for purpose of this policy genre in warranting pre-emptive intervention.

Whilst adding to the range of factors considered in threat assessments, this policy trend has continued the tendency in other actor-oriented accounts to treat organised crime as a collective noun, a singular thing, rather than a variegated process. As a consequence, more elaborate content definitions of this thing have only resulted in a 'potpourri' of factors to be considered rather than their assemblage into something that realist social scientists would recognise as resembling an explanation with a clear explanandum (the thing to be explained) and related explanans (the premises that explain 'the thing' and their antecedent conditions) (Keat and Urry 1981, p. 10, 248-249).

Admittedly there is the privilege in the philosophy of social science, which authorities responsible for taking action on serious crimes don't have, of treating the very possibility of explaining organized crime as an ongoing and contentious issue of epistemology amongst realists and interpretivists (Sayer 2000). However, the absence of clear explanatory thinking in the policy process for security strategies premised on pre-emptive intervention ought to provoke considerable concern. It would be disconcerting enough if, in Paoli and Fijnaut's terms, policy-oriented learning about retrospective law enforcement continued to be 'arbitrary' but in the context of legitimating the *pre*judice of security strategies it is surely indefensible. If the building of predictive machines to warrant pre-emptive intervention is to remain a possible and desirable policy goal then the methodology of threat assessment is justifiably a core concern for any interested in the politics and jurisprudence of group offending.

2.3.1. From OCTA to SOCTA

The journey from OCTA to SOCTA can be characterised as one in which actors, the OCGs, remain central but are represented as more sophisticated 'poly-criminals' in that they diversify into a range of criminal activities that can complement one another, such as trafficking in people as well as narcotics and enabling illegal migration as well as shipping forced labour into the vice markets and sweatshops of Western Europe. Table 2. provides a summary of the key indices of risk referred to in the first OCTA.

This first threat assessment argued that whilst the Organised Crime Situation Reports (OCSR) that preceded the OCTA, provided a descriptive account, the OCTA, 'puts an emphasis on the qualitative assessment of this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon', noting:

> There is a need for a close attention on key criminals, their networks, the financial dimension of the OC groups and their ability to communicate within and between one another. That is, the functional side of OC must be at the forefront of the attention, asking the question what they are doing and how, rather than who they are (OCTA 2006, p. 6).

In these terms, the OCTA recognizes different kinds of organised groups, including 'flexible and fluid patterns of association between individual criminals' and emphasises the importance of understanding, 'the conditions under which patterns of criminal association and co-offending emerge and exist' (OCTA 2006, p. 12).

Reference is also made to the principal activities of these groups, specifically drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings and illegal immigration, fraud, Euro counterfeiting, commodity counterfeiting and intellectual property theft, and money laundering. The OCTA (2006, p. 17-22) also identifies 'key facilitating factors with regards to criminal markets', which provide OCGs with opportunities for commissioning serious crimes, including document forgery and identify theft, misuse of the transport sector, exploitation of the financial sector, problems of globalisation and ease of movement across borders.

Table 2. OCTA Threat Assessment Indicators, Categories and Patterns

Key Indicators of OCGs	Categories of OCGs	Regional Patterns of OCGs
The International Dimension: meaning, international co-operation • OC Group Structures: patterns of criminal association and co-offending • Use of Legitimate Business Structures • Specialization: providing or recruiting actors with specialist skills • Influence and Corruption: misusing entrusted power for private gain • Violence • Counter-measures: undertaken by OC groups to avoid detection and prosecution	Territorially based, indigenous OCGs, with extensive transnational activities • Mainly ethnically homogenous groups with their leadership and main assets abroad • Dynamic networks of perpetrators • OCGs based on strictly defined organizational principles without an ethnic component, coupled with a large international presence.	• The south-eastern region of the EU, with a focus on Turkish and Albanian OCGs • The south-western region of the EU, with a focus on certain African OCGs • The north-eastern region of the EU, focusing on the Baltic States and the influence of Russian speaking OCGs • The Atlantic region, revolving mainly around the pivotal transnational role of Dutch, British and Belgian OCGs

Source: European Union Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2006 (OCTA 2006, p. 11-17, 24).

Even so, the assessment proceeds from an identification of OC actors to their activities and their consequences, rather than taking the accomplishment of particular criminalized activities as the analytical focus, in which the mobilization of different actors is but one part. The admixture of the indicators, categories, regional patterns, principal activities and facilitating factors used to define the threats posed by organised crime groups has been criticised for producing a confused analytical tool. As van Duyne and Vander Beken (2009, p. 274) argue:

> On the one hand, [the OCTA] seems a threat assessment when it tries to make statements about organised crime groups and criminal markets. On the other hand, it carries elements of an impact assessment since the evaluation of the level of threat is sometimes directly connected to its impact on society. Moreover, the analysis of key facilitating factors (like the misuse of the road transport sector) contains elements of a vulnerability study.

Mindful of the confused picture emerging out of the OCTA, the first assessment notes that, 'Weighting crime areas against one another is inherently difficult. This

too, has less to do with analytical insights than value statements, reflecting different priorities in the MS [Member States of the European Union] and beyond' (OCTA 2006, p. 25). It is acknowledged that, ultimately, the intelligence on which the OCTA is premised is gleaned from, 'years of political and law enforcement experience' (OCTA 2006, p. 26), a dependence that is reinforced by the key methodological instrument of threat assessments, that of surveys of police forces' perceptions of organised crime activity (Gregory 2003; van Duyne and Vander Beken 2009).

Without wishing to dismiss the relevance of political and law enforcement-based assessments of threat, there is a danger that these bracket-off other kinds of expertise about organised crime. This has at least three possible ramifications (Edwards and Levi 2008, p. 372-374):

1. Without reference to countervailing analyses, threat assessments run the risk of becoming self-referential, recycling the prevailing values and priorities (the categories and frames of reference) of the political and law enforcement agencies who are surveyed for the purposes of composing the threat assessments;

2. Privileging law enforcement intelligence presupposes law enforcement responses, even whilst the very limitations of law enforcement as a crime reduction strategy are recognised. Consequently, the first OCTA states both that the international scope of OCG activities and their infiltration of the upper-world of government and commerce, 'gives them a sort of impunity and perpetuity that counteracts law enforcement efforts', but it nonetheless asserts that, 'when attacking OC, law enforcement is at the heart of political and economic life in the EU.' (OCTA 2006, p. 5, 23); and

3. The failure to switch the analytical focus from the prosecution of actors, OCGs, to the organisation of serious crimes inhibits the transformation of strategic priorities (such as sustainable crime reduction) into detailed operational recommendations.

Whilst cataloguing OCG actors and activities, threat assessments remain very obtuse and abstract about the explanation of organised crime problems and consequently how remediable they are. There is little sense of how serious crimes are actually organised and what this tells us about the possibilities for crime reduction. Whilst subsequent iterations of the annual OCTA have refined the discussion of its core concepts, the ramifications of its law enforcement-centred strategy remain. The assessment for 2011, for example, identifies the growing importance of the internet as a 'key facilitator' of organised crime, it notes the increased diversification of OCGs into 'multi-commodity' and 'poly-criminal' activities, notes the increased collaboration amongst OCGs in 'regional hubs' across Europe and the corruption of experts in transport, finance, real estate, law and pharmaceuticals who can facilitate serious crimes (OCTA 2011, p. 5-6), whilst still concluding that, 'Targeted law enforcement action is needed to tackle the most dangerous criminal groups operating in Europe' (OCTA 2011, p. 4).

2.3.2. SOCTA 2013 – 2017

The establishment of the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment for the 2013 – 2017 period was promoted by the Director of Europol, Rob Wainwright, as a significant development in thinking that takes policy-making about organised crime beyond the OCTA. He describes it as a strategic report that, 'delivers a set of recommendations based on an in-depth analysis of the major crime threats facing the EU. The Council of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers will use these recommendations to define priorities for the coming four years.' (SOCTA 2013, p. 5). In addition to this more medium-term focus, following a decision in 2010 to shift to a 'multi-annual policy cycle' for responding to problems of organised crime, the SOCTA is premised on, 'a new methodology' that was developed over the

course of 2011-2012, 'by Europol in cooperation with the SOCTA expert group composed of representatives from EU Member States, Europol's third partner countries and organisations, the European Commission and Council General Secretariat.' (SOCTA 2013, p. 42). The SOCTA methodology is represented as developing threat assessment beyond the previous OCTA by refining indications of OCGs and augmenting these with indices of Serious Organised Crime areas (SOCs), their Effects on EU society and the identification of various Crime-Related Factors (CRFs) in the environment which can either facilitate or inhibit OCGs and SOCs. These distinguishing characteristics of the new methodology are summarised in Table 3.

In a novel development, the SOCTA methodology is also accompanied by a response from three academic researchers interested in organised crime, Dr Xavier Raufer[1], Professor Dr Arndt Sinn[2] and Professor Max Taylor[3] (SOCTA 2013, p. 44-45). They congratulate Europol and the SOCTA team on, 'the production of a thorough and competent analysis', which helps to develop the kind of approach that is needed to understand 'the trans-border character of much serious crime' (SOCTA 2013, p. 44). They identify a number of likely future trends and issues:

- maintaining the balance of freedom and security through 'good law enforcement informed by sophisticated analysis to inform policy decisions';
- the changing balance between politically-driven and economically-driven terrorism;
- the hybridisation of criminal activity (similar to earlier arguments about multi-commodity poly-criminal organisations), for example the use of the internet by OCGs to diversify into multiple illicit markets from fraud to counterfeit goods, as in the example of 'Silk Road'[4];
- the unintended and currently unforeseen consequences of general technological developments for serious crime opportunities; and
- changes in the demand for different kinds of drugs amongst different age cohorts as previously lucrative markets decline to be replaced by markets for new intoxicants including new synthetic drugs.

---

[1] Director of Studies, Department of Research on Contemporary Criminal Threats (MCC), University Paris II - Panthéon-Assas, France.
[2] Director of the Centre for European and International Criminal Law Studies, University of Osnabruck, Germany.
[3] Director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St. Andrews, UK.
[4] 'Silk Road' was a black-market website operating in the Dark Net, established in 2011 and closed down in 2013 by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Table 3. The SOCTA Methodology

Aim and Scope	– Analyse the character or threatening features of organised crime groups (OCGs) – Analyse the threatening features of serious and organised crime areas of activity (SOC areas) – Analyse threatening aspects of OCG and SOC areas by region – Define the most threatening OCGs, criminal areas and their regional dimension
Development from OCSR	– Present and future-oriented, not retrospective, threat assessment
Development from OCTA	– The scope and use of indicators for organised crime groups (OCGs) has increased and indicators have been developed to analyse SOC areas – Horizon scanning has been added to better define future threats – The effects of SOC and crime-relevant factors are analysed in detail to allow for better and more focused prioritisation
Data Sources	The SOCTA is based on data from law enforcement agencies and open sources. Law enforcement data includes: – data available within Europol – data obtained from MS via questionnaires, and – data obtained from third organisations and countries The open sources material used has been carefully evaluated for the reliability of the source and the validity of the information
Threat indicators	Tailored indicators describe and assess the intrinsic characteristics of OCGs and SOC areas and are used to assign their respective level of threat OCG indicators – *Low:* cooperation with other groups, expertise, external violence, countermeasures against law enforcement – *Medium:* adaptable and flexible, level of resources, the use of legal business structures (LBS), active in multiple crime areas – *High:* an international dimension to their activities, the use of corruption SOC indicators – *Low:* resource availability, social tolerance, linked crime areas – *Medium:* innovation, number of groups active and evolution of the crime area – *High:* international dimension and high profits Effect indicators – Measure the effect that OCGs and crime areas have on EU society These indicators are key in identifying priority threats and arriving at substantiated recommendations. Crime-Related Factors (CRF) are facilitating factors and vulnerabilities in the environment that have an influence on current and future opportunities or barriers for OCGs and SOC areas. CRF are analysed via horizon scanning, which aims to identify future trends in society and future crime threats.

Source: European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2013 (SOCTA 2013, p. 42-43).

These academics also identify key challenges in the methodological conundrum of prediction in future-oriented approaches to threat assessment. As predictive models are invariably premised on the extrapolation of historical data, they condemn analysts to fight the last battle rather than genuinely anticipate and effectively intervene against novel criminal practices. As a response to this conundrum they suggest, but don't explain, the need for 'continuous crime trend scanning, extending the SOCTA approach to support a more proactive approach' (SOCTA 2013, p. 45). They also note a conceptual need to recognise the mobility of multi-commodity poly-criminal actors across national and administrative boundaries and the need to avoid the kind of mirror-imaging that has debilitated previous security strategies (see also, Sheptycki 2003). They argue that global crime problems require global policy responses, otherwise security agencies bound by national and other administrative boundaries are destined to be outflanked by the increasingly 'flat' networked and distributed organisation of criminal activity. Finally, Raufer, Sinn and Taylor discuss the implication of these future trends for the process, as well as the content, of threat assessment, arguing that it will have to be more dynamic, flexible and responsive than previous exercises that were too slow and bureaucratised to keep pace with adaptations in criminal organisation. The last point echoes a long-established criticism of the policy response to organised crime by researchers noting the 'protieform' qualities of serious crime in which adaptations are fuelled by an ongoing 'arms race' between perpetrators and preventers to outwit and outflank each other (Dorn 2003; Ekblom 2003).

Even so, Raufer *et al.* argue that 'the SOCTA process and methodology we believe to be robust enough to track and inform the problems these [challenges] might imply for the future' (SOCTA 2013, p. 45). In this regard, however, it is worth citing criticism of the first UK Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime by the newly established National Crime Agency (NCA 2014), which adopts a similar conceptual approach to that of the EU SOCTA. Analysts from the Royal United Services Institute's organised crime programme argue that:

> The way organised crime is addressed in the UK has undergone a major overhaul in the last few years with the creation of the National Crime Agency. The first strategic assessment provides a good snapshot of the current state of organised crime. However, it points to a lack of knowledge about organised crime and its drivers – some of which could be addressed through research and deeper analysis. If the NCA is going to have a better record than its predecessors, it must work on getting the basics right. Knowing your enemy would be a good start (RUSI 2014)

Similarly, it isn't clear the indices of OCGs, SOCs, Effects and CRFs defined in the SOCTA methodology actually tell us much about the drivers of serious crime or, more prosaically, how serious crimes are actually organised. The failure to pose this basic question, let alone 'getting it right', remains the most remarkable characteristic of the politics and jurisprudence of group offending in this policy area. Indeed it can be argued that it is the jurisprudential preoccupation with criminal law enforcement rather than crime and harm reduction that explains much of this basic theory failure in the policy response to organised crime. In this regard, and notwithstanding the preoccupation with the flat, networked and distributed organisation of criminal activity, the actor-oriented legacy of Kefauver and Cressey remains strong in SOCTA 2013. Whilst not wishing to doubt the importance of the criminal prosecution of serious offenders for heinous crimes, realising the difference between criminal law enforcement on the one hand and the reduction of crime and harm, on the other, remains important for innovations in the future development of the policy-research relationship.

2.4. The organisation of serious crimes: commissioning processes

The distinction between law enforcement and crime reduction does not preclude the role of the former in the latter, only the treatment of the two as synonymous. If crime reduction is more than law enforcement, what else is it? Concepts taken from

volume crime reduction, of household burglary and automobile thefts for example, have been used by criminologists to rethink the organisation of serious crimes (Cornish and Clarke 2002; Ekblom 2003; Levi and Maguire 2004; Felson 2006; Levi 2007, see also Greenfield and Paoli 2010; Vander Beken and Verfaillie 2010). From this literature it is possible to identify a number of core propositions and to synthesise them into a novel conceptual framework for defining an explanandum (the processes of commissioning serious crimes) and its explanans (the scripts, scenes and scenarios of these processes and their harmful effects):

1. Reducing serious crimes entails an analytical focus on the *commissioning of offences*:

   a) The attributes of perpetrators (whether lone offenders or co-offenders in alleged 'organised crime groups' are 'Albanian', 'Chinese', 'Russian' or whatever) are of concern only in so far as they help explain the commissioning process (for example the use of ethnicity and kinship as a resource for trafficking illicit goods and in ways that insulate trafficking networks from disruption, including interdiction by law enforcement) but of themselves have no intrinsic analytical value;

   b) The offence-focus implies a concern with specific types of crime and a presumption (to be corroborated and refined through comparative empirical research) that different types of crime necessitate different commissioning processes or, to use a criminological term, they necessitate different 'crime scripts'[5] which break-down any crime into the particular sequence of activities through which it is accomplished (trafficking heroin from the Middle East into Western Europe, for example, requires a different script from the sourcing of materials for, and the production and distribution of, counterfeit fashion apparel and so on and so forth).

2. Understanding the commissioning of serious crimes entails an analytical concern with the *interactions* of offenders, victims and guardians in specific social contexts:

   a) Contrary to the dramatic focus on the pursuit and prosecution of 'crime bosses', 'kingpins' and 'core nominals', a concern with the commissioning process also reveals the routine interactions between offenders, their targets and the presence or absence of capable guardians that consequently create opportunities for serious crime (for example the interaction of illegal drug dealers and consumers on street corners, public parks and other notorious places that are under-policed or otherwise 'unmanaged');

   b) A concern with the interactions through which specific crimes are commissioned needn't limit the analytical focus to particular situational settings (such as street corners or public parks) nor to current or retrospective knowledge about serious crime. It can broaden the social contexts of commissioning to include other kinds of environments, such as transnational markets and e-commerce through the internet, and to anticipate future 'scenarios', including the likely consequences of different policy responses for escalating or

---

[5] A concept initially developed by Cornish and Clarke (2002) to augment rational choice analyses of organised crimes and subsequently elaborated and applied by Levi and Maguire (2004) to understand other practices in the *modi operandi* of organising and preventing serious crimes. The concept is employed in this paper in this later, broader, sense to include rational and other dispositions in the scripts and to connect these to their antecedent conditions ('scenes'), their prospects ('scenarios') and their consequences ('harms'). As such, the argument here includes the situational circumstances and routine activities that are the analytical concern of Cornish and Clarke and of fellow traveller Felson (2006) but without restricting the concept of crime scripts to this situational focus.

reducing crime rates (Vander Beken and Verfaillie 2010). Renowned examples include the impact of law enforcement operations against drug dealers generating violent turf wars for the share of markets freed-up by the successful removal of particular dealers or the likely consequences of decriminalising illicit drug use for public health and safety.

3. The *harmful effects*, the 'seriousness', of serious crime entails normative as well as empirical analysis and interpretation as well as measurement in the prioritisation of the policy response:

    a). Another implication of the distinction between law enforcement and crime reduction is to shift the focus of policy outcomes from successes or failures in the prosecution of offenders for predicate offences, the volume of their criminal assets that are confiscated or the volume of illicit goods that are captured, towards reductions in the harmful consequences of these offences. The presumption here is that incapacitation or disruption of particular offenders does little to alter or debilitate the commissioning process or its harmful impact, particularly in highly lucrative markets such as the trade in narcotics, where there are many recruits waiting to step into the shoes of incarcerated or otherwise incapacitated offenders;

    b). Establishing the relative harm of different types of serious crime is a seriously challenging exercise, beyond the kind of legal criteria favoured by the former Serious Organised Crime Agency in the UK, which defined seriousness in terms of an offence which would incur a prison sentence of at least 3 years on first conviction (SOCA 2006, p. 5n1). It entails challenges that are both normative ('what constitutes a harm and from whose perspective?') and empirical (whether to calculate harms in terms of gross figures or net of possible benefits, for example the therapeutic benefits that are believed to accrue from cannabis use for those suffering neurological complaints; whether to tally harms over a year, a decade or a lifetime; and the commensurability of different harmful effects, say 'battered children and household burglaries' as harmful effects of illicit drugs use, see Greenfield and Paoli 2010, p. 8-9). Even so, attempts are currently being made to develop a 'risk assessment matrix' that ranks harms according to their 'severity' (on a scale from negligible to catastrophic) and their 'probability' (from unlikely to frequent). Although not without some interpretative flexibility, this matrix at least provides the analyst with a systematic starting point for prioritising the seriousness of certain activities relative to others from one extreme (frequent and catastrophic) to another (unlikely and negligible) (Greenfield and Paoli 2010, p. 16).

4. Analysis of the scripts, scenarios and harmful effects of organising serious crime implies a more concrete *identification of weak points or 'vulnerabilities'* in the commissioning process for specific types of crime and their prioritisation in policy responses:

    a.) Emerging work in this field identifies border controls, shipping routes and visa applications as notable weak points in trafficking human beings and transporting stolen vehicles (Levi and Maguire 2004, p. 428-429). Other examples of weak points identified through script analysis include the ease with which payment card fraud could be commissioned (prior to the introduction of 'chip and pin' cards) (Levi and Maguire 2004, p. 433-8), or the ease with which amphetamine-

type stimulants can be manufactured using legal precursor chemicals procured from pharmacies (Chiu *et al.* 2011) or the ease with which Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) could be switched from legal but wrecked automobiles to stolen vehicles for the purposes of resale (Tremblay *et al.* 2001, p. 568);

b.) These scripts reveal the important role of crime 'promoters', whether intentional and corrupted or unwitting, in supporting offenders in the commissioning of serious crimes. Viewed from the perspective of commissioning, the key actors are not only the offenders but the pharmacies providing precursor chemicals, the payment card companies providing credit that can be easily forged and the vehicle licensing authorities operating licensing regimes open to abuse;

c.) Allied to the harm reduction framework, the analysis of commissioning informs a policy response that can prioritise the investment of resources in targeting weak points and in accordance with judgements about the severity and probability of any given crime type. This is especially apposite in an 'age of austere' public expenditure and limited resources for crime prevention, particularly inefficient and uneconomical exercises in law enforcement.

5. A crime reduction strategy premised on the targeting of weak points in the commissioning process implies a *broadening of the policy response* from law enforcement to include other public authorities, the involvement of private organisations and public-private partnerships:

a.) The identification of crime promoters, as well as intentional co-offenders (conspirators, entrepreneurs and poly-criminals), in the commissioning process broadens the scope of crime reduction beyond law enforcement measures targeting known offenders. Allied to normative and empirical judgements about the harms associated with different crimes, this approach begins to suggest a rationale for a division of labour amongst public and private sector 'preventers' and opportunities for public-private partnerships in which the effort and costs of sustainable crime reduction are shared (Levi and Maguire 2004, p. 417-423). In addition to charging public authorities other than the police (such as vehicle licensing) and private organisations (such as solicitors and accountants) with surveillance and enforcement duties in relation to the commission of serious crimes, this policy trend generates a wider repertoire of policy choices. It might, for example, be argued that scarce public resources are better concentrated on crimes that are more frequent and more critical (if not catastrophic) for a higher proportion of the public (Greenfield and Paoli 2010). The exemplar of this harm-based calculation being the trade in class A narcotics but, it could be argued according to this kind of calculus, also the on-line trade in counterfeit prescription drugs, the sale of contraband alcohol and cigarettes (Hornsby and Hobbs 2007) and the emerging trade in 'counterfeit meat', all of which generate high volume threats to public health. In turn, it might be argued that counterfeiting of luxury fashion goods (whilst now a sizeable illicit market) is less of a priority for public policy, as it is relatively less severe in its consequences than other crimes demanding a public response and that responsibility for its reduction ought to lie firmly with private organisations, their insurance companies and private security providers (Wall and Large 2010);

b.) Whilst highly controversial, not least because of its explicit prioritisation of policy responses and targets, the harm reduction

approach provides a normative as well as empirical framework for the politics and jurisprudence of group offending. It enables deliberation about the necessary prioritisation of alternative policy agendas for criminal, restorative and social justice and for risk management and their relationship to sustainable public protection in contexts of austere public expenditure (Edwards and Hughes 2012; Edwards *et al.* 2013).

6. This broadening of the policy response also implies a concern with the conditions or 'scenes' in which scripts are played out resulting in more or less harmful scenarios. The concept of scenes alerts us to the importance of an analytical concern with the conditions that can enable or frustrate scripts and their re-writing:

    a.) Following the dramaturgical metaphor, it can be acknowledged that scenes provide possibilities for improvisation in the script and are not crudely deterministic of performance. Even so they suggest a certain narrative progression in the script which actors are disciplined to follow and do not completely re-write each time they perform;

    b.) Disambiguating improvisation and narrative in serious crime scenes is in part a question for 'concrete', empirical research, requiring access to the accounts that can be elicited through qualitative interviews with offenders, victims, control agents and other researchers ('perp talk', 'survivor talk', 'Don talk' as well as 'control talk') and their construct validation, including the scripts, scenarios and scenes that emerge from cross-examination in court proceedings (Levi 2008). As a precursor to this it is, however, also possible to engage in abstract research entailing thought experiments about the necessary and contingent social relations that render serious crimes possible (Edwards and Levi 2008). An instance of this kind of thinking has been provided by Felson (2006), in which improvisation around narratives is understood in terms of the routine activities enabling the necessary supply of offenders, presence of targets and absence of capable guardians (or presence of more than capable but corrupted guardians);

    c.) Perhaps this kind of abstract research is what Raufer *et al.* meant through their reference to anticipating serious crime futures through 'continuous crime trend scanning' although it sounds more like some inductive exercise in big data mining rather than the kind of theory-driven research advocated here (see also Edwards 2016a, 2016b; Housley *et al.* 2014);

    d.) It is through the more systematic thinking through of these relations in assembling explanations of crime scripts, scenarios and scenes that social research can influence, not just critique, the turn towards anticipatory forms of governing serious crimes.

In this regard there is a need to challenge the language and assumptions of crime 'analysts' allied to the policy process and to rehabilitate an older language of social research that renders explicit the different practices necessary at various stages of social scientific work (Keat and Urry 1981, p. 248-249, see below). Researching, rather than 'analysing', the organisation of serious crimes alters the relationship between social scientists and the policy community. This shifts the policy-research relationship away from a view that social scientists ought to be enrolled into agendas set by policy-makers to service their technical refinement or better communication to broader publics. Conversely, the language of research locates

social scientists as constructive critics of these agendas inhabiting a culture of organised scepticism that can pose alternative visions of control. These alternatives may, for example, entail counter-intuitive (for law enforcement agencies) forms of non-enforcement such as triggering self-regulation (Edwards and Gill 2002).

3. Researching the organisation of serious crimes

Whilst the policy trend towards a focus on the organisation of serious crime remains subordinate to the other policy trends considered above, it is gaining increasing salience amongst the research community. Policy-oriented learning can be understood in relation to the types of research strategy implied by this trend and these can be distinguished in terms of *generalizations* about 'organised crime' as a singular subject, *abstraction* (or thought experiments) about the processes or mechanisms through which serious crimes can be commissioned and *concrete research* into empirical cases of how these mechanisms combine in the organisation of particular types of crime in certain social contexts (Keat and Urry 1981, p. 248-249). Finally, research could consider the prospects for a *synthesis* of these research strategies to question whether there are any generic lessons to be drawn from comparative case studies of how particular crimes are organised and any complementarities or inter-dependencies in the commissioning of different crimes (cf. Sayer 1992, p. 236-241). Such a synthesis is, for example, the logical implication of critically testing assertions about the emergence of multi-commodity poly-criminals. The key components of these research strategies and their relationship to one another are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Types of Research Strategy
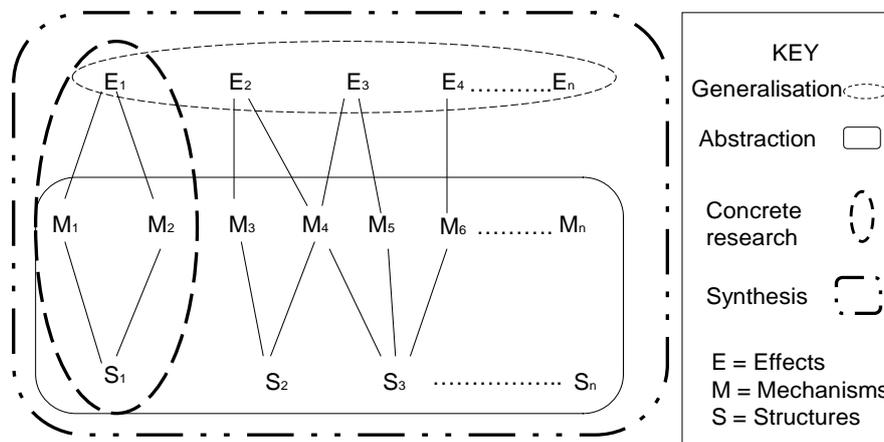
Source: Adapted from Sayer, 1992: 237

These distinctions, taken from methodological debates in the social sciences (Sayer 1992, p. 237) are helpful in clarifying how research strategies steer policy-oriented learning towards certain questions and away from others. As a research strategy, generalisation regards the effects of social relations or social events in relatively simple terms, its main purpose being to identify regularities and common properties. It is possible to understand conspiracy theories, illicit enterprise models and threat assessments as exercises in generalisation insofar as they define organised crime in terms of the attributes of organised crime groups ('utilising commercial or business-like structures', 'employing violence and other forms of intimidation', 'exerting influence on public authorities through corruption',

'ethnically homogenous', 'territorially-based', 'having a large international presence' etc., etc.). As suggested in the 'organisation of serious crimes' paradigm, however, this is a theoretical failure that reduces organised crime to a singular, simple, thing in order to ask how 'it' is organised, rather than focussing on specific criminal activities and how they are organised through various scripts, in certain scenes with alternative scenarios. In this framework, the key questions for research, rather than 'analysis', become: how the interaction of scripts, scenes and scenarios can evolve over time, what they tell us about the actual commissioning of crimes and what this suggests for the identification of vulnerabilities that can, in turn, be targeted for the purposes of harm reduction?

To understand the organisation of serious crimes it is necessary to replace generalisations about organised crime groups with a focus on 'concrete' crime types and their possible interrelationship or hybridisation. In these terms 'multi-commodity poly-criminality' are indications of how scripts, scenes and scenarios are evolving but there is still a need to build explanations of how such scripts are accomplished. As such 'concrete' refers to the idea of regarding commissioning processes as 'unities of diverse determinations' (Sayer 1992, p. 236). Analysis of crime scripts and scenarios seek to capture the multifarious mechanisms (signified in Figure 1., by M1, M2, M3 ... Mn) that combine to generate different commissioning events (E1, E2, E3 ... En) and that can combine in different ways to produce different crime outcomes (M1 + M2 = E1; M3 + M4 = E2; M4 + M5 = E3; M6 = E4 etc.). To take the example of the manufacture and distribution of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) discussed by Chiu *et al.* (2011), it is possible to identify several mechanisms:

> M1: Location of laboratory (house, shed);
>
> M2: Getting the goods (legal purchase, illegal purchase, social network);
>
> M3: Storage of goods (laboratory, rental sheds, storage facilities);
>
> M4: Cooking drug (test cooks, chemist experts);
>
> M5: Packaging drug;
>
> M6: Distribution of drug (In person, official courier);
>
> M7: Benefits (personal consumption, money).
>
> (Adapted from Chiu *et al.* 2011, p. 362).

These mechanisms can be regarded as the necessary requirements of synthetic drug production and distribution yet whether and how they actually come together to successfully commission this criminal enterprise is contingent on various context-specific factors: the capacity to source and store precursor chemicals (in sufficient quantities at regular intervals), to recruit the necessary expertise to combine these chemicals, to store and distribute the final product in ways that do not attract the attention of the authorities and so forth. In turn this crime script suggests potential vulnerabilities in the commissioning process that might prove more amenable to remediation than laborious and expensive law enforcement strategies targeting perpetrators for the purposes of criminal prosecution and sanctioning. For example, a stricter licensing regime for the legal sale of chemical precursors and monitoring of pharmacies monthly stocks and sales.

Implicit in the analysis of crime scripts and more explicit in the concept of crime scenes and scenarios (which are often less observable) is the importance of thought experiments or 'abstraction' to identify possible causal mechanisms. Abstraction fulfils two key analytical purposes. It counters self-referential thinking, for example, the recycling of current political and law enforcement categories and frames of reference, by encouraging researchers to employ other frames of reference such as framing the drug trade as an issue of public health, addiction and compulsive consumption not just 'rational choice' or as an issue of thrill-seeking cultural

practices and other 'notes on the script' (see Hayward and Young 2004; and Wall and Large 2010, on counterfeiting of luxury fashion goods as a cultural practice). Secondly, it encourages researchers to think about the social structures that generate these mechanisms and their possible ways of acting (signified in Figure 1., by S1, S2, S3 ...Sn). It encourages researchers to connect social structural trends to crime commissioning processes in, for example, the consequences of substantial sovereign debts for public expenditure on law enforcement and other preventive efforts; the expansion of the drugs trade as an alternative to reduced employment opportunities in legal economies; the increased demand for contraband and counterfeit goods given reductions in disposable income and prices in the formal economy (including increasing costs in commodities such as the global meat markets); the impact of civil wars and military interventions on governing capacity and as drivers of serious crime to fund (para)military campaigns; and the impact of emergent technologies on the arms race between organisers and preventers of serious crimes (Edwards 2016a, 2016b).

Some advocates of crime script analysis eschew this kind of structural analysis as an unnecessary distraction from identifying the situational opportunities for commissioning serious crimes and the more pragmatic, feasible, strategies for prevention implied by a focus on 'proximate' factors, rather than the 'distal' factors that are the concern of political-economy (Cornish and Clarke 2002). However, structural analysis remains important for establishing the governing capacity for responding to emerging crimes. What, for example, can 'capable guardianship' mean in the context of major reductions in police, municipal government and other statutory services within countries experiencing severe crises of sovereign debt? What else can capable guardianship mean in the context of weak states where criminal enterprises provide what limited employment opportunities and welfare services are available to marginalised populations? How sustainable are crime reductions in a context where, to return to the insights of the Wickersham Commission, capable guardianship has been captured, if not owned, by criminal enterprises? (Edwards and Levi 2008, p. 378-381).

The, as yet, untried synthesis of these research strategies suggests a future direction for the policy-research relationship in responding to serious crimes. It addresses a conceptual problem with the offence-specific focus of crime script analyses, which is that interconnections and interdependencies may exist across different crimes, amounting to a cumulative problem, the 'multi-commodity' and 'poly-criminal' enterprises identified in the EU OCTA (OCTA 2011). These interconnections are 'framed-out' of an analytical focus on the commissioning of specific crimes, notwithstanding the depth of insight that concrete studies of commissioning can yield. For example, some crimes, such as armed robbery or, in the digital age, the less risky enterprise of internet fraud, may be committed as an end in themselves or to fund entry into more lucrative drug markets, which may in turn fund the trafficking of people into the sex industry or other labour markets.

Whether and how these specific crime types are interconnected is a moot point for a research strategy that looks for the mechanisms connecting the commission of different crime types (signified in Figure 1., by the relationship of M4 to both E2 and E3). A significant pay-off from this synthesis could be the identification of particular mechanisms (for example, absent border controls (M4)) that if targeted could yield sustainable reductions in several serious crimes (for example traffic in human beings + narcotics (E2 + E3)). Synthesis also encompasses generalisations, for example regularities in commissioning processes, which might prove important for identifying those causal mechanisms which are 'super-weak points' (such as border and port controls) in the commissioning of several serious crime types and which could be employed in strategies aimed at 'poly-crime' enterprises.

Synthesis also provides a research strategy for testing propositions about crime deflection or displacement (Barr and Pease 1990) and how these can impact on the

reduction of serious crimes. For example, the malign displacement of stable drugs markets into violent turf wars is a renowned criticism of law enforcement interventions within the field of drugs policy (Edwards and Gill 2002), less clear is the displacement effects of intervention against certain serious crimes (e.g. narcotics trafficking) for driving the diversification of criminal enterprises into commissioning other crime types (e.g. fraudulent e-commerce; counterfeiting etc.). In these terms, synthesis supports the normative and empirical questions provoked by the harm reduction approach; whether, for example, a strategic policy ought to be adopted for deliberately seeking to deflect the organisation of serious crimes that could be regarded as more severe and more probable onto those with a lower threshold of severity. The broader point is that as a research strategy, synthesis better facilitates the kind of strategic and anticipatory policy-making that is required in 'austere' economic conditions where motivations for organising serious crimes are fuelled whilst governing capacity is weakened.

4. Conclusion

If the aspiration for 'evidence-based' policy-making is retained, these methodological considerations become even more significant for public debate. If the aspiration is to escape the self-referential narratives of law enforcement and re-frame policy responses to serious crimes in ways that are more suited to the scenarios presented by the political-economic challenges of the present, current trends in criminological research present grounds for guarded optimism. Although methodological innovations in the analysis of crime scripts, scenes, scenarios and their harms are still nascent, they are already beginning to demonstrate the advantages of broadening policy-oriented learning beyond a preoccupation with actor-oriented accounts to the processes through which serious crimes are actually commissioned and the social structures which generate these processes and imply targets for strategic interventions. The normative dimension of researching commissioning processes and their consequences also provides a basis for deliberation about dilemmas in the politics and jurisprudence of group offending, specifically the evidential grounds for pre-emptive interventions in the pursuit of restorative and social justice-driven policy responses, relative admixtures of criminal justice and risk management.

References

Barr, R., and Pease, K., 1990. Crime Placement, Displacement and Deflection. *In:* M. Tonry and N. Morris, eds. *Crime and Justice, Volume 12*. Chicago University Press, 277–318.

Campana, P., 2016. The Structure of Human Trafficking: Lifting The Bonnet On A Nigerian Transnational Network. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(1), 68-86.

Chiu, Y-N., Leclerc, B., and Townsley, M., 2011. Crime Script Analysis of Drug Manufacturing in Clandestine Laboratories. *British Journal of Criminology*, 51 (2), 355-374.

Cornish, D.B., and Clarke, R., 2002. Analyzing Organized Crimes. *In*: A. Piquero and S. Tibbetts, eds. *Rational Choice and Criminal Behaviour*. London: Routledge, 41-64.

Council of the European Union, 2010. *The Stockholm Programme: An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens*, 5731/10, Brussels, 3 March.

Cressey, D., 1969. *Theft of a Nation*. New York: Harper and Row.

Dorn, N., 2003. Protieform criminalities: the formation of organised crime as organisers' responses to developments in four fields of control. *In*: A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organised Crime: Perspectives on global security*. London: Routledge, 227-240.

Dorn, N., 2008. The end of organised crime in the European Union. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 51 (2), 283-295.

Edwards, A., 2011. The Organisation of Serious Crimes: Key Trends in Policy and Research. *In*: J. Rafailovich, S. Gabova and S. Popov, eds. *Organized Crime, Civil Society and the Policy Process: Conference Proceedings*. Sofia: RiskMonitor Foundation, 32-44.

Edwards, A., 2016a. Multi-centred governance and circuits of power in liberal modes of security. *Global Crime*, 17 (3-4), 240-263.

Edwards, A., 2016b. Big Data, Predictive Machines and Security: The Minority Report. *In:* M.R. McGuire and T.J. Holt, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Technology, Crime and Justice*, London: Routledge, 451-461.

Edwards, A., and Gill, P., 2002. Crime as enterprise? The case of transnational organised crime. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 37 (3), 203-233.

Edwards, A., and Gill, P., eds., 2003. *Transnational Organised Crime: perspectives on global security*. London: Routledge.

Edwards, A., and Hughes, G., 2012. Public Safety Regimes: Negotiated orders and political analysis in criminology. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 12 (4), 433-458.

Edwards, A., and Levi, M., 2008. Researching the Organisation of Serious Crimes. *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 8 (4), 363-388.

Edwards, A., Hughes, G., and Lord, N., 2013. Urban security in Europe: translating a concept in public criminology. *European Journal of Criminology*, 10 (3), 260-283.

Ekblom, P., 2003. Organised crime and the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity framework. *In:* A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organized Crime: Perspectives on Global Security*. London: Routledge, 241-263.

European Commission, 2015. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Agenda on Security, COM(2015) 185 final*, Strasbourg, 28 April.

European Council, 1999. *Presidency Conclusions of the Tampere European Council of 15-16 October*, SN 200/99, Brussels, 1999.

European Council, 2005. *The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union*, OJ C 53/01, Brussels, 3rd March 2005.

Felson, M., 2006. *The Ecosystem for Organized Crime* [online]. Helsinki: The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control. Available from: http://www.heuni.fi/material/attachments/heuni/papers/6Ktmwqur9/HEUNI_papers_26.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2016].

Fijnaut, C., *et al.*, 1998. *Organised Crime in the Netherlands.* The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

Greenfield, V., and Paoli, L., 2010. *If Supply-Oriented Drug Policy is Broken, Can Harm Reduction Help Fix It? — Melding Disciplines and Methods to Advance International Drug Control Policy* [online]. Annapolis: United States Naval Academy. Available from: https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/6644314.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2016].

Gregory, F., 2003. Classify, report and measure: the UK Organised Crime Notification Scheme. *In*: A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organized Crime: Perspectives on Global Security*. London: Routledge, 78-96.

Hayward, K., and Young, J., 2004. Cultural Criminology: some notes on the script. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8 (3), 259-273.

Hobbs, D., 2001. The Firm: Organizational Logic and Criminal Culture on a Shifting Terrain. *British Journal of Criminology*, 41 (4), 549-560.

Hornsby, R., and Hobbs, D., 2007. A Zone of Ambiguity: The Political Economy of Cigarette Bootlegging. *British Journal of Criminology*, 47 (4), 551-571.

Housley, W., *et al.*, 2014. Big and broad social data and the sociological imagination: a collaborative response. *Big Data & Society* [online], July-December, 1–15. Available from: http://bds.sagepub.com/content/spbds/1/2/2053951714545135.full.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2016].

iOCTA, 2014. *European Union Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment* [online]. The Hague: Europol. Available from: https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/internet-organised-crime-threat-assesment-iocta [Accessed 27 October 2016].

Keat, R., and Urry, J., 1981. *Social Theory as Science*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Klerks, P., 2003. The network paradigm applied to criminal organisations: theoretical nitpicking or a relevant doctrine for investigators? Recent developments in the Netherlands. *In*: A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organized Crime: Perspectives on Global Security*. London: Routledge, 97-113.

Levi, M., 2007. Organised Crime and Terrorism. *In*: M. Maguire, R. Morgan and R. Reiner, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. 4th ed. Oxford University Press, 771-809.

Levi, M., 2008. Organized fraud and organizing frauds: Unpacking research on networks and organization. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 8 (4), 389-419.

Levi, M., and Maguire, M., 2004. Reducing and preventing organized crime: an evidence-based critique. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 41 (5), 397-469.

National Crime Agency (NCA), 2014. *National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2014*. London: NCA.

Naylor, T., 1997. Mafia, Myths and Markets: On the Theory and Practice of Enterprise Crime. *Transnational Organized Crime*, 3 (3), 1-45.

Oatley, G., and Crick, T., 2015. Measuring UK Crime Gangs: a social network problem. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 5:33, DOI 10.1007/s13278-015-0265-1

OCTA, 2006. *European Union Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2006* [online]. The Hague: Europol. Available from: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/octa2006_0.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2016].

OCTA, 2011. *European Union Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2011* [online]. The Hague: Europol. Available from: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/octa_2011_1.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2016].

Paoli, L., and Fijnaut, C., 2004. Introduction to Part I: The History of the Concept. *In*: C. Fijnaut and L. Paoli, eds. *Organised Crime in Europe: Concepts, Patterns and Control Policies in the European Union and Beyond*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Potter, G., 1994. *Criminal Organizations. Vice, Racketeering and Politics in an American City*. Prospect Heights: Waveland.

Reuter, P., 1983. *Disorganised Crime: The Economics of the Visible Hand*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

RUSI - Royal United Services Institute, 2014. Assessing the Threat of Organised Crime: The First National Strategic Assessment. RUSI Analysis, 23.05.14 [online]. Available from: https://rusi.org/commentary/assessing-threat-organised-crime-first-national-strategic-assessment [Accessed 27 Month 2016].

Sayer, A., 1992. *Method in Social Science: A realist approach*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Sayer, A., 2000. *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage.

Sheptycki, J., 2003. Global law enforcement as a protection racket: some sceptical notes on transnational organised crime as an object of global governance. *In*: A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organized Crime: Perspectives on Global Security*. London: Routledge, 42-58.

Smith, D., Jr., 1991. Wickersham to Sutherland to Katzenback. Evolving an "Official" Definition for Organised Crime. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 16 (2), 138-142.

SOCA, 2006. *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime, 2006/7*. London: Serious Organised Crime Agency.

SOCTA, 2013. *European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2013*. The Hague: Europol.

Tremblay, P., Talon, B., and Hurley, D., 2001. Bodyswitching and Related Adaptations in the Resale of Stolen Vehicles: Script Elaborations and Aggregate Crime Learning Curves. *British Journal of Criminology*, 41 (4), 561-579.

United States Senate, 1951. *Third Interim Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce (Kefauver Committee)*, Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office.

UNODC, 2004. *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

van Duyne, P., and Vander Beken, T., 2009. The incantations of the EU organised crime policy making. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 51 (2), 261-281.

Vander Beken, T., and Verfaillie, K., 2010. Assessing European futures in an age of reflexive security. *Policing and Society*, 20 (2), 187-203.

Wall, D., and Large, J., 2010. Jailhouse Frocks: Locating the Public Interest in Policing Counterfeit Luxury Fashion Goods. *British Journal of Criminology*, 50 (6), 1094-1116.

Woodiwiss, M., 2003. Transnational organised crime: the global reach of an American concept. *In*: A. Edwards and P. Gill, eds. *Transnational Organized Crime: Perspectives on Global Security*. London: Routledge, 13-27.

Woodiwiss, M., and Hobbs, D., 2009. Organized Evil and the Atlantic Alliance: Moral Panics and the Rhetoric of Organized Crime Policing in America and Britain. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49 (1), 106-128.