Researching the organization of serious crimes

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Abstract
In a sense, the problem of organized crime is the concept of ‘organized crime’ itself. The implications of shifting the analytical focus from explanations of ‘it’ toward building theories of the organization of serious crimes are considered in relation to three ways of framing research: organized crime as an external threat; the organization of serious crimes through routine activities; and their organization through social relations. Beyond taxonomic assessments of various threats, organized crime groups, their regional theatres of operation and involvement in illicit markets, a major fault-line exists within social scientific studies of the organization of serious crimes over the appropriate scope of inquiry. Specifically, whether this should be limited to the particular settings in which discrete serious crime events occur and/or broadened to encompass the social structural antecedents of these events. This boils down to an argument over what constitutes the necessary relations for the commission of serious crimes for economic gain, and how their contingent concentration in certain places and moments amongst particular populations can be adequately explained. This also suggests that the interplay between more remote ‘distal’ causes, situational opportunities presented by public and private sector controls, and pre-existing networks of relationships have to be understood in combination for an adequate explanatory account of the organization of crimes.

Key Words
Crime networks and opportunities • criminal organisation • drug trafficking • Europol • illicit Markets • necessary and contingent relations for crime • organized crime • Serious Organised Crime Agency • threat assessment
Introduction

During the past decade, within the EU generally and the UK in particular, there has been a growing stress placed by governments and by some parts of the police upon the threat posed by ‘organized crime’. However, the nature of this threat—the underlying phenomenon—has remained elusive. Is it truly a political threat, in the sense that a significant part of the economy and/or the polity risks being taken over by current active criminals or people acting in their interests? Is it a threat to the state’s monopoly of the use of violence? As a justificatory concept for extra policing (including non-police) powers and resources, it has been successful—conjuring forth an image of Men in Dark Glasses and Guns—but in a sense, the problem of organized crime is the concept of ‘organized crime’ itself. Official conceptions of this problem have been preoccupied with asking if ‘it’ has been organized in particular ways that pose external threats to otherwise ‘licit’ political-economies. Not long after its formulation, the hierarchical model of criminal organization (Cressey, 1969) was accused of imposing a spurious conceptual order on a diverse and analytically distinct range of actors, activities and harmful consequences. To better recognize these, the ‘problem of organized crime’ has been reformulated to ask, instead, how different crimes of a serious impact and magnitude are organized, and what overlaps exist between the offences and those who commit them (Levi, 2007).

Terminology found in the ‘organized crime’ literature is often ambiguous: that is both its political strength (for producing consensus around increased resources, domestic powers and international co-operation) and its analytical weakness. Despite the constant use of the term ‘organized crime’ in media, political and policing spheres around the globe, the overwhelming consensus within the criminological literature and among contemporary police (e.g. OCTA, 2007; SOCA, 2008) is that networks are very important and are more appropriately refined than ‘organized crime’ as a dynamic depiction of how criminals operate. On inspection, however, it appears that there are at least three common uses of this term (Dorn et al., 2005: 9—variations from which are in square brackets):

(1) As a way of describing the structure and/or everyday workings of the market as a whole, in the sense that the market can be regarded as a complex social network (singular noun), within which different participants have to network (verb) (to carefully seek out and interact with traffickers who may be like or unlike themselves, etc.: see for example Coles, 2001, Pearson and Hobbs, 2001). In other words, through networking, traffickers [and other offenders] construct the market.

(2) As a way of describing drug markets as made up of independent small groups or individuals, sometimes called ‘disorganized crime’, sometimes simply ‘networks’ (plural). Doubt is cast upon the existence of larger and/or ‘harder’ criminal organizations operating in the UK or other European contexts [outside of Italy], partly because it is posited that law
enforcement agencies break up larger groups.... In other words, in European

drug trafficking [and many other offences], ‘small is beautiful’

(3) As a way of referring to the durability or otherwise of criminals’ organiza-
tional and other arrangements, when these are seen as ever-changing....In
other words, impermanence is the name of the game. (This approach often
cosists with number (2) earlier, although they are analytically separable.)

In that review of upper level drugs trafficking literature, we opted for the
first meaning—networking within the market—because the research best
supports it. However ‘networking’ is a term applicable equally to all traf-
fickers (and most co-offenders), not a type in itself, and reflects increased
mixing between hitherto different traffickers, leading to the breakdown of
linguistic, national and cultural barriers between them. This does not mean
there are no risks for them in dealing with other cultural groups and with
strangers, or that people routinely propose joint involvement in serious
crime to people they do not know well: to that extent there are barriers to
finding co-offenders, stimulated by fear of undercover policing. But for all
the casual discourse about the globalization of organized crime (and ter-
rorism)—see for a relatively sophisticated popular text, Glenny (2008)—
comparatively little is known about the barriers to successful integration of
criminals within and across national borders (Dorn et al., 2005; Matrix,
2007), nor to what extent and via which mechanisms these have been
changing over time. Though this may be in part an artefact of its dataset,
the Matrix (2007) study of imprisoned drugs traffickers suggests they were
less subtle and complex in their internationalization and money laundering
behaviour than universal police statements about ‘organized crime becom-
ing increasingly sophisticated’ would lead us to suspect. This is reflected
also in European and North American studies of laundering by convicted
drugs traffickers (van Duyne and Levi, 2005; Levi and Reuter, 2008),
though not that by serious fraudsters.

In this article we consider the implications for research that follow from
alterations in analytical focus. We contrast the conventional concern with
the threats posed by organized crime actors—whether they be hierarchically
structured ‘groups’ or, as recognized in more recent threat assessments,
looser networks of criminal associates—with two other ways of ‘framing’
research that are prevalent in social scientific study: routine activities and
social relations (Levi, 1998; Edwards and Gill, 2003; Levi and Maguire,

The implications of these three frames of reference are discussed in terms
of the distinction between ‘extensive’ and ‘intensive’ research strategies
(Harre, 1979; Sayer, 1994: 242–51); and their application to research on
the organization of serious crimes is summarized in Table 1. Extensive and
intensive strategies pose different kinds of question aimed at producing dif-
ferent kinds of account, employing alternative methods of investigation,
each entailing certain limitations. Extensive strategies are concerned with
empirical patterns of regularity and the distinguishing characteristics of a
Table 1. Framing research into organized crime and the organization of serious crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame of reference</th>
<th>External threat</th>
<th>Routine activities</th>
<th>Social relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research strategy</td>
<td>Extensive.</td>
<td>Extensive/Intensive(^a).</td>
<td>Intensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research question</td>
<td>What are the regularities, common patterns and distinguishing features of organized crime groups?</td>
<td>What are the patterns of serious crime commission?</td>
<td>What causes the organization of serious crimes in specific societies?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Where do these groups operate and in what markets?</td>
<td>How do offenders, victims and guardians interact in the organization of serious crimes in specific settings?</td>
<td>What tendencies alter this organization over time and in different places?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relations studied</td>
<td>Formal relations of similarity.</td>
<td>Formal relations of similarity/substantial (necessary and contingent) relations of connection.</td>
<td>Substantial (necessary and contingent) relations of connection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical focus</td>
<td>Taxonomic groups.</td>
<td>Taxonomic patterns/causal groups interacting in situational settings.</td>
<td>Causal groups interacting in social contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of account produced</td>
<td>Descriptive ‘representative’ generalizations about the threats posed by organized crime actors.</td>
<td>Descriptions of serious crime patterns/interactional analysis of criminal co-operation and organization.</td>
<td>Structural analysis of the social antecedents of serious crimes in particular places and moments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical methods</td>
<td>Surveys of law enforcement agencies (e.g. notification schemes); content analyses of police and court files; qualitative interviews with offenders (e.g. ‘pentiti’ confessions) and victims.</td>
<td>Crime pattern analysis of police and other statistical data; victim surveys; qualitative interviewing of victims, offenders and guardians; case studies; abstract research (conceptual analysis).</td>
<td>Ethnography; abstract research (conceptual analysis); historical/archival research; case studies.</td>
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<td>Limitations</td>
<td>Limited explanatory power and equivocal intelligence for the purposes of harm reduction; even where representative of a whole population of offenders, diagnosed threats are unlikely to be generalizable to other populations at different times and places; ecological fallacy in making</td>
<td>Problem of inferring crime causation (an intensive research question) from extensive research into crime patterns, which at best suggest the presence of necessary relations but cannot explain their contingent realization in any definite context.</td>
<td>Problem of reductionism in historical accounts specifying causal structures in the organization of serious crimes (e.g., ‘modernization’) but not the contingency of their apprehension by particular actors in certain times and places. Allied problem of over-predicting the incidence and...</td>
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inferences about individual actors from aggregate data and patterns. inferences about the commission of certain serious crimes will not be representative, are limited in their focus on the situational settings of commission, which in turn obscures the antecedent conditions for serious crimes. prevalence of serious crime with limited explanation of its concentration.

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<th>Appropriate tests</th>
<th>Replication</th>
<th>Replication/ corroboration</th>
<th>Corroboration</th>
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Note: Research informed by routine activities theory has often employed both extensive and intensive research strategies, a criticism of some work in this tradition being an inclination to infer causal explanations (a question for intensive research) from extensive studies of crime patterns.
population, specifically how widely distributed and ‘representative’ these characteristics are within a given population. This is exemplified in large-scale surveys of victims of organized crime (see Tilley and Hopkins, this volume) and in notification schemes requiring law enforcement agencies to return quantifiable information on the incidence, prevalence and demographic characteristics of ‘organized crime groups’ (Gregory, 2003). Conversely, intensive strategies are concerned with explicitly causal questions of how certain processes work in particular cases: for example, studies of how particular serious crimes such as human trafficking or various frauds have been organized (Goodey, this volume, Levi, this volume).

Extensive research questions focus investigation on formal relations of similarity and difference, as in the identification of taxonomies of organized crime groups (as ethnically-based, indigenous or non-indigenous, hierarchically structured or networked, employing violence for internal discipline etc., see, OCTA, 2006 and below). By contrast, intensive research questions focus investigation on substantial relations of connection, both necessary and contingent, involving causal actors. In these terms, routine activities theory represents a significant breakthrough in thinking about crime causation, in so far as it identifies interactions between motivated offenders, suitable targets and absent or incapable guardians as being necessary for crime commission at all or in large volumes (Felson, 2006a, b; Tilley and Hopkins, this volume).

Such approaches, however, are incomplete without a qualitative understanding of the contingencies that form the elements of the ‘crime triangle’. It is, for example, not necessary for the organization of drug trafficking for motivated offenders to come from a particular ethnic background, but some drugs trafficking has been undertaken by ethnic and kinship networks that better insulate trafficking operations from penetration by law enforcement agencies, e.g. in the trafficking of hashish by crop farmers in the Rif region of Morocco, using their émigré relatives in Western European cities for transit and distribution (Werdmolder, 1998); and in the trafficking of cocaine from Colombia to the Netherlands (Zaitch, 2002). Further, causal accounts are more convincing if they give an account of the social structures that produce, reproduce or undermine contingently-necessary relations,3 as in accounts of the ‘social relations of crime control’ (Lea, 2002). This research lifts the study of how serious crimes are organized from a relatively narrow focus on the proximate conditions or ‘situational opportunities’ for their commission in particular neighbourhoods at specific moments (while leaving in those proximal factors, thereby avoiding the reasonable criticism that criminology has little to offer the understanding of how, when and where crimes happen). It informs more strategic considerations of the social preconditions for serious crimes and their development within certain, ‘modern’ or ‘Fordist’ etc., social formations, and their transformation (Lea, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000).

The different kinds of question that can be posed about organized crime or the organization of serious crimes matters, not least because, as in
broader social science, intensive and extensive research questions are often conflated and confused: this results in mismatches between what is being asked, how it can be investigated and what is actually studied. For example, attempts to infer ‘the causes of organized crime’ from descriptive and inferential data on patterns of organized crime groups confuse a number of intensive and extensive research questions and the related formulation of the problem to be explained. Organized crime threat assessments, which allegedly have become the focal point of intelligence-led policy responses in the European Union (OCTA, 2006; see below), employ research methods that are extensive in the sense used above. Law enforcement agencies in EU member states are asked to identify the organizational attributes of organized crime groups (their ethnicity, indigenous/non-indigenous membership, structure, use of violence etc.), describe the distribution of such groups so characterized around different regions of the EU (the South-east, South-west, Atlantic etc.) and the pattern of their activities (the involvement of these groups in these regions in various illicit markets, such as trafficking drugs, human beings and armaments, commissioning frauds, producing counterfeit goods etc.). The result of this taxonomic exercise is to leave the readership of threat assessments none-the-wiser about how these particular actors actually accomplished these variegated crimes and the causal relevance of the geographic regions in which they are identified as operating. Furthermore, it is far from clear what proportion of the crime in question is committed by the ethnic group, or indeed the form of their ‘organization’. (For a serious critique of this process and a good discussion of the history of organized crime as a social issue in Continental Europe and of changes in situation reports and threat assessments, see van Duyne and vander Beken, forthcoming. See also Klerks, 2007 for a thoughtful, measured review of the Dutch national process and some discussion of how improvements generally might be made. No analogous work has been published in the UK since Gregory, 2003, though the SOCA, 2008 threat assessment does represent an advance on previous British exercises.)

The analysis of techniques and social organization of different crimes may yield important lessons for tactical and strategic interventions for the reduction in levels of crime and changes in its organization, which in itself may make crime groups less threatening. (However care needs to be taken to specify the nature of such threats: threats of what, by whom and to whom?) Such analyses—like those of problem-oriented policing generally—may not require a full understanding of distal factors stimulating crime. However insofar as it is accepted that any genuinely intelligence-led identification of measures liable to reduce organized crime requires a causal account of these activities, we need a different framing of the problem and allied investigation. Following a more detailed consideration of how threat assessment has limited understanding of the organization of crimes, self-consciously social scientific developments are discussed in terms of two distinct frames of reference: routine activities and social relations. Whilst more comprehensive surveys of the research literature already exist (e.g. Levi,
2007; Fijnaut and Paoli, 2004; Edwards and Gill, 2003; Beare, 2003; and Kleemans and de Poot, 2008), the purpose of this discussion is to illustrate these alternative ways of developing research into the organization of serious crimes and provoke a debate over their relative merits.

External threat

A useful starting point for distinguishing extensive research on organized crime from intensive research into the organization of serious crimes is the analytical orientation found in the ‘threat assessments’ produced by the European Union. The first EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment was adopted in 2006 (OCTA, 2006—see also the further revisions in OCTA, 2007, 2008), replacing the previous Organised Crime Situation Reports (OCRS), which were produced annually from 1994, and publicly since 1998. Both the OCRS and the first OCTA are based on police intelligence contributions from EU member states and provide an insightful archive on developments in the official conceptualization of organized crime. One key difference with the OCTA was that Europol officials—though few in number—were able to integrate their own assessments with the contributions of member states. However this remained a rudimentary exercise. The OCTA was described by the director of Europol as ‘a new approach to the way in which Europol, the European institutions and the Member States will think and operate in the future and in so far, it is a first step into a change of paradigm in policing’ (OCTA, 2006: 3). It is argued that whereas the OCRS provided a descriptive account of the ‘OC situation in Europe’, the OCTA ‘puts an emphasis on the qualitative assessment of this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon’ (OCTA, 2006: 4). Specifically:

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: 6)

Even assuming that this is applied in practice by the under-resourced staff who compile the OCTA constituents without significant training, the legacy of what can be called an ‘actor-centred’ conception remains, in which ‘OC groups’ are granted analytical primacy over criminal activities which may or may not be accomplished in parallel by structured groups or looser networks of criminal associates. The OCTA recognizes different kinds of organized criminal actors including those revealed by, ‘flexible and fluid patterns of association between individual criminals’, and emphasizes the importance of understanding ‘the conditions under which patterns of criminal association and co-offending emerge and exist’ (OCTA, 2006: 12). The key point, however, is that threat assessment proceeds from the identification of OC actors to their activities and consequences, rather than taking
the accomplishment of particular criminalized activities as the analytical point of departure from which theories of serious crime causation can then be built: of which the different mobilization of actors is but one part. This actor-centred logic is reinforced in the OCTA by a focus on ‘key indicators with regards to OC groups’:

- **The International Dimension**: meaning, ‘international co-operation, between non-indigenous [not having a nationality, origin or ethnicity of any Member State of the EU] groups or between an indigenous and non-indigenous group, or as international operations carried out directly by an OC group’.

- **OC Group Structures**: patterns of criminal association and co-offending, whether hierarchical or networked.

- **Use of Legitimate Business Structures**: establishing licit businesses as ‘fronts’ or as vehicles for illicit activities and targeting licit businesses for extortion, corruption and deception.

- **Specialization**: providing or recruiting actors with specialist skills in, for example, finance, accountancy, information technology, needed for the accomplishment of illicit activities.

- **Influence and Corruption**: misusing entrusted power for private gain in lowering the risks of commissioning serious crimes and/or as criminal activity in itself for financial gain, for example in capturing tenders for large construction contracts.

- **Violence**: using ‘intra-group’ violence to maintain discipline within and loyalty to particular rackets, ‘inter-group’ violence to ensure survival and/or expand operations, and ‘extra-group’ violence that is intrinsic to certain practices, such as extortion, exploitation of labour and robbery.

- **Counter-measures**: undertaken by OC groups to avoid detection and prosecution by law enforcement agencies, such as counter-surveillance, infiltration of law enforcement agencies, camouflaging money transfers and shielding electronic communications via the internet. (OCTA, 2006: 11–17)

On the basis of these indicators informed, in turn, by ‘years of political and law enforcement experience’ (OCTA, 2006: 26), the OCTA distinguishes between four categories of OC groups:

- Principally territorially based, indigenous OC groups, with extensive transnational activities; especially with possibilities to shield their leadership and assets, even inside the EU.

- Mainly ethnically homogenous groups with their leadership and main assets abroad.

- Dynamic networks of perpetrators, whose organizational setup is less viable to attack from a law enforcement perspective than their communications and finances.

- OC groups based on strictly defined organizational principles without an ethnic component, coupled with a large international presence. (OCTA, 2006: 24)
In addition, political and law enforcement experience, which is typically processed for the purposes of threat assessments by such research methods as organized crime notification schemes (Gregory, 2003) and the content analysis of police and security service case files and/or qualitative interviewing of offenders, is used by the OCTA to identify four regional patterns of OC groups:

- The south-eastern region of the EU, with a focus on Turkish and Albanian OC groups;
- The south-western region of the EU, with a focus on certain African OC groups;
- The north-eastern region of the EU, focusing on the Baltic States and the influence of Russian speaking OC;
- The Atlantic region, revolving mainly around the pivotal transnational role of Dutch, British and Belgian criminal organizations (2006: 24).

Finally, reference is made to the substantive activities of these groups, primarily drug trafficking, especially synthetic drugs; exploitation of trafficking in human beings and illegal immigration; fraud; Euro counterfeiting; commodity counterfeiting and intellectual property theft, and money laundering. The involvement of these groups in terrorism and illicit arms trafficking is also acknowledged but these are ruled out of the threat assessment due to the ‘particularities’ of these issues, their analysis as separate issues by the EU, the lack of material available to the OCTA for their ‘in-depth assessment’ and, non-substantiated, reasons for emphasizing ‘the need to focus on Euro counterfeiting, commodity counterfeiting, intellectual property theft and money laundering’ (2006: 25). Separately, the threat assessment identifies ‘key facilitating factors with regards to criminal markets’, which provide opportunities for OC actors to commission serious crimes, such as document forgery and identity fraud, technology, misuse of the transport sector, the exploitation of the financial sector, globalization and borders (2006: 17–22).

In place of any scientific reasons for indexing, rather than explaining the causes of the activities of the OC groups identified, the OCTA states, ‘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 EU] and beyond’ (2006: 25). As such, the OCTA, as the proclaimed state of the art in threat assessment and exemplar of this framing of organized crime, is explicitly premised on political and value-driven description rather than analysis in any social scientific sense of this term.

Our intention here is not to dismiss out of hand the value of ‘years of political and law enforcement experience’—clearly these are important sources of intelligence—but to question the limitations this places on understanding, and can lead to the bracketing-off of other kinds of expertise and their allied frames of reference. This matters for at least three reasons. Without reference to countervailing analyses, threat assessments run the risk
of becoming self-referential, recycling the prevailing values and priorities of the political and law enforcement agencies consulted rather than subjecting these to criticism. (Rather like including response costs in ‘the costs of crime’ leads us to increase resources to those areas of activity that have always had the most resources and away from those that, like fraud, have had the least.) A second related issue is that privileging law enforcement intelligence presupposes that the responses should come from law enforcement (Gill, 2000; Sheptycki, 2003; Stelfox, 2003), a point acknowledged by the OCTA, alongside its formal recognition of the severe limitations of law enforcement, particularly international police co-operation (see also Harfield, this issue), in reducing the harms associated with the threats identified:

The main threatening aspects of OC groups are, first, the overwhelming obstacles in dismantling them because of their international dimension or influence, and second, their level of infiltration in society and economy. The first aspect gives them a sort of impunity and perpetuity that counteracts law enforcement efforts. The second aspect makes them mingled with the legal world, negatively affecting the willingness to attack these OC groups, the level of corruption and democratic dynamics. (2006: 5)

(SOCA threat assessments in the UK and others in North America do incorporate open source material and information from business.) The key policy lesson drawn from these acknowledged limitations, however, is that, ‘when attacking OC, law enforcement is at the heart of political and economic life in the EU. It is the safeguard against too excessive an impact from crime, especially OC, on civil society and in the end a protector of democracy and the economy’ (2006: 23). Our central point remains, it is the actor-centred framing of the problem in terms of ‘OC groups’ that produces such contradictory outcomes for both analysis and policy development. Van Duyne and vander Beken (forthcoming) make the following point:

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.

This brings us to the third reason why this framing of the issue matters and that is its exclusion of other expertise and experience that can enhance the analytical rigour for studying the problem of organized crime, including the very definition of the problem to be explained. To reiterate our opening point, 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?’ (Levi, 2007: 779). The failure to pose this question and
employ the social scientific knowledge available is, we suggest, a major component of the problem of using the OCTA and similar threat assessments in EU member states for ‘transforming strategic priorities into more detailed operational recommendations’ (OCTA, 2006: 4), in addition to the various institutional problems associated with transnational police and security operations (see Harfield, this volume). No real Europe-wide intelligence collections policy has been developed and applied in the 27 EU states that might give flesh to the forward-looking promise of the ‘threat assessment’, nor is it ever clear what would constitute non-threatening criminality. There has been little openness about methods and about the limitations of intelligence development or inference from very imperfect ‘data’. Further, the framing of the problem in terms of groups that pose an external threat to ‘democracy and the economy’ obviates an understanding of how these social relations can themselves generate both demands and opportunities for serious crime. It presents a false conceptual dichotomy between unproblematic licit economies and the exceptional threats of illicit actors, when long-standing research has identified the interdependencies between licit and illicit markets, such as the use of criminal enterprises by licit companies to dispose of toxic waste or, conversely, the use of licit financial services (banks, bureaux de change) to launder the proceeds of crime or lawyers as facilitators of serious crime (Block, 1991; Ruggiero, 1998; Levi and Reuter, 2006; Levi, Nelen and Lankhorst, 2005; Middleton and Levi, 2005, Middleton, 2008).

Routine activities

Recognizing the opportunities for organizing serious crimes generated by the interdependencies of licit and illicit entrepreneurs forms part of a paradigmatic shift in criminological research, away from a focus on the attributes of criminal actors per se towards a concern with the routine activities that enable the commission of crimes (Levi and Maguire, 2004; Felson, 2006a, b). Having originally developed routine activities theory to explain the necessary interactions between offenders, suitable targets and incapable guardians in the commissioning of conventional ‘street’, crime, Felson has recently applied this theory to an analysis of ‘criminal co-operation and organization’, which is his preferred term to that of ‘organized crime’, because the latter mixes analysis with the requirements of prosecution rather than opportunities for crime prevention, understates the diversity of criminal co-operation, underestimates the interdependence of criminal and legitimate activities and otherwise overestimates the exceptionality of serious crime activities, particularly the alleged degree of planning and sophistication needed for their accomplishment, it ‘conveys a specific image popularized by television, not one substantiated by scholarship and experience’ (2006b: 1).

In developing an understanding of criminal co-operation and organization as a relatively routine, ordinary phenomenon, Felson advocates a rejection of
the ‘dramatic fallacy’ associated with popular images of organized crime and a concern with how specific criminal events occur in specific settings. The implication is that a shift in focus onto the types of public and private settings necessary for the occurrence of serious crimes in turn suggests preventive measures that can achieve rapid, sustainable and substantial reductions. This argument is illustrated through reference to illicit drugs markets as one of the most ‘dramatic’ concerns of official and media accounts of organized crime.

From questions about the interactions that make it possible for strangers to exchange illicit drugs, it is observed that in order to maximize their customer base, sellers try to operate in specific notorious places, the narcotic equivalent of red light districts, that are located on arterial routes near legitimate activities and thus in proximity to more suitable targets for custom. The sustainability and expansion of such trade is, in turn, enabled by the absence, corruption or intimidation of ‘place managers’ or guardians that could interrupt, even prevent, the drugs trade, such as overstretched police forces or residents frightened into compliance. Such open drug markets are, however, highly vulnerable to police action, environmental design or civil and administrative laws compelling property owners to remove illicit activities from their properties, if these can be effectively mobilized to tackle such ‘offender convergence settings’, which are of more causal significance than the actors, sellers and consumers who occupy them. Focusing on these routine activities reveals the vulnerability of drug traders who, in giving up the concealment afforded by trading in relatively insulated but restricted social networks of trusted consumers in order to broaden their customer base, expose themselves to counteraction. A ‘counterintuitive’ approach to prevention follows from this; rather than investing in expensive operations to detect and arrest key offenders or disrupt organized crime groups, illicit sales can be reduced rapidly and with lasting impact by impairing the settings in which co-operative crime meets the public or where small-time dealers meet each other (Felson, 2006b: 11–12; Harocopos and Hough, 2005).

In the terms of intensive research strategies, this focus on the substantial relations of connection amongst specific causal groups, such as the exchanges between sellers and consumers of illicit drugs at the point of purchase, explains the causation of serious crime in terms of the environmental conditions or, as Felson puts it, the ‘ecosystem’ that makes it possible (2006b). In turn, this reverses the conventional logic of drug control strategies that proceed from a focus on actors involved in production and wholesale (for an interesting research study of whom, see Matrix, 2007). Many drug control strategies are focused on prosecuting ‘upstream’ actors, disrupting drug markets by reducing overseas supply through the destruction of crops used to produce heroin and cocaine and interdiction of trafficking operations, notwithstanding cumulative evidence on the negligible effects of these measures on levels of illicit drugs consumption (Reuter and Stevens, this volume). By contrast, it is argued that altering the ecosystem of the street-level drugs trade provides a means of reducing the overall size of this
illicit market, not just its presence in particular neighbourhoods, as better guardianship of public places drives sellers and consumers into more private settings and social networks that strictly delimit the expansion of trade and reduce ‘collateral damage’ to neighbourhoods and schools.

The kind of accounts that can be produced by the routine activities framing of criminal organization is further illustrated by Tilley and Hopkins’ (this volume) research into business victimization. The principal focus of the study is an extensive account of patterns of victimization that could indicate criminal organization in three high crime neighbourhoods in England. These are derived from a victim survey of the kind of small independent businesses (convenience stores, grocers, bars, cafes, travel agents, betting shops etc.) thought to be particularly vulnerable to extortion and fraud given their limited security resources. The study then switches to an intensive research strategy, exploring the ‘crime chemistries’ of the three high crime areas, or the causal relations behind the organized crime patterns revealed by the survey, conducting qualitative interviews with law enforcement, commercial and community representatives in these areas.

Across the study, protection rackets and other forms of extortion, as archetypes of criminal organization, were reported by only 1 per cent of those surveyed. A more telling insight, which corroborates the analytical importance of interdependencies between licit and illicit markets, was the extent to which survey respondents had been invited to receive illicit goods (stolen, counterfeit, contraband, especially smuggled alcohol and tobacco). Forty-four per cent of the sample had been made at least one offer, 20 per cent had received offers once a week and 33 per cent had received offers in the past year. This crime pattern was also highly concentrated, with 20 out of the 420 respondents reporting daily offers of counterfeit goods. Limited reporting of these offers to the police means traders in illicit goods do so with virtually no risk, reiterating the importance of incapable guardianship as a key cause of criminal co-operation. Such low reporting rates suggest collusion amongst licit entrepreneurs and criminal organization for the purposes of mutual benefit, as businesses get cut-price goods they can sell on at sufficient mark-up to yield lucrative profits, whilst still undercutting the prices charged by their competitors for licit goods. This mutually beneficial arrangement was acknowledged in qualitative interviews with community representatives, who also recognized the social as well as individual benefits accruing from the trade in illicit goods; enabling small retailers to remain in business by providing a service to local residents in relatively deprived neighbourhoods and during harsh economic climates (which may increase in coming years). As such, fertile conditions exist for licit business participation in the trade of illicit goods, much of which (especially counterfeiting and persistent touting of contraband tobacco and alcohol) is prima facie evidence of criminal organization.

Further depth to this account was provided by the application of other concepts in routine activities theory to building a causal explanation of the different dynamics of business victimization in the three case study areas.
chosen. The concept of ‘crime chemistry’ (Felson, 2006a) is used to clarify the features of a specific setting that enable and foster the commission of crimes. In addition to routine activities of offenders, targets and guardians, such chemistry can entail certain ‘props’, ‘camouflage’ and audiences for the commission of crimes. Tilley and Hopkins depict the crime chemistries of the first case study site as having a white working class demography and a history of high volume crime levels. Police intelligence suggested the area had a long established network of crime families that was sufficiently robust to renew itself when key members were successfully prosecuted by law enforcement operations and which had strong links to licit businesses in the neighbourhood, particularly public houses, which were used as bases, or in the argot of the local villains, their ‘offices’, for organizing crimes. These public houses were used with impunity and with the willing/unwilling collusion of landlords. Police intelligence further suggested the use of other licit businesses as props and camouflage for illicit activities, such as the use of taxi firms for transporting offenders around the neighbourhood whilst conducting their criminal activities. The audiences for these activities were rendered incapable as guardians or as effective ‘place managers’ through direct intimidation and by a more diffuse, pervasive, atmosphere of fear of retaliation should audiences ‘grass’ to the authorities. In such an atmosphere, potential guardians from the bourgeoisie who are capable of interrupting or preventing serious crimes self-censor themselves from involvement. The two other areas with different demographies studied by Tilley and Hopkins had licit businesses respectively (1) experiencing episodic spikes in protection rackets or ‘paying rent’ with a high turnover of young gangs exploiting opportunities for extorting money out of vulnerable businesses; and (2) being used as fronts for operations in trafficking drugs and people, particularly for the purposes of prostitution.

The Tilley and Hopkins study neatly demonstrates how different research strategies and methods can yield conflicting as well as complementary findings, even within the same analytical frame of reference. Extensive research into patterns of victimization suggested organized criminality was present, but that it accounted for only a small fraction of the overall volume of crime experienced by licit businesses. Rather, in contrast with the perceptions of police and community representatives, the survey suggested collusion between licit and illicit entrepreneurs in the trade of illicit goods was more likely than victimization of businesses by criminal organizations through extortion, robbery or fraud etc. This, of course may say more about tendencies amongst the police and those citizens sufficiently exercised to act as ‘community representatives’ to overestimate the volume and severity of crime on the basis of particular incidents they have experienced, and to ‘telescope’ events that have occurred over long periods of time into erroneous perceptions of high volume activity in the present. Alternatively, survey respondents may not appreciate that their ‘community contributions’ to political causes are channelled into the coffers of criminal organizations or to support terrorism: victims are not always in the best position to ‘connect up’ co-offending relationships.
These conflicting findings illustrate the limitations of inferring causation from extensive research into crime patterns, but also recognize the margins of error associated with intensive research premised on the perceptions of those members of causal groups sampled for interviews and/or observation. Beyond these generic methodological dilemmas, however, the framing of research into the organization of serious crimes, in terms of the routine activities that make their accomplishment possible, can also be criticized for the analytical focus on particular events and settings, which obviates a concern with the antecedents of serious crimes. This orientation is borne out of the concern of routine activities theorists to produce intelligence for situational crime prevention measures, less concerned with explaining the social antecedents of crimes than with effecting quick remediation of particular crime problems:

Unfortunately, news headlines feature the more emotional and extreme claims about crime prevention, such as zero tolerance, heavy punishment, social prevention, social justice, and arresting kingpins. Managing safe public parks is far less glamorous, and requires ongoing effort with minimal confrontation. Such effort is our best chance at crime prevention, since the Underworld depends on the Upperworld. We need to specify how; then we can begin to do something about it. (Felson, 2006b: 15)

Social relations

Even so, as Felson acknowledges, the mobilization of capable guardians needs to be maintained and adapted to evolving serious crime opportunities (cf. Dorn, 2003; Ekblom, 2003). This, however, begs further questions about the available resources for, and cultures of, control, especially informal social control by ‘responsibilized’ citizens. Some of the latter may be given formal roles, such as Money Laundering Reporting Officer, that go well beyond the exhortation for them to act responsibly and as far as the legal duty (on pain of imprisonment and unlimited fine) to report to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) a suspicion of money laundering (once developed). It is one thing to find that audiences who are intimidated by, or are direct beneficiaries of, criminal co-operation and organization are not acting as capable guardians, but it is another to work out how they can be transformed into effective collaborators with the police and other state authorities in interrupting and preventing serious crimes, particularly where there are historic antipathies between them and state authorities.

Framing research into the organization of serious crimes in terms of their social relations poses intensive questions about the geo-historical contexts that produce the antecedents of serious crime (Hobbs, 2001). Framing-in a concern with context entails recognition of the explicitly political-economic and cultural structures that underlie (or undermine) the crime triangle. Accounting for the organization of serious crimes includes accounting for criminalization of vice (e.g. Woodiwiss, 2005: 47ff; van Duyne and Levi,
2005), migration and other late modern phenomena such as digital intellectual property (e.g. audio, DVDs). Periodization is variable, however. It includes historical studies of entire epochs such as ‘modernity’ (Lea, 2002) or of multiple epochs (Hobsbawm, 1969; Levi, 2008; McIntosh, 1975; Naylor, 2004); regimes of accumulation, such as ‘Fordism’ (Ruggiero, 1996: 119ff); studies of the ‘careers’ of individual criminals (Steffensmeier and Ulmer, 2005) and, more rarely still, integration of aggregate ‘criminal careers’ data with the organization of crime (Kleemans and de Poot, 2008); through to ethnographic studies of organized crime in its real-time context, such as Chambliss’ study of criminal networks in Seattle between 1962 and 1973 (Chambliss, 1978), Bourgois’ (1995) study of ‘crack’ cocaine dealers in Spanish Harlem in the late-1980s; Venkatesh’s (2008) study of crack dealers in Chicago; Hobbs and Dunnigan’s study of ‘criminal lifeworlds’ in their anonymous sites of ‘Downton’ and ‘Upton’ in England during the 1990s (Hobbs and Dunnihan, 1998) and Hornsby and Hobbs’ study of cigarette bootlegging within the UK (Hornsby and Hobbs, 2007).

Ethnographic methods are employed by those concerned with the social relations of organizing serious crimes in order to connect interactions observed in specific situations to their broader political-economic and cultural conditions. The assumption is that these conditions structure interaction in particular ways. John Lea’s (2002) discussion of organized crime and processes of ‘modernisation’ illustrates this. Lea conceives organized criminality as a ‘form of governance’ usurping the functions of the state in societies where the writ of sovereign rule is particularly weak or highly contested. An example is historical studies of the origins of the Sicilian mafia in the vacuum of authority created by the onset of modern social relations; the allied collapse of feudalism; and the—systemic not just situational—opportunities the breakdown of this social formation provided to violent entrepreneurial families to ‘substitute themselves for the state and pursue some of its functions—protection of property, repression of petty crime and deviance, and mediation of disputes and conflicts—through the medium of private violence … while at the same time never breaking their own connections with criminality and the arbitrary use of violence’ (Lea, 2002: 71). It is this governing role that distinguished mafia from simple banditry. In turn, the social relations of crime control are undermined in this historical case by their ‘partial appropriation by a competing form of legitimacy’ (ibid.). As such, mafia is a form of ‘governance from below’, a concept that has recently been developed by those interested in the extension of political power beyond the state and into realms of civil society that do not simply resist sovereign law but actively pursue their self-governance (Stenson, 1999, 2005).

The long-standing crime families discussed in Tilley and Hopkins’ first case study, referred to above, exemplify the pursuit of self-governance, as do, in a different way, the criminal organizations exerting such power amongst the émigré population in their third study. The point is that political-economic concepts do not simply paint a more picaresque background
to the activities of organizing serious crime but inform an understanding both of their constitution and, critical for the applied criminological orientation of routine activities theory, the possibilities for their prevention. Whether in post-Feudal Palermo or the high crime neighbourhoods of contemporary England, perceptions of state weakness in consolidating social solidarity and observance of sovereign law is indeed fertile territory for criminal entrepreneurs with the capacity for violence, intimidation, the provision of welfare support and opportunities for capital accumulation denied to local populations by licit economies. The particular analytical value of the social relations frame is, then, a research programme that clarifies the historical tendencies that generate the demand for organized criminality within civil society whilst eroding effective guardianship of sovereign writ, thereby fuelling forms of governance from below. The implication of this research programme is that criminal organizations responding to social relations rooted in structural transformations are unlikely to be remediable through situational management in any sustainable way.

A contemporary and dramatic instance of this is the trafficking of human beings, particularly of women and children, to supply the appetite for vice and informal labour in Western societies (Goodey, this volume). Intensive research into this traffic, entailing interviews with victims, workers for non-governmental organizations established to support victims, law enforcement personnel and content analyses of court cases prosecuting traffickers, is building up an account of the tendencies towards a form of ‘gangster’ capitalism following the post-1991 collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the transformation of Eastern and Central European societies (Rawlinson, 2003). This research is also informing accounts of the fallout from the Balkan wars of the 1990s and problems of poverty in the developing world. These major social transformations of the 1990s structure the routine activities observed by contemporary case studies of neighbourhoods in Western European cities, as they have fuelled a rapid expansion in the ‘suitable targets’ for organized criminality, from economic migrants desperate to escape poverty in the developing world or flee ongoing civil wars to post-Soviet populations taking advantage of their new rights to freedom of movement to migrate to the West in search of economic prosperity, particularly post-EU enlargement (see Glenny, 2008).

The rich qualitative research provided by a victim-centred view of human trafficking also reveals the degree of coercion employed by criminal organizations in threatening relatives of women inveigled into prostitution, should they co-operate with the authorities in prosecuting traffickers or otherwise disrupting trafficking networks. This, of course, throws a rather different light on concepts of capable guardianship and the different audiences for organized crime, including in some instances corrupt state police. Neither is it clear what ‘situational prevention’ could mean in relation to the freedom of movement of labour around the expanded single European market. Presumably it would be to focus, as in Felson’s drugs example, on the ‘downstream’ points of purchase, but, again, this really does beg questions about
the resources available for the sheer volume of surveillance implied by better ‘place management’ and the likelihood of their provision by Western municipal authorities already struggling to meet their statutory duties for public services in economically challenging environments.

Combating harms and threats: the new policing model

Alongside these routine activity issues, we have a transformed but still very uneven institutional and legal environment. Even (or particularly) before 9/11, the threat of ‘organized crime’ served as a functional rallying cry for police and intelligence services to enhance powers, share information and co-ordinate action (though the latter was not as common as were claims about it—see Harfield, this volume, and Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006). In the EU and the UN, attempts were made to ‘approximate’ (EU jargon that causes less offence than ‘harmonize’) legislation and powers.

The UK and the Netherlands (followed by Sweden in a lower-key way) made the running on more radical approaches to organized crime prevention that went beyond conventional law enforcement. Thus the Dutch introduced controls on who was allowed to own properties, first in the red light district of Amsterdam and then nationwide: although a recent evaluation (Huisman and Nelen, 2007) suggests that these attempts to ‘keep organized crime out’ were not very successful—there was implementation and to some extent theory failure—the ambition was there. A combination of serious scandals in enforcement of excise laws and appreciation that the fuddled set of police bodies were not working well led the UK to create the Serious Organised Crime Agency, badged overtly as a harm reduction rather than (just) a law enforcement body (a model followed by New Zealand in 2008). This has a whole set of cradle-to-grave monitoring powers such as financial monitoring orders, which can require released offenders to make annual reports of their income, lying about which can itself trigger sanctions. Under the Serious Crime Act 2007, SOCA can apply to the court for a Serious Crime Prevention Order to stop suspects from owning more than one mobile phone, going to particular places or running particular businesses. These are fairly severe restrictions on freedom.

The jury is still out on the appropriate metrics of judging impact and on the impact of SOCA activities to date. Predecessor policing bodies were quite good at generating indicators of activity, such as how many important investigations they conducted, drugs they seized or organized crime groups they disrupted, not even mentioning the conceptual difficulty of what does it mean to disrupt a network? They also reported process data such as how many Suspicious Activity Reports they handled. However, measuring the link between activities and outcomes is analytically very difficult and also politically hazardous (Levi and Maguire, 2004; Sparrow, 2008). For micro-level outcomes, with explanations of how particular actions or combinations of actions led to those outcomes, seem quite different as accounts of
institutional performance, especially when details may be lacking in order not to provide counter-intelligence to the actual and potential offenders (or—for the more cynical—to mystify academics and journalists by giving them little to enable them to test accounts). There are also problems of working out whether any effects or lack of effects result from theory failure about the concept of a Serious Organised Crime Agency or from implementation failure.

One possible cause of implementation failure is that the cultural and practical difficulties of integrating within a very short time frame drugs investigators from Customs & Excise, immigration officers and the police were seriously underestimated by the government, if not by academics or some of SOCA’s leadership. One difficulty is the cultural and practical changes brought about by the desire to find out more about the techniques and organizational patterns of crime networks before deciding on appropriate interventions. One difference between harms caused by criminals and many other hazards is that criminals are ‘conscious opponents’ (Sparrow, 2008) who—to the extent that they are able—adapt their approaches to what they see as situational prevention and law enforcement risks, placing a higher premium on analysis of weak points and variation in control tactics to create uncertainty in the minds of actual and willing but not yet actual offenders (to the frustration of some academics and others who believe in transparency). Even where the general suppression efforts may be unsuccessful, some harms may be reduced along the way (Goodey, this volume; Reuter and Stevens, this volume). Other difficulties involve the peculiar tension implicit in the term ‘serious and organized crime’ between the sorts of activities criminals undertake, leading to estimates of how much harm particular acts do (Levi and Burrows, 2008) and the proportion of them caused by ‘organized criminals’ (Dubourg and Prichard, unpublished). The former costs may rise even if the latter fall, or vice versa.

Conclusion

A predictable retort would be that macro-theoretical concerns with the social relations of organized crime, even where they have analytical purchase, provide limited guidance on what is to be done about the threats and/or routine activities identified by other frames of reference. This, in turn, provokes an important debate for criminological scholarship over the extent to which the merits of an analytical framework and its allied research programme should be limited to its policy relevance. An important role for social science is to rein in unrealistic expectations of government of the kind that pervade debates over security, and to broaden argument to encompass cognate issues often proscribed by relatively narrow analytical foci on the subjects of criminal justice or situational prevention.

Beyond the threat assessment industry, disputes over the appropriate locus of analysis on particular settings and/or social structures represent
the main fault-lines of scientific inquiry into the activities of organizing serious crimes. As in longer-standing arguments over the explanation of volume crimes, proponents of a focus on social relations insist that causal accounts of these activities are unconvincing without reference to their political, economic and cultural antecedents; whilst advocates of routine activities theory contest the relevance of social causes, arguing that a ‘crime science’ of events and situational settings suffices. As suggested above, this boils down to an argument over what constitutes the substantial relations of connection that are ‘contingently-necessary’ (see No. 3, above) for the commission of serious crimes. In turn, this implies a research programme with three basic dimensions; (1) abstract research, employing conceptual analysis to isolate in-thought the different causal mechanisms believed to produce (certain kinds of) serious crime; (2) concrete research into the conjuncture of these mechanisms in definite contexts, to corroborate their existence and identify other mechanisms; and (3) a synthesis of abstract and concrete research findings, with insights from extensive research into crime patterns, to question interrelationships between the commission of different serious crimes (cf. Sayer, 1994: 236–41). Such synthesis is particularly important in avoiding an event-orientation in criminological research, which can obscure social interrelationships, even interdependencies, between legally discrete activities (e.g. trafficking in drugs, humans and armaments), thereby limiting meaningful causal explanation (Edwards and Gill, 2002).

There are opportunities for such synthesis, for if the frame of threat assessments renders redundant the routine activities of criminal cooperation and this frame in turn renders redundant social causes, the reverse is not the case. Expertise on tendencies toward governance from below, fuelled in part by state economic, immigration and foreign policies, ought to be of interest to authorities interested in the possibilities for enhancing capable guardianship in relatively wealthy but still overstretched municipal authorities in the West. In turn, the characteristics, not just supply, of motivated offenders and their organization for the purposes of commissioning serious crimes is of interest to accounts of the ‘crime chemistry’ in any particular locality. The concept of a chemistry or conjuncture of criminal opportunity (cf. Ekblom, 2003) provides a means of addressing problems of reductionism in social structural accounts of organized crime, where these fail to address criminological research on the high concentration of crime patterns in particular localities but not in others during the same historical eras studied. They also provide a means of tackling the tendency of social structural accounts to over-predict the incidence and prevalence of serious crime; a problem also exemplified in the dramaturgical uses of threat assessments. In making these observations, we are also indicating that we are only part of the way along a difficult journey of disentangling relationships between activities and offenders, and between offending and the panoply of private and public sector activities that bear upon co-offender crime rates.
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Notes

1 Though the casual stabbings and shootings by gang and non-gang youths seem to threaten this monopoly outside the framework of organized crime.

2 By which we mean the ways in which a problem of social scientific interest is posed for the purposes of its explanation, in which certain analytical foci are privileged and others rendered redundant, with implications both for the kinds of explanation provided and the repertoire of expertise and experience that are included and excluded as relevant (Collins and Evans, 2007: 123–5). This idea has affinities with the concept of ‘governmentality’ (Smidsch, 1999) and ‘problematics of government’ (Rose and Miller, 1992), but also encompasses the work of non-governmental commentators, including that of many social scientists.

3 This is not the contradiction in terms it appears because necessary relations refer to the ontology of a social relation, its conditions of existence, whilst contingent relations signify the substantive content of these conditions, which are unlikely to be present in every specific case, e.g. the organization of illicit drug trafficking through ethnically exclusive groups. The concept of contingent necessity has also been used to refer to the, ‘non-necessary interaction of different causal chains to produce a definite outcome whose own necessity originates only in and through the contingent coming together of these causal chains in a definite context’ (Jessop, 1990: 11).

4 In line with the prevailing UK and UN ‘definitions’, the study defined organized criminality as, ‘Crime that involves three or more people who come together in committing criminal offences over a sustained period of time.’

5 27 June 2008 saw the first Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs) issued in England and Wales against three defendants convicted of money laundering offences. Mr and Mrs Hakimzada ran a money service bureau through which they laundered £25m over a two-year period. Grover assisted with their enterprise. The orders impose restrictions upon each defendant in respect of movement and possession of money for five years, beginning with the day they are released from prison. The three were also made the subject of Financial Reporting Orders, which means that they will have to report all their financial activity on a six-monthly basis for 10 years once out of prison.

References


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Erratum

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In this article, the authors’ affiliation on p. 363 should have appeared as Cardiff University, UK.

On p. 384, the Acknowledgements should have appeared as follows:

Michael Levi is grateful for the ESRC Professional Fellowship RES-051–27–0208, under whose auspices this research was conducted.

On p. 388, the author biographies should have appeared as follows:

ADAM EDWARDS is a Lecturer in Criminology in the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. He is Director of the European Society of Criminology’s working group on the Governance of Public Safety and was formerly director of the UK Economic and Social Research Council’s research seminar programme on policy responses to transnational organised crime. Recent publications include ‘Comparing the governance of public safety in Europe: a geo-historical approach’, Theoretical Criminology (2005, with G. Hughes) and Transnational Organised Crime (2003/2006, with P. Gill).


SAGE would like to offer its apologies for publishing the errors corrected above.