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A problem-oriented account of Organised Crime in the UK

Introduction

I first met Nick Tilley during 1996. I was a police officer with the Lancashire Constabulary and Pauline Clare, appointed as the first female Chief Constable within the UK, had recently joined us. She brought with her a form of leadership we were uninitiated to – consultative and evidence-based. Once an overarching policing strategy had been devised (to make the communities of Lancashire feel safe, involved and reassured), she turned her attention to how this should be delivered. To assist this decision the Chief Constable invited advocates of established policing approaches (community policing, intelligence led policing), together with those who championed newer variants (zero tolerance policing, Compstat, and Problem Oriented Policing (POP)), to visit and educate us on their respective strengths. Nick Tilley was one such speaker; he was also the most influential. His explanation of POP contained no fire and brimstone, just a simple, systematic logic that captivated the room. Whilst willing to challenge our misconceptions, he also sympathised with our predicament. He explained that policing and crime prevention are complex concepts, and whilst many efforts to prevent crime are well intentioned they are often badly implemented. He emphasized that understanding the realism associated with policing was critical to success. Ultimately his advice, in relation to a problem-oriented way of working, steered the Constabulary on a consistent (and successful) path for many years.

Tilley's influence will be seen in this chapter on UK based organised crime (OC), a subject that epitomises the complexity of policing and one on which he has published widely (see Tilley, 2016; Tilley & Hopkins, 2008; Hopkins, Tilley & Gibson, 2013). In tribute to Nick, the chapter is structured in a problem-oriented way. As such it will identify the problem of OC, analyse its elements and actors, discuss ways to tackle it, and explore how these efforts might realistically be evaluated. However, before doing so it is useful to provide some context.

Organised crime – some overriding themes.

Unpacking the term 'organised crime' is not for the faint hearted, as commentators refer to it as one of the most contested concepts in criminology (Levi, 2012). Whilst Woodiwiss (2001:3) describes it simply as 'systematic criminal activity for money or power', other academics and policy makers tease out numerous variables, which have generated

approximately 180 separate definitions (Von Lampe, 2017). Although space prevents a full discussion of these issues, it is important to outline some general points.

For certain commentators, even the term 'organised crime' does not pass muster. Some argue the term 'organised' is a misnomer, as the process often involves chaotic actors. Others question at what stage the action becomes a crime, highlighting the 'strong interdependencies between licit and illicit economies' (Edwards & Gill, 2003:60), with Smith (1991) questioning where 'shady dealing' stops and organised crime starts. However, if we accept the term at face value, Albanese (2008) suggests Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) can be understood by either describing their criminal activity, or their group characteristics. In this way organised crime activity can be viewed as: the provision of illicit services (e.g. illegal dumping of waste; human trafficking); the provision of illicit goods (e.g. counterfeiting; controlled drugs); or the infiltration of businesses (e.g. fraud, money laundering, or extortion). Similarly, OCG characteristics have been listed as: profiting from crime; using force or threat; having a continuing organizational hierarchy; and maintaining immunity through the corruption of public officials.

Opinion, concerning how OCGs are structured and operate has changed over time. Whilst early research emphasised a rigid leadership, hierarchical structure, strong group identity and internal discipline (UNICP, 2000:75), this model is considered outdated and in decline (Finckenauer 2005). Duijin et al. (2014) point out that in the last decade studies have increasingly pointed to non-hierarchical and flexible social networks that come together to form collectives. Europol (2015:12) endorse this by arguing, "The organised crime landscape in Europe will be increasingly dominated by loose, undefined and flexible networks made up of individual criminal entrepreneurs". They go on to say, "Criminals work on a freelance basis and are no longer part of a bigger network or group. Coming together as service providers to support project-based criminal endeavours, they inhabit a broader criminal underworld, which is already heavily facilitated by the internet".

As no agreed definition exists it is difficult to accurately assess the level of organised crime or the harm it creates (Anderson, 1997; Burke, 2009). This absence of knowledge is compounded by several factors. First, although in theory, academic insight can be generated through observations and interviews, organised crime offenders (more so than traditional offenders) crave secrecy to conduct their operations and are often willing to use violence and intimidation to maintain this. Secondly, governments tend not to capture organised crime information in any systematic way; it is not a crime category, and official records prefer to record individual offenders against specific offences (e.g. drug trafficking or fraud) (Kohler, 2007). Thirdly, there is a lack of victimization or community surveys on the topic (vanDijk, 2007). All these factors mean that academic analyses of OC often rely on secondary information (von Lampe, 2012), with much of the empirical data drawing on proactive police investigations (van Koppen et al. 2010). As such there is an inherent bias to

the selection process, from which less obvious forms of organised crime, or more sophisticated offenders can potentially evade. This lack of data is further exacerbated as law enforcement agencies volunteer information reluctantly, due to reasons of operational confidentiality (Bullock & Tilley 2002). Overall these challenges generate a diversity of methodologies, routinely criticized by academics from Europe and North America (Tusikov, 2012), and which serve to prevent comparative analysis (von Lampe, 2012) and dilute findings. Bearing in mind these challenges, the chapter now goes on to explore what is known about OC in the UK, some of which is based on empirical study, generated by myself or those I have had the fortune of being associated with.

Organised Crime in the UK: Establishing the extent of the problem

During 2005, whilst a Detective Chief Superintendent in the Lancashire Constabulary, I witnessed a milestone in the way the UK started to tackle OC. Her Majesties Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC, 2006), published a thematic review, 'Closing the Gap', which outlined the capacity and capability of police forces in England and Wales to deal with organised crime. It revealed numerous concerns, perhaps the most sobering disclosed that less than 6% of known OCGs were being targeted. One of the responses was to create the Organised Crime Group Mapping (OCGM) project, which asked police agencies in England and Wales to identify and generate a threat score for their resident OCGs, based upon: (i) injury caused, (ii) community impact, (iii) reputational/ political impact (public attitudes of police impartiality and effectiveness), (iv) level of cross border offending; (v) economic impact; and (vi) criminal capacity/ capability (Gilmour, 2008; Tusikov, 2012: 107). This project also allowed the Home Office to aggregate the findings, giving rise to estimates that in 2015 about 5,800 Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) existed, comprising 40,000 active offenders (HM Government, 2015). Further, using a frequency scale of high (5), to low (1) HM Government (2013:23) could show OCGs generally concentrated in urban Police Force areas. The Metropolitan Police, for example, was unique with a score of 5, with other major city Forces scoring 4, and the remaining areas scoring between 1-3.

The OCGM project appears the most systematic approach ever instigated to monitor OCGs and its introduction was supported by a national strategy. The UK government defined OC as, '...serious crime, planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis, their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain' (HM Government, 2013:14). This, as with all OC definitions, is somewhat ambiguous and requiring interpretation by operational officers. To explore some of the operational issues that might affect the tackling of OC in the UK, I hosted a research workshop for 47 practitioners. These comprised senior leaders, operational officers and analysts from seven police forces in the North of England, North West Regional Crime Unit, and the National Crime Agency. These individuals were joined by two 'serious case' lawyers from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and a representative from the Environment Agency (who were specifically interested in the rise of illegal tipping). The day's workshop generally mirrored the same format as this

chapter, exploring practitioner opinion on: the extent of the problem, its causal factors; ways to tackle it, and methods of assessing the interventions. This information was captured throughout the day by asking participants to respond anonymously to a series of questions (some of which will be referred to later in the chapter). In relation to how they identified OCGs, 75% reported using the government (Home Office) definition, albeit highlighting it could be interpreted broadly. When asked what factors influenced their choice of organised crime category to concentrate upon, most (69%) stated they were influenced by their Chief Constable, 59% said they were also directed by the government (Home Office), although only 6% disclosed being influenced by community opinion.

Delegates also mentioned three other factors that affected the prioritisation of OCGs. The most prominent related to firearms. The rationale behind this was that firearms were associated with immediate harm and since they were more likely associated with high profile drug trafficking (often linked with violent territorial wars and 'taxings'), this type of crime was often prioritised above others. In fact, the practitioners thought human trafficking (34%), child sexual exploitation (31%) financial crime / fraud (25%) and cybercrime (19%) were the crime types most likely to be overlooked by the OCGM process for this reason. Secondly, practitioners highlighted that resources were also a factor. This was because they realised once an OCG was mapped this required immediate attention, which was problematic when resources were limited. Finally, practitioners were also concerned that similar problems may be scored inconsistently as there was no process of inter-rater reliability across the Force areas. Taking all these issues into account, whilst all delegates were extremely complimentary of the OCGM and its systematic approach, it illustrated the complexity of gaining consistent and robust OCG data.

Different methodologies can reveal different perspectives. Whilst the OCGM exercise provides an 'offender based' methodology, an 'offence based' approach was used in a Home Office study (Francis et al. 2013; Kirby et al. 2016). This attempted to separate OC offenders from other offenders within the UK offender database (maintained on the Police National Computer). Such offenders were filtered on three variables: offence type (a list of probable OC offences was identified¹), seriousness (the offender was convicted for a minimum of 3 years imprisonment), and evidence of co-offending. Over a three-year period (2007- 2010), 4,109 offenders were identified as OC offenders from a national sample of 2.17m offenders (0.2% of the overall sample). Whilst numerous levels of analysis were conducted on the cohort (some of which will be discussed later), an early finding revealed the geographic spread of prosecutions was disproportionate. This distribution did not necessarily mirror general crime patterns, as some lesser populated but affluent areas showed a low level of general crime but a disproportionately higher level of organised

¹ The Home Office list about 2,500 notifiable offence codes. Of these 46 offence codes were thought likely to involve OC and a further 139 possibly linked to OC (see Kirby et al. 2016).

crime. It was also observed that areas encompassing maritime ports appeared to have a higher association with organised crime prosecutions. This suggests further research on the geographic distribution of OC would be useful in allowing agencies to target their resources and skills more effectively in particular locations.

The ramifications from OC can be seen from global to local level and in allocating resources to the problem it is important to understand the level of harm as well as its frequency (Duborg and Pritchard 2007). Hobbs (1988) suggests its economic impact is difficult to determine as drug offences (for example), can lead to an increase in theft, robbery and burglary, as addicts look to fund their habit. In turn, there are wider costs to health and productivity, as well as the emotional costs to victims of crime. The most recent Home Office analysis cautiously estimated that OC costs the UK £24 billion a year (Mills et al. 2013:11). Whilst community surveys are rare, an isolated study by Bullock et al., (2009) surveyed 1000 community members between 2004 and 2006. The study discovered that 70% of those surveyed thought the problem of organised crime was very serious with 67% feeling it had become more serious in the past two years. The survey also showed that whilst residents had limited knowledge of how OC might plausibly produce effects at street level, the threat of personal harm was more concerning than the wider impact at community (local) or society (national) level.

An analysis of OCGs within the UK

During the many hours Professor Nick Tilley spent providing me with advice about POP, some comments remain vivid. One of these was that unless a problem is analysed carefully, the response is unlikely to be effective. He also said that the *analysis* and *assessment* components of the much-used SARA² model (Eck and Spelman, 1987) were often the most poorly served elements of the problem-solving process (see also Bullock *et al*, 2006). Of course, when this message was originally given I was an operational police officer, who regularly jumped prematurely between problem identification and response. Only when I started to evaluate the impact of these interventions did I become aware of my wasted effort. As mentioned at the outset, the OC subject area is often bereft of scientific validation. However, this section attempts to show what we do know about OC offenders in the UK, based on the available data.

The Home Office figures described earlier suggest an average of 6.9 offenders per OCG, although some of these individuals may be involved in more than one OCG. Snow (2015) reviewed 145 offenders within 49 OCGs from the north of England and found 57% had 2 or 3 members within each crime group. This finding more ably describes enterprise or

² SARA is the most common operational model associated with POP. It is an acronym that distinguishes between the four elements of problem solving: (S)canning; (A)nalysis; (R)esponse; and (A)ssessment (see Eck and Spelman, 1987).

networking models than a more permanent hierarchical structure, such as the *Costra Nostra* or *Yakuza*. However, in the research workshop (described earlier) an overwhelming number of practitioners (91%) stated within their jurisdictions they could see both network and hierarchical OCG structures. Further, they felt they could also intuitively distinguish OCGs on specific criterion, including: operating level (local, national or international level); the threat and harm they posed; the type of crimes they engaged in; their level of resilience; and their propensity to violence.

Within the OCGM process, offenders are separated into 'principal', 'significant', and 'peripheral' categories. Whilst no formal selection criteria is apparent, 'principal offenders' can be viewed as those responsible for the control and direction of the OCG. 'Significant' offenders are those considered important to the group, but subordinate to the principal. Often, they can be trusted associates or have a specific expertise, crucial to the commission of particular offences. Finally, 'peripheral' offenders are those who are less significant to the group and are often transient; for example, they may be used solely as a driver or enforcer. In a study of 99 UK-based OC offenders, principal and significant members each comprised 35% of the sample, whilst peripheral offenders accounted for 29% (Kirby & Snow, 2016). Snow (2015) also found principal offenders appeared to be older, enjoying a more stable lifestyle (associated with fewer house moves), whereas significant and peripheral members tended to be younger and move address more frequently.

Assets can be a useful indicator of offender status. In fact, Sproat (2009:134) argued that assets from organised crime relate to about £18m, approximately 2% of the UK's GDP. Assets can take various forms, with property being a particularly popular way to launder money as it allows for criminal proceeds to be mixed with rental income and other legal profits (NCA, 2016). Prichard (2008) points out that combining revenue, costs and investments/savings allows an estimate of assets to be made for the purposes of seizure. Unfortunately offenders become skilled at hiding their assets. In Snow's (2015) study of 49 OCGs, information relating to assets was available for 36. Of these, 69.5% had an estimated value of between £25,000 and £1m, with one OCG estimated to be worth over £10m and one group below £25,000. Snow (2015) discovered that older and more frequent offenders (defined by conviction rate) tended to have higher estimated asset values as did later onset offenders and those engaged in fraud and theft offences. Although currently underused by academics, asset monitoring appears a rich vein of analysis that can help describe and differentiate organised crime offenders and groups.

One of the more recent research areas in OC revolves around the profiles and criminal careers of OC offenders. Previous Dutch studies have used an Organised Crime Monitor (which collates offenders who have been proactively targeted and prosecuted) (van Koppen et al., 2010). Analysis shows such offenders don't commit OC as a first offence and exhibit a more persistent offending pattern than volume offenders. Many of these findings have

since been corroborated in the UK (Francis et al. 2013; Kirby et al. 2016). Indeed these studies highlighted convicted UK offenders were more likely to be male (95%), white European ethnicity (53.9%), and aged between 19-45 (86%). Overall OC prosecutions appeared to be dominated by drug offences (73.8%), which is a consistent finding across many studies. This was followed by sanctions for violent criminal activity (11.1%), commodity importation/ counterfeiting (6.8%), theft (5.2%), and fraud/ financial crime (4.9%). One new and interesting finding was that non-UK offenders comprised 13% of the OC sample, with 58% of these having already been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK prior to being convicted for organised crime.

Perhaps the most illuminating finding from this research highlighted the diverse range of pathways leading to organised crime. At one end of the continuum exist a significant number of early onset and persistent offenders. Here 40% of the OC offenders received a criminal conviction or caution prior to 16 years and 65.5% before 18 years of age. However, in contrast, 10% of the cohort replicate the 'adult late onset' offender highlighted in Dutch studies (van Koppen et al. 2010). For this individual (aged 30 years or more), the organised crime offence is their first criminal sanction. Why they engage in OC at this later stage is currently unknown, however there are two potential explanations. First, the offender is an important facilitator and is approached because they possess a particular skill or professional connection (e.g. solicitor or transporter); second, his invisibility is maintained through being a particularly sophisticated offender, skilled at avoiding police attention. Francis et al., (2013) also examined specialization and escalation amongst the sample. Previous commentators had discovered the clear majority of general offenders do not specialize in particular offences (Soothill et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2009) and this pattern was replicated with these OC offenders. Only 11.8% of the cohort might legitimately be called 'specialists', the majority of these being associated with drug offences. Further, just under 20% showed a rapid escalation pattern, with an additional 5% showing some level of criminal escalation later in life. This corroborates other findings that suggest a significant number of OC offenders follow a persistent pattern of offending prior to the commission of OC.

As well as the SARA model mentioned earlier, the Crime Triangle is another well established model that underpins a problem oriented approach. Based upon Routine Activity Theory (Felson, 2002), it acknowledges that crime occurs when a motivated offender, comes together at the same time and place, as a vulnerable victim, in the absence of a capable guardian. As such, the triangle stipulates that the characteristics of the victim and location should be analysed, as well as offender variables. A similar premise is true of OC. Many commentators have highlighted the importance of opportunity in crime (see Felson & Clarke, 1998), and this is true for OC, where opportunities are generated in a global environment (see Bullock et al., 2010). Europol (2016:10) explain how this works with human trafficking, highlighting the push and pull factors that make certain victims more

vulnerable. Push factors include: adverse personal situations, lack of education, unemployment, low living standards, and human rights violations. Further, they argue pull factors also materialize through wider environmental issues. These include: an increased demand for cheap labour and services; established foreign community networks across the EU; inconsistency of legislation across member states; porous borders; and the availability of cheaper, easier and faster travel. These factors all allow entrepreneurial offenders to exploit the potential for crime. Unlike general crime therefore, organised crime is more usefully considered as a *criminal process*, where offenders perform different roles, requiring different levels of resources and expertise. This means the trafficking of human beings (THB) involves a network of actors, from the person who coordinates logistics at a transnational level (e.g. false documents, transportation), to those who guard a 'safe house' containing trafficked women. Although involved in the same crime each of these individuals will have a different profile, and often require a different preventative approach, involving a wide range of agencies.

To summarise, the diversity of criminal activity within organised crime, is vast. As such, focusing solely on the offender is insufficient to tackle the problem in any sustainable way. OC, as with other crime types, generally emanates from opportunity, requiring much wider analysis. This includes consideration of the actors involved (offenders, victims and facilitators), understanding where and how the profits are made, as well as identifying the stakeholders or guardians that might reasonably be expected to block these criminal opportunities (Kirby, 2013:159). As such, whilst some broad level of understanding can be made in relation to OC, at a tactical level (and in keeping with the chief tenet of POP), any intervention needs to be specific to the context. It is to the issue of response that the chapter now turns.

The response to UK Organised Crime Groups: Enforcement, Disruption and Prevention

Earlier sections of this chapter have explained OC as an umbrella term under which a diversity of offences occur. Castells (1996) was one of the first to argue that organised offenders have been quick to seize these wider commercial, political, and social opportunities in the pursuit of profit. This has been particularly evident with increased virtual and physical mobility enabling offenders to seize new routes to move people, money and products. In contrast, law enforcement agencies are built locally and constrained by legislation, boundaries, organisational bureaucracy and finite resources. As Ekblom (2003: 257) points out, this 'has set the scene for an arms race between prevention and organised offenders, especially where social and technological change constantly creates new opportunities for offending'. Whilst offenders are able to adapt quickly, law enforcement agencies are much slower to evolve. This has been graphically illustrated in the digital world, where police resources are ill prepared and under resourced. Faced with this dynamic environment, law enforcement agencies generally tackle organised crime using one of three approaches: enforcement, disruption, and prevention.

Enforcement

Enforcement is synonymous with prosecution. It can be defined as a criminal investigation, which is specific to a particular person or group, and which results in the arrest and prosecution for the specific crime they are suspected. This is the traditional approach to dealing with crime generally, and often relies on a team of experienced detectives, who use a covert approach to gain evidence against a member or members of the OCG. This approach has considerable benefits, and perhaps, most importantly, underpins the realization of justice. If the process works as it should this is the foundation upon which civilized societies are built, facilitating public confidence by upholding the rule of law – sanctioning transgressors and protecting the innocent. The successful administration of justice can therefore (in theory), encourage victims and witnesses to come forward and deter vigilantism. It can also reduce reoffending by imprisoning and rehabilitating recidivists and acting as deterrent to those who pose a threat to society (Davis et al. 2005).

However, in practice, there are many weaknesses associated with this approach. First, the various agencies involved in the CJS often find it difficult to work together (Auld, 2001). Second, there are more identified OC offenders than available resources to prosecute them. Third, OC investigations can be complex, costly, and difficult to implement. Cases often cross international borders, which are subject to different legislation, protocols, procedures and languages. Fourth, victims often disengage from prosecution as they face threats in relation to their own safety or that of their family (NHTRC, 2014). These challenges are particularly pronounced in the trafficking of human beings, as between 2010-12, although 30,146 trafficked victims were registered across EU member states, only 8,805 prosecutions and 3,855 convictions followed (Eurostat, 2015).

From a problem oriented perspective, enforcement is less effective in reducing organised crime. The impact of incarcerating the offender can be limited as others seek to fill the OC vacancy that has been provided, whilst some offenders continue their criminal operation from their prison cell. Similarly, the low probability of incarceration fails to generate a sufficient deterrent for many offenders (Kennedy, 2008). Nevertheless, culturally it remains a popular tactic as it epitomizes ‘real police work’ (Loftus, 2009), and involves the excitement of utilizing covert methods, such as informants, surveillance, and undercover officers.

Disruption

Disruption, has been defined as a ‘flexible, transitory, and dynamic tactic, which can be used more generally to make the environment hostile for the organised crime group....this approach focuses on disrupting the offender’s networks, lifestyles and routines’ (Kirby & Penna, 2010:205). This method uses any legal and ethical means to stop the offender from operating illegally. Whilst also regularly using enforcement approaches, these do not

concentrate upon the suspected organised crime offence, but on associated behaviour, which ordinarily would not be targeted.

A disruption approach draws on Rational Choice Theory (Cornish & Clarke, 1986), which holds that if the cost of committing crime outweighs the benefits (broadly defined), it will be abandoned by the offender. This balance can be affected by: increasing the effort needed to commit the crime; increasing the risk of being caught; reducing the rewards from the crime; and removing the excuses to justify the crime. Kirby (2013:162) provides examples as to how specific interventions fit under each of these headings and the framework offers significant potential for a wide array of community safety partners to engage in this process. However, notwithstanding the creative potential of this approach, a variety of studies (Kirby et al., 2015; Kirby & Snow, 2016), found the arrest or prosecution for lower level offences (i.e. motoring offences), to be the most popular intervention, although four other general disruption categories were revealed:

- Policing behaviours: which disclose to the suspect they are being targeted. This may involve a warning about their behavior or a request for information.
- Specific investigation: most commonly seen with the use of search warrants, investigating a variety of issues (often unrelated to OC).
- The control of assets: conducted using criminal (Proceeds of Crime Act) or civil powers (repossession of business or residential property).
- The control or modification of a suspect's behavior: This can include a variety of methods such as ancillary orders³ or use of harassment notices.

Disruption approaches can involve an array of partners from the public and private sectors. With examples including the: Environment Agency, Local Authority Building Control (LABC), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), Department for Environment, as well as Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)). Such interventions can be generated at low cost, as the agencies exploit opportunities presented to them by the offender. The approach is culturally popular with practitioners, as it is action-orientated, involving a high level of enforcement (albeit not always involving prosecution) and allowing spontaneous or planned interventions. A small study (Kirby & Nailer, 2009) also found it popular with members of the community, who were pleased to see action being taken against high profile criminal offenders in their locality (normally invisible using covert approaches). Conversely, those who oppose 'disruption' argue this more creative use of legislation/enforcement make the police less accountable, as fewer traditional prosecutions are heard by the Court. This means offenders will have reduced access to legal representation and fewer opportunities to challenge police evidence in a public

³ The UK government has developed a variety of ancillary orders, designed to prevent or deter re-offending in organised crime. These include: Travel Restriction Orders (TROs); Financial Reporting Orders (FROs) and Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs).

court. However, these arguments can be countered by those who point out that this approach requires no additional police powers, nor breaches legitimate procedure. Further, the suspect who feels unfairly treated will always have an avenue to challenge police activity, be it through criminal or civil court, or other police oversight processes. Thus, any disruption strategy should be transparent (using civil and legal instruments as well general leverage), and there should always be clear and ethical engagement with suspects and their legal representatives (suspects should be aware of the reason surrounding law enforcement interest). Currently there appears no documented evidence of suspects successfully challenging disruption approaches by pursuing civil action on the grounds of harassment.

Prevention

Prevention is best understood as providing a sustainable means to tackle a crime event (Kirby & Penna, 2010:206). Its aim is to either change the physical environment or the human behaviour which generates the opportunity to commit OC. For example, a specific port exploited by human traffickers could be made less vulnerable through changing its structural design; redesigning documentation procedures; or increasing surveillance. A successful preventative approach therefore blocks the opportunity for a specific criminal process to occur - not just for one OCG but for all OCGs who may be attracted to that crime location or specific modus operandi. Prevention, is an approach that relies on more reflective, creative partnership working and is probably the least culturally popular with law enforcement agencies. As such there are few examples of it being implemented successfully. This was endorsed by the practitioner workshop mentioned earlier who disclosed enforcement was the most common approach, followed by disruption, and then prevention. For those interested in the subject of OC prevention, a useful text by Bullock et al. (2010) is dedicated to this subject.

In summarizing this section, conceptual distinctions distinguish these three approaches (Tilley, 2009). Whilst *enforcement* is a reactive approach, *disruption* and *prevention* are proactive approaches. *Disruption* concentrates on the present, whilst *enforcement* concentrates on the past, and *prevention* focuses on the future (Tilley, 2009:3). *Prevention* concentrates on blocking the opportunity surrounding the crime event, whereas *disruption* (and enforcement) concentrate on blocking the offender. As such, whilst *prevention* provides the most sustainable reduction in crime, *enforcement* lies at the other end of the continuum as incarcerated offenders are often quickly replaced. Further, each of these themes have different objectives: *prevention* aims to reduce the frequency of a specific crime, whereas *disruption* aims to reduce the threat posed by a specific offender or crime group, and *enforcement* aims to facilitate justice through holding the offender publicly accountable (Tilley, 2009:3; Kirby & Snow, 2016). These three approaches vary in effectiveness, as the next section will explain.

Assessing the impact of organised crime interventions

Problem solving is an iterative process (see Sidebottom and Tilley, 2010), and the evaluation element is critical. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC, 1997; 2000) found 'assessment' to be the most neglected stage of the SARA model (Eck & Spelman, 1987). Indeed the practitioners involved in the research workshop, revealed this was completed infrequently and, if done, was most likely to encompass quantitative outputs, with arrest and imprisonment cited as the most commonly used indicators. Indeed, the practitioners argued the evaluation of OC required national guidance and training. Further, when prompted for research gaps within OC, many practitioners highlighted the importance of evaluation. They wanted to know what type of OC offender characteristics made them vulnerable to policing interventions; what interventions were most successful (and in what context); and how OC interventions should be evaluated.

Establishing a process to monitor how inputs are transferred into outputs and then into outcomes, can be complex. Within this process, it is important to understand how specific mechanisms, underpinning the policy/practice/ or programme, can produce an impact and under what conditions (Johnson et al., 2015). The process also relies on the ability to identify indicators that can illustrate material change in demanding operational circumstances (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Unsurprisingly, methods to identify suitable evaluation criteria in this area have been problematic with previous targets and performance indicators sometimes leading to unintended consequences involving corrupt practices and wasted resources (Seddon, 2008). Mackenzie & Hamilton-Smith (2011) have argued for a more sophisticated approach involving longer-term evaluations across various levels, that assess the evidence supporting the intervention and its impact on harm reduction. However, this multi-level approach is more difficult to implement and no examples were found of its use.

Some of the limited evaluation literature on the subject has looked at the impact of legal powers. The pursuit of criminal assets is a prime example and although 'follow the money' is a logical response the evidence shows the confiscation process often fails (Mitchell et al., 2015:7). Offenders adapt their behavior to prevent the seizure and confiscation of their wealth, for example through exploiting Hawala or other underground banking systems to launder money (El Rahman & El Sheikh, 2003). Whilst attempts have been made to improve the original UK Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, a House of Commons Select Committee Review (2014) identified numerous complications. These include the cost of administration, the low level of potential orders and the ability to recover assets. It observed, whilst 680,000 offenders (from all types of crime), were convicted annually, only 6392 were subjected to orders. From those orders £490m remained outstanding, meaning only 26 pence in every £100 was recovered. It appears implementation challenges, rather than a shortage of legal instruments or law enforcement powers create the problem, and this difficulty is observed across Europe (EC, 2015).

Across each of the three themes (enforcement, disruption, prevention), examples of good practice can always be found. In terms of enforcement, a useful example was 'Operation Golf', a partnership predominantly between the Metropolitan Police Service and Romanian National Police to deal with trafficked Romanians. The 18-month initiative led to a more effective and efficient system in transferring intelligence/evidence between partners without the associated 'Letters of Request' bureaucracy. It also solved difficult evidential problems by allowing staff to operate in each other's jurisdiction. During its duration over 20 proactive operations took place, with 87 OCG members and associates being arrested in the UK, resulting in the first British conviction for child trafficking. The project also led to a large quantity of cash being seized (believed to be criminal assets). Indeed, the investigation discovered that between 2002 and 2007 over 5,000 financial transactions, totalling 2.2m US dollars, took place through money service bureaus (MSBs) by suspected gang members. Further, as over 40 trafficked children and young people were found, important lessons were also learnt concerning effective care and repatriation.

Unfortunately, this type of examples is 'good' rather than 'common' practice, and the lack of more systematic evaluation, makes it difficult to interpret the most effective way to tackle OC. In relation to disruption there have been some concerns as to its level of efficacy. For example Leong (2007), although supporting the concept of disruption, points out the approach relies on multi-agency partnerships, which are notoriously difficult to implement. Furthermore Duijin et al. (2013), in exploring 19 cases of cannabis cultivation in the Netherlands, found disruption had limited impact on the resilience of the network. Indeed, they argued the OCG learnt from the interventions and became stronger. Meanwhile Sproat (2012:332) pointed out that whilst disruption powers exist often they are underutilised, pointing to the lack of uptake on UK ancillary orders as an example.

Previously in this chapter research relating to interventions underpinning a disruption approach relating to 99 offenders (15 OCGs) in the north of England, was described (Kirby & Snow, 2016). These offenders were proactively targeted by police and partner agencies between three months and five years (mean= 28 months), before a decision was made to discontinue operations against them, as they were no longer considered a threat. Kirby and Snow (2016), reviewed the reasons associated with this decision, and in 53.3% of cases it was disclosed there was no evidence to suggest their offending behavior was continuing. However, it was unclear whether: the attention had disrupted the group either temporarily or in a more sustainable fashion; the initial threat was inaccurate or exaggerated; or their offending was displaced in some way. Other reasons for archiving the OCG cited members moving away from the region, or being imprisoned. Finally, the study also tracked what had happened to the 'principal' and 'significant' offenders after this archiving decision had been made. It discovered 19 of the offenders (33.9%) had been further prosecuted for other crimes (mean=15.5 months), albeit it could not be ascertained whether this related to OC. Without

a detailed follow up, it is difficult to argue that a disruption approach generates a sustainable solution.

In summary evaluations of OC interventions can be significantly improved. Across Europe, North America and Australasia, there is an increasing interest in determining 'what works' with regards to law enforcement and crime prevention. Studies have shown there is tremendous variability in the capacity and capability of organised crime groups and law enforcement agencies. This can be compounded by different levels and quality of intervention, with initiatives being based on insufficient or incorrect evidence, poor implementation, and misguided or unrealistic evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Kirby & Snow, 2016). Policy makers and practitioners would be helped by a central repository of evaluations which explained: the central mechanisms (or theories) on which preventive initiatives are based; the context in which these mechanisms might best be activated to produce the sought-after effects; the type and level of resources needed for effective delivery (context); the impact (outcomes) they achieve; and the confidence with which they can be transferred to other environments. This type of understanding provides a clearer evaluation framework that enables academics and practitioners to work out what interventions create specific outcomes. A more robust approach to implementation and evaluation will provide a much stronger evidence base to establish and support different levels of intervention, including legislation. At the time of writing scholars were undertaking the first systematic review of OC for the 'what works' centre (College of Policing), which is a significant step forward.

At this point in time, from a problem oriented perspective, the limited evidence suggests that whilst prosecution remains critical to the administration of justice, its impact in reducing organised crime is questionable. As such, the central business model used to tackle OC is both slow and cumbersome. Current operational constraints make investigation increasingly complex (sharing of information, jurisdictional accountability), costly (travel, interpreters, courts) and limited in impact (the OC often continues). It is therefore clear that the policing model needs to adapt to become more effective and efficient when tackling OCGs. As with most problem solving approaches, effectiveness appears to lie in enhanced partnership working, both in terms of information sharing and intervention. Multi-agency sources provide a richer intelligence picture. For example, a partnership of police, housing, social services, immigration, tax and employment departments can bring together information that can more readily identify actors, suspicious premises and patterns of behavior, to generate more innovative and sustainable responses to OC. These partnerships can operate at both strategic and tactical levels.

This concept is not new. When Peel founded the London Metropolitan Police in 1829 he did so on the principle that preventative approaches were more effective than detecting the offence after commission. Also, that whilst the police were paid to deliver specific services,

it was incumbent on the rest of society to engage in the prevention of crime. Of course, we know that many aspects of society can influence individuals to conform to social norms (e.g. religion, schools and the family). Indeed, many legitimate organisations have a specific role in reducing the criminal opportunities available to organised crime offenders. For example, if banks allow investors to be secretive, or developers allow individuals to launder money through property, there will be continued opportunities for offenders to hide their wealth. More thought is required to understand how these institutions can reduce organised crime, and the leverage needed to persuade them to comply with anti-crime measures. In this, the concept of 'super-controllers' illustrates how regulatory bodies can have an impact on lower level operations (Sampson et al., 2010). A move in this direction would require a more reflective approach to understanding what processes facilitate OC and a more active engagement with regulatory bodies. At a tactical level, embedding multi-agency team working as core business would present more opportunities for success. Recommendations such as these are not without their challenges. Whilst multi-agency working and information sharing is theoretically persuasive, bringing together representatives from diverse and previously siloed agencies is difficult to implement (see Bullock et al., 2006). Whilst 'fusion centres' have emerged as an increasingly common policy approach, recent terrorist attacks continue to highlight the implementation challenges surrounding intelligence sharing and co-ordinated practice (Taylor & Russell, 2012). Ultimately however, new ideas, responses and skills are required to reduce the impact of OC.

Conclusion

A few years ago, leaving for home after a conference, I was in Professor Tilley's company on an Amtrak train travelling the 51 miles from Providence to Boston airport. We became so engrossed in our 'policing' conversation that we were startled by the train coming to a halt. Observing a Boston sign on the platform he said we should disembark. We jumped off only to find out we should have stayed on one more stop. We then had to change platforms to board a crowded commuter train to continue our journey. Again, engrossed in our conversation, we went past our stop. Suitably embarrassed, we again changed platforms to reverse our route. I tell this story to warn the reader that Nick isn't the best for providing geographic direction, but in terms of academic direction he's pretty much unrivalled.

Whilst the chapter has provided an overview of OC within the UK, the subtext has revolved around its format, which has clearly been influenced by Professor Nick Tilley. Hopefully it has provided an overview of the topic in a way that provides a realistic, systematic and critical way of engaging with the subject, with some operational relevance. Indeed, bizarrely, at the time of writing this chapter, I had a sense of déjà vu. Sitting close to Nick at a meeting, which had been convened by the Metropolitan Police to discuss the implementation of a new operational strategy, the chair invited comments. Nick (as he had done twenty years earlier when visiting Lancashire), teased open the tensions and challenges of the proposed approach. The Chief Superintendent smiled and said, "I wouldn't

have invited you if I had known you were going to ask such hard questions". It was as if time had stood still, Nick still enthusiastic and animated about operational policing, and still focused on the pragmatism of 'what works'.

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