East Midlands Special Operations Unit

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

Working Together on Serious Organised Crime

Collaboration Report
January 2020

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"What can academics add to the many existing policing strengths?

Academics ask questions in different ways and find and circulate learning from elsewhere. We can help you search and ask questions and maybe go find out where we don't know between us. It might be academics interpreting your existing data set. It might be interesting to see what it's saying or asking – maybe we offer different perspectives to police".

Findings

There were overlapping emergent repeating topics, which have been collated here into four main themes.

1. **The challenge of Data**

There was extensive discussion about data, some stressing the need for more, but with more joined-up, dynamic coding and analysis required. There was also recognition that the increasing volume of data was making it challenging to identify priority relevance from that volume.

Highlighted points
We have a lot of data but it's having really agile processes to interrogate it that are the problem.
We also need to consider where the next types of data collection might be coming form and plan to manage the, too, take 5G.
Artificial Intelligence may help to manage the scale of data. It may help cut across also different data sets, as we've a problem of capacity in resourcing data interrogation.
There needs to be a smarter use of data, and find new ways of being more future orientated.
We maybe need to not focus too much on the 'past' and the data and focus more on 'what if' speculative thinking.

2. **Ways of thinking: opportunities to enhance?**

There was an emergent pattern concerning how existing policing approaches may be developed, to enable more agility, i.e. military intelligence. This theme offered new opportunities for lateral approaches, such as getting more creative and working through what could be applied operationally

Highlighted points
Can we use warfare theory to disrupt how OCG might not work in the future – damage their ecology?
Can't arrest our way out of this. As we take one out another takes their place, so we need to get more creative.
We need to speed up our capability as the crime business models are operating faster and faster, feeding off emergent opportunities. We may to start anticipating more.

3. Inside their world: what's behind SOC?

A third identified theme concerns understanding more about the *why* than just the *what* of SOC. Here, opportunities identified included gathering a more aggressively in-depth profile of the enemy, concerning not what it gets up to but why it exists.

Key points identified characterising the world of SOC included techniques of corruption, internationalism, use of violence and a sophisticated matrix business commissioning model. As serious *organised* crime, the 'known unknown' identified was a need to fill the gap of knowledge around SOC business models.

Highlighted points
What is life like living in the SOC world? How is money laundering for example have a business model? How can we make that SOC lifestyle more difficult?
What's the business model here? How do we frustrate the business model that OCGs might use?
Recruitment of SOC operatives – including their own specialists, how do they do that? Where do OCG members and principal members come from?
Follow the money. Lots of money is being extorted out of communities - how far can we follow that trail? May need financial accounting expertise to help. Some of this involves unexplained wealth, so we will need an international perspective.
Change in a digital fast-moving world means SOC is reinventing itself regularly almost overnight. It's highly agile and adaptive. We will need to be able to structure to combat that.

4. More intrusive and proactive analysis

This final theme was a challenge to go on the offensive more against SOC. Delegates pointed to a need to tackle the 'ecosystem' of SOC, to effectively starve is of resource and fuel. This thought process was influenced by health-based approaches, and suggested widening the Prevention focus, for example, to a wider agenda within Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plans.

Highlighted points
What is the private sector's role in disrupting SOC? Look at the emerging data on the number of people working in textile factories alone. Profit in business must hold responsibility for the human cost of exploitation.
What is it we need to build to get an area that is hostile to SOC? Are we looking at global exemplars? What is the evidence base of what works elsewere?
Can we stop the emerging market from emerging? Think about the business model: lots of SOC infrastructure relies on legitimate camouflage such as using supply chains, for example cash and textiles are using human trafficking. How do they hide the profit and process?

Evaluation

Given the considerable investment resource and time, evaluation process were used to measure effectiveness. Kirkpatrick (1980) Level 1 evaluation was used at this stage, and invited future priority orientation. 100% of feedback received reported the event had been stimulating and beneficial in opening up a richer understanding. All feedback pointed to the need to work together more and to evolve from this initial conversation.

Next steps

Having introduced the context of the SOC challenge, and various team members having identified relevant skills and knowledge opportunities, a follow up event was envisaged. Here, the focus would be on the five identified operational challenges, with reference to exploring a more agile law enforcement mindset applicable across all of these.

It is suggested that mixed groups tackle each of the 5 operational priorities (international links; understanding digital technologies; OCG business models; protection from OCGs; what works) by assessing how law enforcement could improve its current approaches, identifying any immediate opportunities.

By the end of the next workshop event, tangible opportunities for trialling or experimenting would be used to improve the evidence base and where appropriate be taken away for appropriate operational development.