

East Midlands Special Operations Unit



Working Together on Serious Organised Crime

DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
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Serious Organised Crime

Working together for the future

The UK Cabinet Office reported in 2018¹ that serious and organised crime affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat. It costs the UK at least £37 billion annually.

The national imperative should be about mobilising the full force of the state, aligning our collective efforts to target and disrupt serious and organised criminals. This means pursuing offenders through prosecution and disruption, and bringing all of our collective powers and tools to bear to:

- prevent people from engaging in serious and organised crime
- protect victims, organisations and systems from its harms
- prepare for when it occurs, mitigating the impact

In the East Midlands, facilitated via the East Midlands Police Academic Collaboration², the East Midlands Special operations Unit (EMSOU) is working closely with De Montfort University (DMU) to deliver against the national Serious Organised Crime Strategy, and to get us, as a region, ahead of the game.

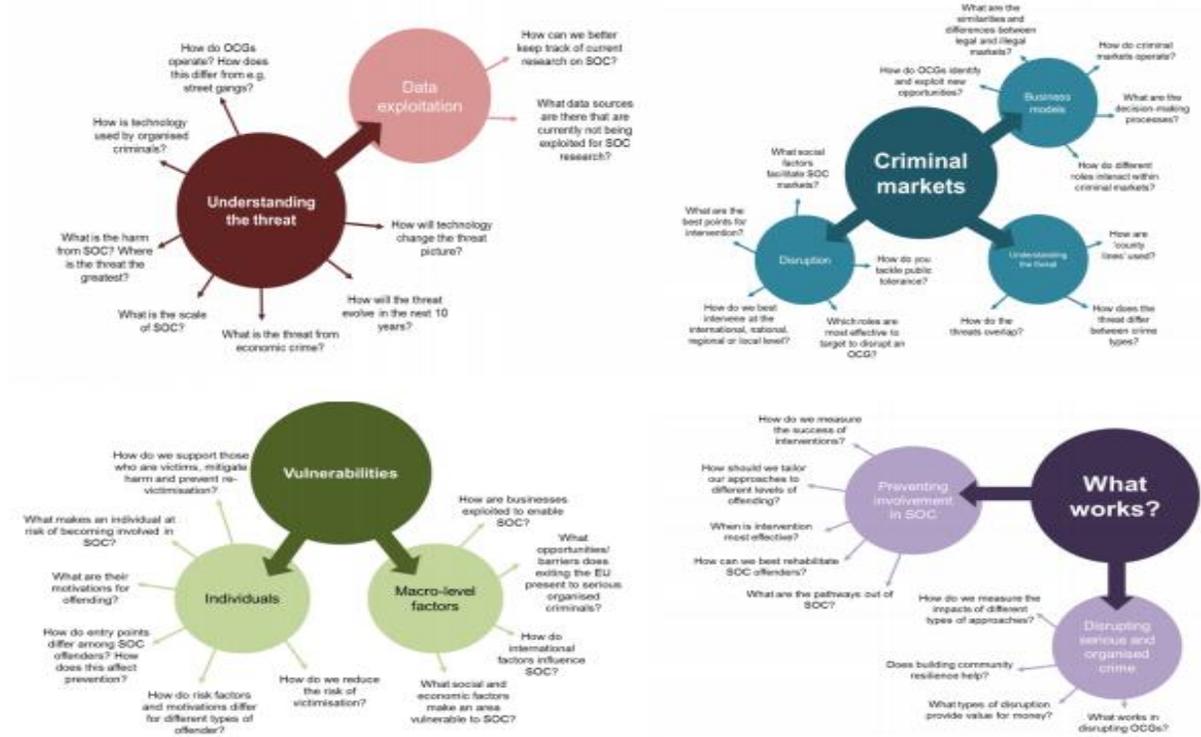
Policing professionals working with academic researchers is promoted as best practice in the UK national strategy, and it's something we've been developing in this region for some time. We're now ready to take a gear shift forward to closely align the thinking across policing intelligence and academic research to proactively attack SOC.

The huge benefit of working together is that we can bring together the professional experience from law enforcement with a diverse set of academic disciplines, offering fresh insight and innovation for how SOC is tackled. This is about not only better protecting victims and bring offenders to justice, but is also about looking to the future, and for the first time to take the initiative away from entrepreneurial criminals.

¹ UK National Strategy on Serious Organised Crime, 2018-2021

The UK national strategy on SOC identified a series of key themes and research questions that would help move law enforcement in a more proactive approach.

Serious and Organised Crime Research Priorities 2018/19 – 2020/21, Home Office Research Report 105



EMSOU has gone one stage further, by collating six key aspects that are of particular relevant to the East Midlands region. These are:-



² East Midlands Police Academic Collaboration (EMPAC), five East Midlands force areas, EMSOU and the Universities of Derby, De Montfort, Leicester, Loughborough, Lincoln, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent & Northampton

DMU are working right across the whole university structure to bring together overlapping expertise from Psychology, Computer Science, Law, Accountancy, Education, Community and Youth, Business, Criminology, Policing and the Public Engagement Team. The approach is to bring fresh perspective on existing and emergent data, in order to become more proactive in our joint analysis and planning.

Whilst DMU are leading this venture academically, they are, as part of EMPAC, also bringing with them all the other regional universities and their collective expertise, to further strengthen the width and depth of knowledge. It's all about getting the best ideas and using them in the East Midlands to improve policing.

We know organised crime is highly fluid, dynamic and adaptive. In order to combat this, and take the initiative, we need to get more agile in our thinking. By bringing the best minds together to focus on a common goal we have huge potential now to steal the initiative, identifying vulnerabilities and criminal opportunities, before criminals do.

“For new ways of doing things we need new thinking”

Academics have started to chart the potential landscape, based on the interconnectivity of many varied disciplines all focusing on a joint issue. Research wise, there is a recognition of the limitations of data categorization at too early a stage, meaning early interpretations can then limit or even hide insights later. The involvement of researchers, who are after all professional ‘sense makers of data’, earlier in the analysis process is recommended, rather than seeking to use researchers just to ‘fix a problem’.

It's not also just about the analysis of the past. As SOC is dynamic and constantly adapting, it's about building a more proactive and exploratory approach to better inform the future. To achieve this, academics have argued that we need a paradigm shift in the way we understand current and future emergent SOC.

A new Paradigm



The involvement of multi-disciplinary academic researchers at any earlier stage of MoRiLE³ means additional sense could be made of data, and gaps, to help sift root causes from symptoms, identify patterns and future trajectories: in short to give a richer picture. There are many parallel uses of proactive analysis used for example in Business, and some approaches are transferrable. There are other parallel uses in military intelligence, from the use of Red Teams⁴, through to using a more speculative cognitive reconnaissance, to better prepare for future possibilities. The principle here is SOC starts with joined-up, interconnected and often entrepreneurial activity, and by narrowing down our analytical thinking we can then lose agility through silos and assumptions.

There is huge benefit in having additional and fresh eyes to help interpret and inform tackling SOC, and doing this jointly with policing professionals in a process of co-

³ Management of Risk in Law Enforcement, a standardised analysis approach

⁴ A Red Team approach uses an independent group to challenge organisational presumptions to improve its effectiveness through alternative views and insights. It is particularly effective in organizations with strong cultures and fixed ways of approaching problems.

problematization, moving then to stages of co-production of new knowledge and problem solving and ultimately transformational evolution.

Areas for exploration

Using social scientific research methods, such as emergence in Grounded Theory; Ethnomethodology; Linguistic Analysis; Qualitative and Quantitative Interface to give richer picture	Using Business theory models such as Systems Thinking (organization, social and technology); Market Growth Opportunity; Matrix Thinking; Mode 1 and 2 Knowledge
Using approaches in Forensic Science such as Novel Technologies, Enhanced Development of Evidence Capture	Using theories about Networks; Key Nodes; Intelligence Networks; Opportunity Markets; Facilitation Support Networks; Non-Human Networks; Supply Chains; VRIN Resources; Network approach to Complexity; Commodities and Value Discrepancies
Using Psychological approaches such as Motivations and Status; Authority and Control; Risk and Pay Off; Sub Group Culture; Moral Legitimation of Offending	Using Organisational Research such as Recruitment of Workers (from County Line mules to cyber experts)
Using Computer Science to draw on Cyber Digital Technologies; Smart Policing	Using Ethnography from Ex-Offenders and Victims
Using Social geography such as Building Design, Urban and Rural Community Design; Influences of Poverty; Environmental Factors	Education Research to inform Training of CJ wide workers and Community Safety Partners
Business School links to Business Community as an Active Asset and Partner	Media Research on how to promote campaigns; how Media is exploited for illegal means
Widening Knowledge Management and Innovation; widening critical thinking; widening creative and lateral thinking	Social Science methods to inform Evaluation of what is effective and why; clarifying correlation and causation factors
Connecting existing research on influence of drugs, poverty and family relevant to both offending and victim vulnerability	Use existing knowledge of adversary intelligence networks as a way of exploring and strengthening counter-intelligence

Next Steps

For this workstream, DMU is being led by Professor Dave Walsh, and EMSOU by Deputy Chief Constable Chris Haward. A series of events have taken place at DMU and the next stage is for a joint event between researchers and SOC Police leads to knit together latent capacity and capability. This event, in January 2020, will be hosted at DMU and will enable a further update report of progress.

For January 2020, a case scenario approach, using Hydra⁵ immersive real-time principles is advocated, drawing on common regional experiences, such as County Lines. Such an approach will reflect the dynamic and multifaceted nature of contemporary crime relevant to the region and EMSOU. Researchers are encouraged to get actively involved in what is an innovative cross-discipline approach, to work with policing professionals, co-produce high impact research insight and change the face of tackling serious organized crime.

⁵ Hydra is a model of immersive, real-time scenario learning and development, advocated by the College of Policing