

Business views of organised crime

Nick Tilley and Matt Hopkins with the assistance of Adam Edwards and John Burrows

This report describes research that examined the impact of organised crime against businesses located in three high crime residential neighbourhoods. It is based on a survey of businesses in the three areas (420 interviews with owners and/or managers between November 2006 and January 2007), police intelligence and local community contacts.

- Businesses in the three high crime neighbourhoods were found to suffer high rates of crime. Many were repeatedly victimised. While a small proportion of the offences were attributed to organised crime the vast majority were not. To have a significant impact on overall levels of commercial victimisation, prevention would, therefore, need to focus on routine, relatively disorganised criminal activities as well as organised crime.
- The social processes through which organised crime is produced and conducted were found to vary by area. Specific disruption tactics would, therefore, need to be tailored to the specific circumstances of organised crime in different places.

- Businesses in the sample neighbourhoods were found very frequently to be invited by organised and non-organised criminals to dispose of illicit goods of various kinds. Offenders appeared to be able to offer the goods, with negligible risks to themselves that their actions would be reported to the authorities. Businesses in high crime neighbourhoods could comprise important potential sources of intelligence and sites for the disruption of crime involving the distribution of illicit goods.
- The three sample areas used in the research were not typical. They were picked in conjunction with the police because there were thought to be organised crime problems there. Further research is recommended, to look at a wider range of neighbourhoods. That research could also usefully use ethnographic alongside survey methods to obtain a richer picture of the ways in which organised crime is undertaken and impacts on local businesses as well as others within the neighbourhood.

Contents

Summary	i
1. Introduction	9
2. Background to the study and method	11
3. Levels of crime and organised crime against businesses located in high crime neighbourhoods	20
4. Businesses as invited colluders in organised crime	29
5. Area variations in organised crime impact	35
6. Variations in business vulnerability to organised crime	50
7. Conclusions	56
Appendices	58

Keywords

Organised crime
Business crime
Victimisation
Counterfeiting
Minority groups
Extortion

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy).

The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate exists to improve policy making, decision taking and practice in support of the Home Office purpose and aims, to provide the public and Parliament with information necessary for informed debate and to publish information for future use.