Literature review on upper level drug trafficking
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Executive summary

The purpose of this work is to contribute to the achievement of UK government objectives in relation to drug trafficking and organised crime (OC). Specific objectives set for the review are: to describe criminal organisations active in upper level drug trafficking; to construct a useful typology of them; to comment on changes over time; and to understand impacts of specific types of intervention on specific types of drug trafficking organisation. Upper level trafficking is taken to include: source zone traders’ relationships and transactions, including wholesale distribution within the source countries; export, international transit, entry into Europe including the UK; and connections downwards to city level. The interest here is particularly upon heroin and cocaine because these are of greatest concern in the UK drug strategy. Clearly, a heterogeneous set of traffickers is involved, in very varied geographical, economic and political settings. The objective for the review is to create a simple framework within which the publicly available information can be summarised.

Published and unpublished literature was reviewed in the following languages: English, French (covering not only French but also to some extent Belgian publications), Dutch (including some Belgian publications), German, Italian, and Spanish (including to some extent Latin American publications). To varying degrees (described below) these sources covered upper level trafficking within the countries concerned and on the wider international stage. The focus of the review was upon recent work where available but, where work was sparse and/or significant work was ten years old or more, that was also consulted.

From all these sources, the reviewers concluded that upper level drug markets can be understood as networking (including patterns of avoidance) and transactions between three broad ‘types’ of traffickers (and variants). All typologies are conceptual devices, potentially useful for drawing out features of environments that are always more complex, more ‘mixed’ than the typology is capable of capturing. In addition, criminal organisation may change over time. The typology presented should be regarded as an analytic grid or as a working language, not as a series of watertight compartments.

- ‘Politico-military’ traffickers, having aims of restructuring the political field, or achieving or maintaining a dominant position in existing political structures/states/failed states.
- ‘Business criminals’, driven by financial considerations, whose political aspirations are limited to their own quiet enjoyment of the proceeds of crime. They do not seek wider political change but may attempt limited corruption for defensive reasons.
- ‘Adventurers’ for whom a relatively high level of risk-taking is the norm for a variety of reasons – because they may feel they have little alternative (e.g. due to debt or coercion), or they may experience a sense of excitement yet do not fully understand the risks being run.

The report summarises what, on the basis of the literature, may be said about the positioning of each ‘type’ within drug markets, degrees of permanence, typical business practices of each of the three types identified, and vulnerabilities to law enforcement.

Possibilities for future research on upper level drug trafficking identified by this review include:

- trafficker ‘careers’, including recruitment, learning, networking, building of mutual trust amongst diverse traffickers (e.g. whilst in prison), key turning points and desistance;
- better understanding of impacts of specific policing methods, of wider ‘crime proofing’ and of political strategies in source, transit and importation zones;
- research to compare outcomes of committing financial resources to short strike and long haul approaches; and
- better understanding of what direction and degree of change in drug prices would reflect reductions in upper level drug trafficking.

In most cases it will be appropriate for the research to be interdisciplinary and to have both qualitative and quantitative strands.
1. Introduction

Purpose

There is considerable activity aimed at reducing upper level drug trafficking. Yet the impact of the activities of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) is not clear, partly because understanding of upper level drug trafficking is still being developed. Who are the traffickers, why do they persist, what are the possibilities for more effective action and what if anything could research contribute? The purpose of this report is to contribute to the achievement of UK government objectives in relation to drug trafficking and organised crime. Specific objectives are: to describe criminal organisations active in upper level drug trafficking and to construct a typology; to comment on changes over time; and to understand impacts of specific types of intervention on specific types of drug trafficking organisation.

The focus on organisational questions and the requirement to construct a typology of traffickers, linked to their vulnerabilities, was not intended to imply any prior assumption as to whether going after the money (proceeds) of drug trafficking organisations, removing traffickers (people/organisations), or seizures of the drugs (product) might be a superior control strategy. Nor was any view taken as to the balance required between judicial proceedings (criminal or civil), disruption/dismantlement, or both. Rather, at the start of the exercise, all strategies were seen in principle as equally worth exploring.

The method is a review of published, grey and other sources of literature in the English language and in five other European languages, supported by background briefings on sensitive internal documentation by government Departments and LEAs.

Scope: 'upper level drug trafficking' and questions asked

For the purposes of this review, upper level trafficking is taken to include source zone traders’ relationships and transactions, including wholesale distribution within the source countries; export, international transit, entry into Europe and particularly the UK; and connections downwards to city level. The interest here is particularly upon heroin and cocaine because these are of greatest concern in the UK drug strategy. It excludes typically small-scale peasant cultivation of plants (such as opium poppy and coca bush); and, at the other end of the chain, retail sale and transactions immediately above retail.1

The exclusion of cultivation and transactions around it at the very top end of the chain means that this review does not report on the circumstances, daily lives and decision-making of farmers regarding what proportions to grow of opium or coca, other produce for the market, and food for household/livestock consumption. Coverage of cultivation and of the mixed fortunes of 'alternatives' and related development issues would merit separate review.

The exclusion of retail sale and transactions immediately above retail reflects the fact that these lower levels of drug markets are relatively well researched and understood. There is British work by (amongst others) Edmunds et al., 1996, Best et al., 2001 and Mason and Bucke, 2001. European comparative work on retail/local/city markets has recently been conducted by Paoli et al., 2002 and Gruppo Abele/Massari et al., 2003. For the US, Taking care of business (Johnson et al., 1985) remains a classic text on retail level drug markets.

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1 The review’s exclusion of issues around cultivation and retail sale has to be relaxed in certain economic work, where for example there is an attempt to model the whole chain, or to model the impact of near-source interventions on retail prices (see Chapter 2 under What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerabilities).
Stages of work

The work proceeded in five stages.

1) In initial work (a preliminary review of sources, followed by email and telephone discussions between the various contributors to the study) areas of enquiry and methods were agreed.

2) Regarding the literatures in French, Dutch, German, Italian, and Spanish, arrangements were made with relevant centres of academic expertise, (see acknowledgements page of this report for institutions and individuals involved). For these languages and for the English language literatures, the aim was to capture the main points from the published literature (academic and LEA) and grey literature (LEA and others) and also, to whatever extent would be practical, to gain direct or indirect access to LEA internal work. Previous UK work had shown that, in some cases, it may be possible for researchers without security clearance to see an internal LEA document, without taking it away; or LEA personnel might be able to give a verbal briefing on the pertinence of an internal study, even though it could not be seen. This was the approach also adopted for the current review. The contributors each submitted a short report outlining the main findings of the literature and briefings in their language.

3) A draft report was drawn up which offered a possible synthesis of the findings of the literature, with special attention being paid to construction of a typology on traffickers and their vulnerabilities. This was circulated to UK stakeholders for their comments and fine-tuning. That draft included restricted and confidential material which had not been approved for wider release.

4) The draft text was ‘sanitised’ for a wider readership and circulated to all the contributors in order to tie up loose ends.

5) The report was peer reviewed and some amendments made in the light of comments made.

Characteristics of English, French, Dutch, German, Italian and Spanish language sources consulted

The relevant English language literature includes OC in general as well as drug trafficking specifically; typically the latter is treated as an important subset of the former. Historians, political commentators, security specialists, economists, criminologists, ethnographers and law enforcement personnel have made strong contributions. This heterogeneity of background has however been no bar to interdisciplinary analysis (see for example Friman and Andreas, 1991). Qualitative work on upper level drug trafficking is much more extensive than quantitative work. Regional and country case studies are quite common, in which key individuals are described within their cultural and historical contexts. Most of this work is somewhat historical but much of it has some relevance for understanding upper level drug trafficking affecting the UK over the last ten years. Quantitative data sources are generally either lacking (in respect to the reality of uncaptured OC), of uncertain quality (e.g. world production data, local price data), ambiguous (e.g. seizures, saying as much about the LEAs which generate them as about OC itself) or somewhat theoretical (see Chapter 2 under What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerabilities). There are just a few studies in which quantitative markers of the situation changed unambiguously in response to changes in enforcement, at least in the short term. All these literatures were consulted by online and library searches through universities, the British Library and the specialist agencies concerned. There is also a considerable unpublished literature – strategic reports, summaries for policy-makers, etc. – produced by analysts working for LEAs and government departments. Some of this is classified at the level of 'Restricted' (lowest level) or 'Confidential' (the next up – sometimes used for strategic overviews without details of current cases); some was read for this review on LEA premises, whilst some was described in briefings by LEA staff (see above). UK government departments and LEAs contributing were: the Strategy Unit of the Cabinet Office (reporting to the Prime Minister); the Foreign & Commonwealth Office; various branches of the Home Office, the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS); the National Crime Squad (NCS) (which combats national and international serious organised crime); and a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers.
As for the French language literature on upper level drug trafficking, in 1992 a publication from the Descartes Association (Schiray, 1992) commented on its sparseness, and the situation today is only slightly better. Relations between judicial/enforcement agencies on the one hand and researchers on the other are not close: some enforcement staff frankly think research is unnecessary, and some researchers consider scientific work on trafficking very difficult and anyway less important than work on health and social aspects of drug use. The resulting ‘gap’ has to some extent been filled by the experiences of police officers (Morin et al., 1991), magistrates (De Maillard, 2000) and (more rarely) traffickers themselves (see Colombié et al., 2002, 2003). The work of the Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues, based on news from a variety of international correspondents, deserves special mention. Meanwhile, there have been independent studies touching on: careers of traffickers (Duprez et al., 2001); their modus operandi (Schiray, 1994); and the structure of drug markets (Colombié et al., 2000). Some theoretical pieces of work have been carried out, but without much empirical linkage to the reality of drug markets (Poret, 2002). These and other works cited in the text below have been drawn upon here, together with very helpful briefings by staff of the OCRTIS (Central Office for Repression of Trafficking in Illegal Drugs) and the Tribunal de Grande Instance. Direct access to unpublished official documentation was not possible. Judicial files could be a useful source of information but have yet to be used for this purpose. Similarly, situation overviews written by the OCRTIS on the basis of information from regional police and judicial services remain fairly inaccessible to researchers, although OCRTIS does publish annual statistics on drug offences in France. In general, official sources of information remain underused by researchers.

Dutch language literature (i.e. covering the Netherlands and to some extent Belgium) on upper level drug trafficking mostly consists of grey literature, based on various analyses and reports by the Belgian and Dutch police. Upper level drug trafficking is seen as being of considerable importance to the national and international position of both countries. In some cases, grey literature is published or further elaborated on in public documents. However, a lot of grey literature is confidential, composed by police authorities for internal use. In these cases, a representative of the police authorities gave a verbal briefing on the contents and relevance of internal (confidential) studies. Verbal briefings by senior staff of the Criminal Intelligence Division of the National Police Agency in the Netherlands, and of the Department of Judicial Departments of Crime Against Persons in Belgium, also proved informative. For example, in Belgium a list of the most active crime groups on the heroin market is published annually by the Federal Police (Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik - PKS). A narcotics report (Rauschgiftjahresbericht) is published annually by the Federal Police (Bundeskriminalamt, 2002). Pertinent information about drug law enforcement is also contained in the federal police activity reports about organised crime (Bundeskriminalamt, 2001) and about international financial transactions (Bundeskriminalamt, 2003).
The drug and addiction report (Bundesminister für Gesundheit, 2002) published annually contains mostly policy and strategic statements. In order to get some additional qualitative information and find more ‘grey’ literature on the topic, especially internal papers and regulations of police and administration, interviews were carried out with four people in German LEAs.

For Italian language literature, the main sources used are academic, although few of these are recent. In Italy, analysis of criminal groups dealing with drug trafficking was first developed in the early 1980s, within the wider debate on the mafia. At that time drug trafficking was singled out as one of the main businesses used by ‘mafiosi’ to increase their political and social power (Violante, 1987, Arlacchi, 1988). In the early 1990s, case studies on drug markets were conducted in northern Italy (Verona, Torino). Becchi and Turvani, 1993, present a good historical and sociological perspective on the international drug markets, with special reference to the Italian situation. More recently, for a simpler description of the international drug markets see Pietrostefani, 1999. Studies on drug markets in some European cities have been recently conducted by Italian authors and published in English language (Paoli, 2002, on Milan and Frankfurt; Gruppo Abele/Massari et al., 2003, on synthetic drugs in Amsterdam, Barcelona and Turin). None of these is specifically focused on upper level trafficking, nevertheless all throw some light on it. Currently, trafficking in drugs is not a primary concern of academics in Italy: just a few articles in specialised journals and reports by law enforcement agencies describe recent changes in the structure of trafficking networks. Among specialised reviews are Narcomafie and police reviews, presenting articles by experts (such as sociologists, journalists and police officers). A number of annual reports were consulted, for example those of the DGSA (Direzione Centrale Servizi Antidroga), the Ministry of Interior, the Direzione Nazionale Antimafia, and the six-monthly reports of the DIA (Direzione Investigativa Antimafia). DIA reports on traffickers of specific nationalities (Albania, Nigeria, Turkey) or regional areas (North Africa) were also consulted, summarising the results of several police investigations and judicial cases. The collection of information was completed by interviews with law enforcement officials, in formal and informal settings, and an interview with DIA officials. An English language account of some aspects of the Italian situation can be found in Jamieson, 1995. A specific and detailed analysis of the Italian mafia, and its limitations, has been published in English by Paoli, 2003.

Spanish sources are mainly articles in magazines published by the various enforcement agencies (Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil), as well as some legal and criminological publications. As for grey literature, statistical information about actions against the illicit drug traffic by the Central Unit of Criminal Intelligence of the Judicial Police were obtained, bringing together data of the National Police (Policía Nacional), the Civil Guard (Guardia Civil) and the Autonomic Police of Catalonia (Mossos d’Esquadra) but not the Basque Police (Ertzaintza). The authorities did not feel able to share documentation on the structures of criminal groups but a public prosecutor of the Special Office of the Public Prosecutor for the Prevention and Repression of the Illegal Drug Traffic gave a valuable briefing. Likewise, the Spanish researchers gained access to unpublished research of the School of Police of Catalonia (cf: Montañés, Barruti, Pallarés and Domínguez, 2003). The Spanish contributors to this review also made a contribution on South America, specifically Colombia, the findings of which dovetail well with those in the English language literature.

Quality of sources

It is difficult to summarise the quality of the work because the disciplines and associated methods vary so much. Each approach has its strengths and its potential weaknesses.

For example, much of the quite extensive politics/security studies/regional studies/history literature sets out to describe drug trafficking groups and significant individuals within them in their regional and cultural contexts. This strand of work typically plays close attention to problems and processes in state-building, economic development and/or cultural and political conditions and implications for trafficking. Examples would be Thoumi, 1999; Galleotti, 1998; and Paoli, 2003. Other work emphasises the ‘borderless’ aspect of the modern world (Stares, 1996). Much of the near-source literature necessarily grapples with broader political developments and some of it has a political colouring of one kind or another. One or two works are clearly bound up with ‘cold war’ issues and seem less reliable, insofar as they confidently set out to blame international drug trafficking on, for example, communists, sometimes basing their perspective on hearings in the McCarthy era in the
US in the 1950s (Ehrenfeld, 1990; Jordan, 1999). Some communists may have had a hand at various times, likewise some groups at least tolerated by the CIA and indeed policy-makers – witness the Iran Contra affair, in which 'senior US policy-makers were not immune to the idea that drug money was the perfect solution to the [anti-Nicaraguan government] Contras' funding problems' (Kerry Report, 1989, p 41, further discussed in Scott and Marshall, 1991). CIA Inspector General Frederick Hitz put it thus: "Let us be frank. There are instances where the CIA did not in an expeditious way or consistent fashion cut off relationships with individuals who were alleged to have engaged in drug trafficking..." (cited in Woodiwiss, 2001, p 368).

Criminological work in the period following the Second World War shifted from an early US concern with Italian (or other 'foreign') mafia-type groups, basing its analysis on Congressional committee hearings, LEA briefings and the like, to a more recent tendency to describe looser groupings, many of which nevertheless remain careful in their criminal affairs. Issues for this kind of research include how to work productively with, but independently from, LEAs. Examples would be Pearson and Hobbs, 2001 and Dorn et al., 1998. Independent academics are well aware – and make their readers aware – that, in all cases of dependence on government and/or LEAs for access to data or cases, they are steered by government officials (in terms of questions to be asked) and by law enforcement agencies (in terms of selection of specific cases and data). However, since the researchers do not always quite understand what it is that has been deselected, they may not be in position to attempt to compensate for its lack. (If they try to reshape their analysis in the light of what they only suspect they have been steered away from, they may get things badly wrong.) Similarly, accounts based on court cases are shaped by investigators (McConv ille et al., 1991), prosecutors and the defence. Accounts based on discussions with co-operating witnesses, plea-bargainers and pentiti may provide the avid prosecutor or journalist with what the information provider thinks is wanted, whilst withholding certain details; considering these 'filters' alongside case construction makes interpretation additionally challenging. Accounts based on conversations with the criminal justice system can provide rich information on the lives of peripheral figures, but no researcher is romantic enough to think that important figures will tolerate contact except under strictly controlled conditions (McCoy, 1999, pp 144-6).

Ethnographic work, carried out by researchers of similar national/linguistic backgrounds to the subjects of the research, has become more common in this field. Examples would be Adler, 1993 for the United States, and Zaitch, 2001, 2002a and 2002b for Europe. What one gains here is a close-up perspective and, potentially, cultural understanding. What one may lose, if immersed in one setting and disinterested in others, is width of vision.

Economists and allied professionals have contributed in three main ways: classical theory and statistical analysis of available data (e.g. on drug prices); studies of impacts of law enforcement (where the work of the US Institute for Defence Analysis is notable, see Crane, 1999; Crane et al., 1997); and qualitative work with other disciplines, approaching issues noted in paragraph (one) above.

LEA analysts have access to much up-to-date information, although it is shaped by their agencies' activities. As a senior officer said during this review, "we don't know how typical this really is". In the UK today there is considerable inter-agency sharing of information based on operational intelligence, resulting in 'common ownership'. The major UK published output is NCIS's annual Threat Assessment; several other European LEA documents are mentioned above.

Some government departments undertake semi-independent work, for example that of the Strategy Unit in the UK Cabinet Office2 and analytical work and scenario-playing by researchers for the UK Ministry of Defence. However this work is not in the public domain.

In principle it seems worthwhile to draw upon all these perspectives and sources. This is the

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2 As described in the context of UK Government press release, 2002, David Blunkett Publishes Updated Drug Strategy: "Educate, Prevent and Treat - Key to Success in Tackling Drugs Problem" (3 December), the objective is to 'review the impact of enforcement work on the drug supply chain from international production to distribution in the UK so that work can be focused where it will do the most damage to drug dealers'. See http://www.drugs.gov.uk/News/PressReleases/1038909859
approach taken. Limitations and partiality of both qualitative and quantitative work may be mitigated by attempts to cross-check and integrate the variety of sources and perspectives on offer. However, recourse to a variety of perspectives raises the question of how to weigh and organise material and tell a coherent and even-handed story.

Helpfully, the literature of the past few years propounds one clear principle: analytically, drug traffickers are understood as being in interaction with states and LEAs and that relationship – be it antagonistic, complicit or ambiguous – is seen as key to understanding the varied forms taken by organised crime and the prospects for control (Dorn et al., 1992; Hess, 1992; Heyman, 1999; Cave and Reuter, 1988; Kenny 1999; Kleemans and van de Bunt, 1999; and more broadly Dorn, 2003 and Edwards and Gill, 2003, p 277). In a real sense the forms, weaknesses, strengths and strategies of particular states open the door to some possibilities for drug trafficking as they close the door to others. In weak or 'failed' states, drug traffickers may effectively take the place of the state or fuse with it (Friman and Andreus, 1991). Examples include Noriega in Panama (Vásquez, 1992), Garcia Meza in Bolivia (Pinter, 1994, esp. p 59). Alternately, traffickers may strongly challenge a state, seek to renegotiate the functioning of its justice system (Colombia) and/or struggle for regional autonomy (parts of Myanmar, and arguably Afghanistan). In other places a stronger state, for example that of the UK, obliges most traffickers to keep their heads down, to flit in and out of the country or, alternatively, to be exposed to greater risk (Gruppo Abele, 2003, and see below). In intermediate transit zones, the situation may be mixed. Since upper level drug trafficking typically traverses weaker and stronger states, a description of it must cover these contexts and the ways in which they meet.

Lastly, by way of introduction, it should be acknowledged that there is no consensus within the literature that traffickers' forms of organisation (and related questions of market structure) are necessarily the best jumping-off points for analysis or for policy. Some authors, following in the footsteps of the LEAs' traditional approaches to crime analysis, do indeed start with organisations. For example, for Shelley, 1999, pp 2-14, organised crime/trafficking groups can be categorised in a number of ways: by 'source country' (and one assumes transit and destination countries); by relationship with the legitimate economy; by structure; by product; by numbers of 'members' (where this is an applicable concept) in a country or region; by assets, revenues or costs of their crimes; or by political and terrorist links. Halstead, 1998, contrasts approaches based on organisation (pp 2-8) – that is to say, all or any of Shelley's categories – and on activities (pp 8-18), reviewing several economic approaches to analysis of the latter (although Halstead notes that in practice most authors take a mixed approach). Dorn, Bucke and Goulden, 2003, propose looking at traffickers' activities from the point of view of the potential for opportunity-reduction, as well as economic and organisational analysis. Williams, 1995, and some other authors suggest moving the focus from the level of traffickers to that of the market as a whole, identifying disruption of co-operation between traffickers as a key objective. Others have placed the spotlight on conditions within 'weak' or 'failed' states and/or within the increasingly transnational economy and society (see Halstead, op cit, pp 15-17 and Chapter 2 below). For the present review, objectives have been specified in terms of organisational aspects and related vulnerabilities, so other perspectives will be brought in largely within that frame. For reasons that are touched upon in Chapter 2 under Organisational structures and their degrees of permanence, some of these issues have been quite controversial.
2. Findings

Overview: the literatures on international relations, criminology and ethnography

The literature (published and unpublished) on upper level drug trafficking forms part of the broader literature on organised crime. According to a recently published English-language overview and *quo vadis* on that topic (Edwards and Gill, 2003), three contrasting perspectives and sets of assumptions can be identified in the research literature.

1. A focus on security threats external to the mainstream society, these threats being defined (a) for the US, in the historical context of post-Second World War concerns about ‘foreign’ mafias (as discussed by Woodiwiss, 2003, and see *Organisational structures and their degrees of permanence* in this chapter), (b) for western European countries, by national and EU co-operation on crime and insecurity (as described by Bigo, 2000), (c) for parts of the developing world, insurgency and, (d) following 2001, renewed concerns about terrorism.

2. A description of crime as inscribed within the mainstream society, sharing the same economic rationality and social objectives as non-criminals, but ‘cutting corners’ in achieving them – needing to be thwarted by a reduction in criminal opportunities (Clarke, 1997; Felson, 1994; Ekblom, 2003) as well as by reactive law enforcement.

3. A sociological perspective that describes a blurring of formal distinctions between the legal political economy and a subterranean illegal counterpart – producing illegalities that need to be addressed by social reforms as much as by law enforcement (Hobbs, 1998; Ruggiero, 2002; Edwards and Gill, 2003, pp 272-5).

These three perspectives – characteristic of the literature on politics/security, criminological, and ethnographic studies respectively – generate specific insights into upper level drug trafficking. Summarising, they produce descriptions of the involvement of politico-military groups, business criminals, and adventurers, as described below.

Traffickers as described in three bodies of literature

1. Political studies/security studies tradition
   - Concepts in this literature: state within a state; semi-autonomous groups in weak or failed states; militarised groups; mafia when acting against the state or as its proxy or agent.
   - Structures of trafficking groups: within areas of their control, hierarchies (see illustration), although outside militarised zones cells may be more common. Cells are structures in which each participant would be in a position to betray only one or two above/below/alongside him or her.
   - Examples of traffickers: Kung Sa in Myanmar; the Kuomintang throughout South East Asia; Afghan regional commanders; Pablo Escobar in Colombia; Roberto Suarez in Bolivia; Sicilian mafia in Italy; some groups based in the Middle East, the Balkans, Spain, N. Ireland ...
   - What they have in common: aims of restructuring the political field, or achieving or maintaining a dominant position in existing political structures/states, and employing drug trafficking proceeds to this end.
   - Policy positions advocated by those who focus on this type: country development, strengthening of judicial and other institutions, political negotiation, military measures.

2. Criminologists or other social scientists in co-operation with LEAs
   - Concepts in this literature: criminal organisations; criminal enterprises; EU-based organised crime groups (OCGs); crime as a business.
   - Structures of trafficking groups: a well-protected principal (individual or small group) controls core operations, has access to others (some of whom are disposable ‘adventurers’, see below) as needs be.
- Examples: many groups in European and wider transit zones, including Colombia, South East Asia and the Middle East.
- What they have in common: they are driven by financial considerations but without any broader political aspiration (even if some operate in a region or country where other traffickers do have political aims).
- Policy positions advocated by those who focus on this type: enhanced powers for LEAs (conspiracies, criminal association...).

3. Independent ethnographies (and some autobiographies)
- Concepts in the literature: individuals and cultures, as distinct from stable organisations; geographically mobile groups; semi-criminalised communities on the margins of licit economies; uneven structures of opportunity in global economy; acceptance of high levels of risk.
- Structures of trafficking groups: none formal – individuals, extended families and small groups float in a risky manner in the market environment.
- Examples: independent small operators; many relatively amateur individuals and small groups; migrant traffickers.
- Policy positions advocated by researchers who focus on this type: alternative opportunities and socio-economic integration; critique of the idea that strong criminal organisations/mafia exist or could justify enhanced powers for LEAs.

The three perspectives taken together

Putting the three perspectives and the data they generate alongside each other, a wider and more comprehensive picture of upper level drug markets than would be obtained from one perspective alone is obtained.

Taking the literature as a whole, it is suggested that:
- in structural terms, upper level drug markets include each of the formations described, and some mixed types (to be discussed below);
- in dynamic terms, mutual surveillance, networking, transactions, co-operation and alliance-making, conflicts and patterns of avoidance – between these diverse traffickers, and between them and law enforcement agencies – characterise the operation of these markets;
- ways of doing business and vulnerabilities differ according to each type yet, as will be suggested later on in this review, there are tendencies towards convergence.

Evidence from the literature is now given. The general approach is to start off with reference to the English language literature and then fine-tune that by reference to French, Dutch, German, Italian and Spanish language work, according to availability and relevance. A note on terminology is given in Box 2.1.
Box 2.1: A note on terminology: networking in the market

Terminology found in the literature is sometimes ambiguous. This is especially so in relation to 'network/networking' which, whilst popular, seems to mean different things to different people. The overwhelming consensus within the criminological literature is that networks are very important. On inspection, however, it appears that there are at least three common uses of this term.

(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 construct the market.

(2) As a way of describing drug markets as made up of independent small groups or individuals, sometimes called 'disorganised crime', sometimes simply 'networks' (plural). Doubt is cast upon the existence of larger and/or 'harder' criminal organisations operating in the UK or other European contexts, partly because it is posited that LEAs break up larger groups (see for example Hess, 1992, 1993; Hobbs, 1998). In other words, in drug trafficking, "small is beautiful" (Dorn et al., 1992).

(3) As a way of referring to the durability or otherwise of criminals' organisational and other arrangements, when these are seen as ever-changing ('fluid networks' being counterposed to structures of all kinds). In other words, impermanence is the name of the game. (This approach often co-exists with number (2) above, although they are analytically separable.)

For present purposes, within the text of this review, the first meaning – networking within the market – will generally be preferred. This is because, of the three propositions above, the first is not contradicted by any author examined. By contrast, an implication of the second meaning, that upper level drug trafficking lacks larger and/or 'harder-edged' organisations, is not well supported by the literature consulted or briefings received. Similarly, regarding the third meaning, although no doubt some traffickers are very much in a state of flux, according to the literature many others are not, persisting more or less in the same forms for years or even decades. Hence, here, 'networking' is a term equally applicable to all traffickers, not a type in itself.

Traffickers' backgrounds, concerns and priorities

The priority, objective, motivation or 'driver' most commonly noted in the English language literature and in the literatures of all the languages consulted is financial gain for personal enrichment. Block, 1991, in a wide-ranging analysis of crime including drug trafficking, states that the market mechanism provides incentives that transcend the licit/illicit divide (cf Ruggiero, 2000). In relation to upper level trafficking specifically, Lee III refers to most as seeking 'to prosper commercially without being disturbed' and as having no fundamental quarrel with the 'social order that nurtures them' (Lee III, 1989, p 9). Many groups trafficking into Europe and the UK are of this type, as are many source zone groups (many Colombian groups, for example Cali 1980s traffickers, see Strong, 1995, pp 268-283) and their 1990s successors (Zaitch, 2001).

In addition, two other drivers are found, both of which link financial gain to other issues. Drug trafficking linked to political transformation (or action to prevent political transformation) is very well established in relation to many regional and national situations in South American countries, south-east Asia and Afghanistan (UNODC, 2003). Lee III refers to 'guerrillas, whose objective is seizing power (Lee III, p 9). Tullis, 1991, pp 49-95, gives an overview up to the end of the 1980s of 'the rise of a new genre of organised trafficker' within the 'state within a state' paradigm. Woodiwiss, 2001, p 3, refers to 'systematic criminal activity for money or power', mentioning a number of cases in which political motivations became intertwined with drug trafficking – for example that of ex-Gestapo officer Klaus Barbie who in 1951 went to Latin America where he continued his anti-Communist activities, becoming security adviser to top Bolivian trafficker Roberto Suáres in the 1980s and assisting the 1980 coup which brought to power Colonel Gomez, who subsequently oversaw a national cocaine 'monopoly' (ibid, p 367). Whist one could debate the relative importance for specific groups of
political transformation and simply making money, and whilst some groups might slide from one of these to the other, clearly some groups traffic in drugs at least in part in order to fund political and/or military campaigns. The case of Khun Sa, a notorious gangster/criminal/trafficker who formed an alliance with and became the leader of secessionists in the Shan State of Myanmar, typifies this ambiguous stance (see case study under What makes traffickers change? Qualitative studies on vulnerabilities below). However, there is a question mark over the relationship between success in business and success in maintaining political power, insofar as it has been argued by Paoli, 2003, that, in the case of Italy, mafia groups’ concerns with maintaining their local power bases prevented them from fully developing their international businesses and in the longer term contributed to their decline. At an analytic level, it is important to distinguish political power from financial gain for personal enrichment.

The third driver is risk-taking, as noted by ethnographic research and also in some criminological and ethnographic work. The literature points to people who are socially and economically marginal, for whom risk seems a ‘normal’ part of life (Ruggiero, 2000), including some facing debt or coercion (see for example: Zaitch, 2001, 2002). Gruppo Abele, 2003, shows very clearly the involvement of very young, quite inexperienced people in synthetic drug trafficking in Barcelona, Amsterdam and Turin, moving in and out of drug trafficking and other illegal or irregular activities. They do not belong to the criminal underworld, and do not use violence. Because of their low level of criminal skills and precautions, in principle they are rather exposed to law enforcement but, in practice, quite often are not detected as they are not known to LEAs before capture (ibid; see also Harper and Murphy, 2000). The literature also identifies some traffickers who positively value levels of challenge that others would find off-putting. For example, the UK Threat Assessment covering 2002 refers to ‘some criminals [being] ready to take apparently unnecessary risks, and there are various examples of successful criminals getting caught for relatively petty crimes, suggesting either an acceptance or even an appetite for risk-taking’ (NCIS, 2003). Pearson and Hobbs refer to ‘Ronnie and Terry [...] good friends since their schooldays in a middle-sized town in east Midlands, where they lived on a run-down council estate. In the past, as ardent supporters of their local football team, they had been heavily involved in football hooliganism and enjoyed a fearsome reputation’ (Pearson and Hobbs, 2001). Ronnie and Terry subsequently became active in drug trafficking (ibid). Dorn et al., 1998, provide some evidence that, whilst most upper level drug traffickers are ‘risk averse’ (cf business criminals, above), a minority are ‘risk tolerant’ and may be motivated at least in part by the thrill of challenging LEAs (Dorn et al., 1998). The career of Howard Marks, breathtakingly told in his autobiography (Marks, 1998), also illustrates this fun-loving approach to drug trafficking.

Such studies describe people who lived a lifestyle as much as they ran a business. However, excitement is something that many people can have too much of. The classic work on excitement and upper level trafficking is undoubtedly Adler’s ethnography, set within a 1970s ‘sex and drugs’ milieu in the south-western US. This describes a scene in which individuals, couples and friends imported and locally distributed the drugs they themselves consumed – cannabis and cocaine (Adler, 1993, op cit). On seeking out some of these individuals, again in the late 1980s/early 1990s, Adler found that a mix of changing social and political attitudes in the US, plus greatly heightened law enforcement, had encouraged most of those previously involved to quit the business: the risks run had got too great, moving past stimulation to become deterrence (ibid). There are echoes of this in 1980s UK research, for example the ‘trading charities’ described by Dorn et al., 1992, some of whom also quit the business or wound down their activities not only in response to law enforcement but also because the entry of rougher and tougher characters had raised the tempo to an uncomfortable extent, spoiling ‘the good old times’ (ibid).

In summary, the English language literature suggests that toleration of risk may sometimes be a consequence of limited options but may also in some cases reflect personal preferences for excitement, challenge and personal achievement against the odds. Risk-toleration therefore sits alongside political objectives and personal enrichment as drivers of involvement in upper level drug trafficking.

Each of these themes was found within the literatures reviewed, albeit to differing extents. For example, in the Spanish language literature on South America, both financial and political drivers of drug trafficking can clearly be observed. From the end of the 1970s through to 2000, a series of
important changes in Colombian trafficking can be observed (see for example Arrieta, 1990; Bagley, B., 1990; Betancourt & García, 1994; Camacho Guizado, 1988; Kalmanovitz, 1994; Kopp, 1995; Neuman, 1991; Rocha, 1997; cf Zaitch, 2001). Upper level drug trafficking was initially driven by the profit motive, quick gains being achieved by people with a background of 'common delinquency'. Some of these people then began to organise themselves in what became popularly known as 'cartels' (Medellín, Cali) and to behave in a socially and politically ostentatious manner, donating money to good causes and, in a few cases, being elected to the Senate. Their failure to persuade the government to drop US extradition charges led some to mount very serious challenges to the political and judicial systems, with assassinations of key politicians and judges (Strong, 1995, UN, 2004). Eventually, however, key figures in Medellin and Cali gave themselves up, were arrested or killed. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and other paramilitary groups became stronger, using the money generated by drug trafficking in violent pursuit of political changes. Through the 'tasamiento impositivo' (tax) levied on cocaine as well as on poppy, the FARC have obtained an important source of income. Other political groups are also involved (ibid). During the 1990s, as far as exports were concerned, the previous syndicates were replaced by 'traquetos' – a greater number of groups that act in partnerships to carry out exports (Zaitch, 2001). Of this 'second generation' of drug trafficking the authorities have identified 162 groups, of which 40 help to finance guerrilla and self-defence groups (Semana, 2003). The ways in which these groups are structured will be discussed later in this report.

Whereas the literature on Latin America illustrates the involvement of both politico-military and business criminals (personal enrichment) trafficking within and from South America to Europe, the literature on Spain itself suggests that most upper level drug trafficking within the country is done purely for personal enrichment (Blanco, 1997, p 231; Fuentes, 2002, p 13). Many groups are involved in a wide variety of crimes (Fiscalía, 2003): illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in arms, prostitution, illegal immigration, kidnappings, extortion, contraband of automobiles and nuclear materials, fraud, etc. They have a 'business model', a high level of professionalism and operate at the supranational level. There are around 300 criminal groups that have an average of 25 members per group (ibid: 2001 data). These groups, involving Spanish offenders, Colombians and Moroccans (Lobato, 2002, p 47) are mainly situated in the capital and along the Mediterranean coast. They present an increasing degree of organisational complexity in terms of structures and hierarchy, multinationality in membership and trans-nationality in operation. They are involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and other economic crime. They are not very violent and have little access to national institutional and political networks. This closely fits the paradigm of business criminal.

As for the Italian language literature, the general view is that from the 1970s onwards mafia groups in the south of the country used their financial gains from high level drug trafficking to strengthen territorial control over their areas (Violante, 1987, pp 61-69; Arlacchi, 1988, pp 152-153). Nowadays, some high level traffickers still belong to mafia families able to influence local and even national decision-making. However, independent traffickers play an important role and, since the 1980s, mafia in any formal sense have constituted minority elements within Italian drug markets (Becchi, 1996). Financial gain is taken to be the immediate priority for most traffickers in Sicily as elsewhere in Italy. According to Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990, p 122, all actors participate in the drug market to obtain money or drugs. It is generally assumed that upper level traffickers deal with drugs to increase their wealth (DNA, 2002, p 88). For most of them it is simply 'business'.

In the German language literature, references are found to profit for its own sake, to financing liberation movements and/or terrorism, to ethnicity, and to psychological group dynamics of gangs (Thamm 1998; Roth 2000). At the level of production, usually carried out in very remote and difficult-to-control areas, the immediate interests of growers are often protected by some sort of autonomous military or rebel force or militia which is generally quite separate from smuggling and distribution organisations (Hess 1992, p 317, and 1993). In this literature, then, can be found all three ‘types’ discussed throughout this review.

The Dutch language literature emphasises economic/financial aspects. To a lesser extent, examples

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3 In fact there are reasons to be sceptical of the connotations of this term and the term 'syndicate' may be preferable, following Strong (1995) and Lee III (1989).
exist of traffickers that are driven by some form of political aspiration, e.g. the Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK), Afghan organisations, and Shan State traffickers in Indo-China (basis: verbal briefings) and to a certain extent Turkish organised crime (Van Traa, 1996). Challenge to law enforcement is not considered an important category in upper level drug trafficking. Although a single case described a Dutch dealer who was mainly in it for “the thrill” (Van Traa, 1996), this type of motivation is seen as being more relevant to couriers and to street level dealing amongst social and economic deprived youth (basis: verbal briefings by senior law enforcement officer).

Similarly, according to French language sources, upper level traffickers’ priorities are mostly of a pecuniary nature, high levels of profitability achieved in a short time being particularly important to them (Morin, 1991). However, what traffickers do with the money varies somewhat, with two hypotheses having been advanced by Schiray, 1994. The first concerns social assimilation and integration into consumer society, by means of spending on food, clothes, housing and travelling. Relatedly, Duprez et al., 1995, refer to transnational networks using as couriers between Belgium and France people whose opportunities are restricted to the parallel (irregular, ‘grey’) economy and whose economic situation has become desperate. These authors describe ignorance and economic dependence as two key factors in the decision to carry drugs in exchange for financial reward. The second hypothesis of Shiray (op cit) involves turning criminal profits into capital investments (houses, restaurants, discotheques, etc.) from which further profits may be obtained. Social assimilation relates to the category of ‘adventurer’ used in the present review, whilst capital accumulation relates to more the professional business criminals. In parallel to these two dominant types, trafficking is sometimes motivated by the need to reimburse a large debt (ibid). Lastly, in some cases, the money obtained through upper level drug trafficking is used to finance political activity, such as the Independent Basque movement, Corsican independence groups, or Islamic armed groups (sources: Legras, 2000; interview with a magistrate in Tribunal de Grande Instance, Paris). It is possible that bartering takes place in some cases, for example drugs being exchanged for arms. The financing of groups with political objectives by the proceeds of international trafficking can result in the local or national population paying lower ‘revolutionary taxes’ (Crettiez et al., 1999), which may help build support.

**Figure 2.1: Constituting upper level drug markets: traffickers’ backgrounds, concerns and priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politico-military groups</th>
<th>Business criminals</th>
<th>Adventurers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~ support for political objectives. Example: eastern European groups involved in transit</td>
<td>~ focus on personal enrichment. Example: ‘traquetos’ importing into Europe</td>
<td>~ accept that risk is part of life. Example: bringing drugs back from ‘holidays’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... and mixed/merged types</strong></td>
<td></td>
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**Mixed types**

According to the literature of the 1970s, crime does not always travel well: for example, Italian mafiosi who went to the US after being forced out by Mussolini found that their methods did not work well in the New York crime scene, even after they had ‘found their feet’ in this environment (Nelli, 1976, pp 254-5).

However, mixed types, including relations between crime groups and states, are quite commonly referred to in the more recent literature. For example, some groups which were previously of the politico-military type have now totally or in part ‘decayed’ into business criminals whilst retaining their involvements in drug trafficking. One example affecting the UK to some extent is the PKK: see Zürcher, 2001, pp 324-330), regarded as having partially given up on its political ends since the capture and imprisonment in Turkey of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan. The PKK is described by LEA sources as having partially broken down into semi-autonomous core groups which continue to be involved in drug trafficking. Adherence to the Kurdish cause may still be proclaimed, albeit with
relatively little of the proceeds actually going in that direction. Likewise, some Albanian groups, organised around villages of birth, came into many countries of the European Union from the 1980s onwards, 'taxing' some Turkish and other criminal businesses and also supporting the PKK financially, but more recently they appear to give more consideration to their own personal enrichment. However their involvement in the UK appears to be relatively low. On the other side of the political fence, there are many suggestions that in Turkey individuals at all levels of the state – from village guards paid by the state to act as anti-insurgency forces, through groups affiliated to the intelligence services, to politicians in the Cabinet – have been involved in trafficking (see Galleotti, 1998, pp 25-9), although it should be noted that many of the sources relied on are newspapers that are partisan one way or the other and, as Galleotti observes, 'claims of criminal connections are a common and indiscriminate feature of Turkish politics' (ibid, p 29). As for Northern Ireland groups, Silke, 2000, refers to the Loyalist Volunteer Force (UVF) and the development of its income-generating activities, from running drinking dens (and making stolen drink available to them), through robbery (e.g. of banks), through art thefts and on to drug trafficking: importation, distribution and retailing, or the 'licensing' of retail zones via extortion (Silke, 2000; see also Sunday Mail, 11 May, 2003, pp 12-13). Similarly, in a report that is admittedly strong on atmosphere whilst being indirectly sourced, the Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues highlights the alleged involvement of Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in drug trafficking:

‘According to the man who last headed the international apparatus of one of ETA's branches known as ETA Political Military, who spoke to a researcher, the rapprochement of the Basque organization with the underworld was gradual: “Other movements introduced us to organized crime... one day, they tell you: ‘I’ll sell you those 50 Brownings, but you must buy a kilo of heroin from me’... It seems that after a while arms traffickers stopped forcing ETA to buy drugs... however ETA gradually started buying drugs of its own free will so as to maintain its economic potential.’ (Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues, 1998/99)

A development mentioned in briefings by UK LEAs is a repoliticisation of some eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian groups, following the second Gulf War. Whist there is little doubt that such re-politicisation is taking/has taken place, the consequences regarding trends in drug trafficking in order to fund armed struggle are not yet covered by the published literature.

More broadly on trafficking types, a recent United Nations study, supervised by Van Dijk (UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, 2002) designed a questionnaire which was filled out by a number of international collaborating centres. Of the 40 groups reported on, 'a significant proportion [...] have drug trafficking as their main or core activity' (ibid, p 26). Two aspects of the findings are of interest here. First, the reports states: 'One of the potentially most interesting conclusions to be drawn from the data is the degree to which the organized crime groups in the sample have no strong social or ethnic identity [...] it is possible to assert with some degree of certainty that in the majority of cases [surveyed/reported in the survey] criminal groups are not tied together by ethnic linkages' (p 26). Care should be taken in interpreting LEA data on both ethnicity and nationality, a point made by Gregory, 2003, nevertheless the broad conclusion arrived at by the UN here is also noted by the European literature referred to above and is no doubt correct. It will be referred to again in the conclusion (Chapter 3).

Second, the UN report identified five typologies, which it summarised in these terms:

'Standard hierarchy': single hierarchical group with strong internal systems of discipline. 'Regional hierarchy': hierarchically structured groups, with strong internal lines of control and discipline, but with relative autonomy for regional components. 'Clustered hierarchy': a set of criminal groups which have established a system of co-ordination/control, ranging from weak to strong, over all their various activities. 'Core group': a relatively tightly organised but unstructured group, surrounded in some cases by a network of individuals engaged in criminal activities. 'Criminal network': a loose and fluid network of individuals, often drawing on individuals with particular skills, who constitute themselves around an ongoing series of criminal projects. (UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, 2002, p 36)

Of these, the first two categories are not dissimilar from each other and are close to the notion of hierarchy used in the present review. The UN project's 'core group' is very similar to the same-named concept in the present review, and 'networks' is close to adventurers/networks. The category of 'clustered hierarchy' seems conceptually weakest and least supported by the data collected by the UN team, who suggested that it consists of a number of criminal groups; that it has arrangements for 'governing' the groups, with the cluster having a stronger identity its than constituent groups; that its groups have some autonomy; and that is 'relatively rare' (ibid p 39). The reader is referred to the full report for details and case studies. The pertinent point for present purposes is that, empirically, various mixed types are found – indeed no doubt could be multiplied to infinity – but perhaps relatively simple conceptual frameworks are least confusing.

Work being undertaken for the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) on terrorist organisations5 is interesting in the context of this review because (a) several of their case studies involve groups involved in drug trafficking; (b) some of these broadly correspond to the politico-military type; (c) the MOD work suggests that one structure or set of priorities may 'nest in' (inhabit) another.

Drawing upon the published literature, it is clear that some politically-driven groups, such as Shining Path, active in Peru in the 1980s, aim to subordinate the interests of traffickers (traders) to those of farmers (peasants), in accordance with their broader political programme. According to Strong, 1993, Shining Path interpreted its political philosophy as ensuring that peasants obtained a 'fair' price from traffickers; whilst taxing the trade, Shining Path was not itself directly involved in drug trafficking (ibid). Likewise, Lee Ill, 1989, p 13, says: 'Guerillas such as Colombia's FARC and Peru's Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path] may sympathise with peasants, but they see cocaine dealers as part of the property-owning classes and as fair game for extortion'. Clearly, relationships between such groups and profit-orientated traffickers can be problematic.

Economists Friman and Andreas, 1991, p 11, discuss corruption in the following terms:
- as penetration of crime groups by the state, the latter imposing an informal 'tax' on crime;
- as fusion, when crime effectively becomes a 'public enterprise' (as for example with the Noriega regime in Panama: see for example Vásquez, 1992);
- and as negotiation, where crime groups negotiate terms with the state (e.g. Colombia in past decades: ibid, p 13, see also Scott and Marshall, op cit, pp 65-72).

Similar to the concept of the state taxing trafficking groups is that of 'franchising' by states, said by Lupsha, 1999, p 15, to characterise 1990s conditions in a list of countries, although justification for the list is not given. A broadly similar perspective is cast by Fiorentini and Peltzman, 1995, and contributors to their edited volume.

Summarising, the literature suggest that linkages between traffickers and states may sometimes be high in the case of those traffickers described here as politico-military; no more than moderate in the case of business criminals (discussed further below); and generally absent in the case of adventurers.

**Organisational structures and their degrees of permanence**

**The debate on the early US literature**

This has been an area of controversy for reasons which are sometimes politically coloured, sometimes technical. Relating to nationality, for example:

- in the early post-Second World War period, many US authors described monopolistic tendencies and strongly-bounded organisations, notably the Italian mafia and US offshoots thereof (see for example Anderson, 1979). Much of this early work is not only politically coloured, given the atmosphere of the times, it also relies almost entirely on particular law enforcement sources (testimony to political panels and to the media). It bears the marks of 'case construction' and plea

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5 Ministry of Defence, soft systems analysis, 2003. Unfortunately for the possibilities of integration of that work and this open-source literature, only a brief verbal outline was available at the time of drafting this review.
bargaining (see Introduction), with some criminals agreeing to give evidence of large-scale
conspiracies, in order to attract more lenient treatment for themselves;

• other researchers say that early post-Second World War US 'mafia' perspectives were grounded
in part at least in concerns about foreignness and immigration and that, whether such
perspectives may have fitted the facts or not in the past, they do not any longer. As Albini et al.
1999, have put it, 'we can no longer afford to use ethnocentric and unscientific stereotypes'.
Whilst this proposition is undoubtedly true, it is worth unbundling the concept of criminal
organisation and questions about degrees of permanence from any assumptions about ethnicity.
This is the approach taken here.

More neutrally, and drawing upon research interviews rather than upon court cases (although access
to interviewees was typically through LEAs), some US researchers say that those that were
conventionally described as strongly hierarchical, secretive and dangerous groups ('mafia in North
American the context) were in reality looser criminal associations.

• Reuter is a well known advocate of this view, repudiating the idea that a mafia exists in the US in
the sense of an all-powerful structure in crime markets, and making the sensible point that 'it
does no public policy good to make a mockery of the term "organised crime" by assuming that all
that requires organisation includes enduring conspiracy' (Reuter, 1984, p 187). Indeed so, and as
Reuter's own work suggests, the proper question is one about degrees of permanence – days,
weeks, months, years, decades – rather than a forced choice between perpetual arrangements
or none at all.

• Specifically on upper level drug markets in the US, Reuter and Haaga, 1989, described a
situation very much of individuals working alone or in small groups, and a complete lack of
monopolistic-style control by any larger and more permanent groups. Similarly, Adler's 1970s
ethnography of hippe-type importers of marijuana and cocaine found that they did not have the
'commitment' to establish organisations (Adler, 1993, p 81; cf Dorn et al., 1992, on 'trading
charities'). Trafficking involvements were 'temporary' (ibid, p 141), arrangements adhoc. Adler
however makes no claims that these characteristics apply outside the milieu she observed.
Indeed this is a general caveat: what one finds depends on where and how one looks.

The present reviewers suggest that, in addressing the question of criminal organisation, it is
important to distinguish between the continuing membership of a group (key members) and others
who may be involved from time to time. Relatedly, US police practitioner-research from the 1990s
(Fuentes, 1998) points to quite large, hierarchical organisations, organised in cells, the members of
which have little knowledge of the rest of the organisation. This research suggests that, for some
trafficking groups, whilst the cells may change, the core may persist over many years. Similar
findings are found in the European literature (see below).

The reviewers also suggest that debates on criminal organisation should include some consideration
of possible impacts of law enforcement. This however is easier said than done. According to some
parts of the research literature (US and European, see below), the general impact of law
enforcement is to fragment upper level trafficking. This is said to occur because larger and more
permanent groups/organisations might be in principle more vulnerable to law enforcement. However
this proposition has never been empirically demonstrated. Furthermore, some researchers advance
the contrary proposition: that at least some ongoing security arrangements (to be described in Three
approaches to security below) are required for those who wish to enjoy the fruits of crime, and that
such arrangements in themselves may amount to a degree of organisational permanence. Lee III,
1989, pp 100-102, suggests that large and ongoing organisations will be vulnerable unless they can
maintain secrecy or, if that meets its limits, pay off LEA staff or, if that fails, at least have an
intelligence capability to warn of coming operations.

These considerations from the US literature – the meaning of criminal 'organisation', possible
distinctions between core and non-core, the debate over nationality, the danger of generalising from
a few dramatic examples to the market as a whole, and the question of security arrangements – find
echoes within European work.
The European literature

There is notable literature on the UK which emphasises absence or impermanence of structures in drug trafficking. Many traffickers work as individuals, couples and acquaintances, networking to seeking out contacts and resources as needed. The work of Hobbs and colleagues, focusing upon individuals, friends and family members, and networking with others in crime markets, deserves special mention: Hobbs, 1998; Hobbs and Dunnighan, 1998; and Hobbs, 2000. This line of work has been developed by Coles, 2001, and Klerks, 2003.

However, the literature also describes other players. A first step up in organisational complexity and degrees of permanence is found in the core groups – the core being the principal(s), main assets and in some cases key managers – which take on specialist and other 'staff' as required for particular pieces of work. Some authors describe a quite sophisticated division of labour, with 'contracting' of specialist competencies when required, keeping out of the clutches of law enforcement through appropriate security arrangements, and a management function (Halstead, 1998, pp 12-16). Groups co-operate in what have been described as 'a system of alliances and joint ventures', 'a pooling of resources', or a 'confederation of necessity' (Bequai, 1979, p 6; see also Albini, 1986, p 93).

The evidence on which of these patterns may be most typical of upper level trafficking in Europe is ambiguous. However there do seem to have been some changes over time. For example, summarising a range of research studies conducted during the 1980s throughout Europe, Fijnaut, 1991, initially drew a sharp distinction between criminal groups in southern Europe and the United States. In northern Europe:

‘there are groups that can be typified as criminal organizations, on a limited, sliding scale, but with the following qualifications. […] … no question of the use of systematic corruption and violence against “outsiders” to build up a position of power […], no question of a structural grip on the legal economy...’ (ibid, pp 21-22).

In that overview, Fijnaut drew inter alia upon work carried out in the 1980s by the German police, describing 'a network of professional criminals in which sometimes a single person or a group of persons fill key roles on a permanent basis and in which members work frequently together in certain jobs and projects' (Rebscher and Vahlenkanp, 1988). This is very close to the UK literature on drug trafficking in that period: referring to the same period, Dorn et al., 1992, refer to 'criminal diversifiers' as those who, having learnt their criminal skills in other avenues of crime, began to apply them to drug trafficking from the 1970s onwards. The backgrounds and careers of these ‘professional' criminals have been described from a variety of perspectives, see for example the collection edited by Hobbs, 2001. Dorn et al., 1992, also referred, on the basis of wide-ranging fieldwork and consultations, to a variety of other traffickers: business people in various occupations who got involved in trafficking, 'idealistic' people who believed in the trade (especially cannabis), and others (ibid). The point for present purposes is that no large organisations were found at that time and the tightly bounded ones observed were new to drug trafficking and in a clear minority.

However, things can change with time. By the end of the 1990s, Fijnaut and his colleagues were describing a scene in which such groups rubbed shoulders with a range of others:

‘The first aspect that we noticed was how widely varied they were. They range from small offshoots of the classic transnational crime groups through loosely-structured Dutch networks and authoritatively-run families of foreign descent to small cliques of otherwise legitimate businessmen […] the widest variety is observed in the drug trade...’ (Fijnaut et al., 1998, p 123).

Similarly, Dorn and colleagues, 1998, researching a little over a decade after their earlier work, found evidence of tightly bounded drug trafficking groups importing heroin and cocaine into the UK, alongside looser groupings, couples and individuals. By that time it was clear to all that the break-up of the USSR and civil wars on the south-eastern borders of Europe were contributing to the diversity of drug trafficking groups in Europe (Lewis, 1998, pp 223-7). From further afield, groups linked to source zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Far East (notably Myanmar) and central Asia...
(notably Pakistan and Afghanistan) were increasingly involved in importation into and dealing within European countries, alongside western and eastern European groups. A question mark hangs over the extent of involvement in drug trafficking into Europe via Russia (Lee III, 1995). All in all, things have become more mixed, more international.

During the 1990s, as drug trafficking continued to expand internationally, the research debate over organisational and market structures shifted into this new terrain: were some of the groups based outside the European Union more hierarchical and more permanent than (northern) European ones? Whilst some authors replied affirmatively, others maintained that, whilst strongly bounded criminal structures might in the past have been important in at least some of these international drug markets, by the late 1990s more fluid groupings had taken their place. This view is premised particularly on observations on the rise of many different 'independent' Colombian operators, following the demise of the 1980s syndicates first in Medellín and then in Cali. One proposition is that, prior to their respective declines, the Medellín and Cali groups had been 'cartels'. Some authors disagree, saying that Medellín and Cali were two loose groupings or syndicates (Lee III, 1989, and Strong, 1995). According to Lee III, 1989, pp 99-102 and 99-153, it was always 'confusing' to call these groups 'cartels' since they were certainly not cartels in the economic sense. Rather, they were 'entrepreneurial' groups with a 'core element' (p 105) and a capability for 'concerted action' (p 100) and they might better be described as 'syndicates' (ibid). It is reported that this was well appreciated by US agency staff members who introduced the term 'cartel' into the public debate (Strong, 1995).

Another reason for caution is that some contributors to the literature have noted a continuing process of production of new 'mafia'-like groups, i.e. highly organised groups in regions and countries of continuing conflict. Even in countries and regions which have become rather more stable, this may in some cases have been achieved through mutual accommodation or alliances between the state and particular traffickers (Peru in the 1990s, also Myanmar in the 1990s, see What makes traffickers change? Qualitative studies on vulnerabilities below).

In the German language literature, there is a conflict of views between academic and more popular sources, with the focus of this disagreement being whether there are truly global drug trafficking organisations/monopolies. According to academic sources, there may be co-operation between smuggling groups operating globally, but this co-operation has been described as usually being transitory (Hess 1992, 1993). LEAs do their best to keep such groups from building structures which could in any way be comparable to oligarchies (Hartmann, 2003). In any case, Germany-based groups do not have the necessary human capital to sustain global organisations. Groups and organisations remain decentralised and even disorganised, highly competitive and prone to destructive gang struggles (ibid). By contrast with these academic sources, popular accounts portray trafficking as being in the hands of a few large enterprises which, reflecting structures in the legal economy, operate as global players (Bundesminister des Innern, 1990; Bundestag, 1991). This perspective is supported by several journalistic books (Thamm, 1989; Thamm & Katzung, 1994; Roth 2000, 2002; Wichmann, 1992) which paint a picture of systematic intertwining of organised crime, the financial systems and the political system. A somewhat apocalyptic perspective has been advanced, in which the various drug mafias will at some time form one conglomerate and exert global power (Roth 2000, 2002).

In the Dutch language literature, too, there is some disagreement on organisational structure. As for change over time, in spite of some follow-up studies, research methods have not been adequate to draw any conclusions about changes in organisational structure or level of permanence. Some evidence is compatible with the proposition of a shift from predominantly high permanence organisations to the current situation in which high, medium and low levels of permanence exist simultaneously and side by side (basis: discussions with senior law enforce personnel).

According to French language sources, when quantities of drugs being trafficked are large (over one tonne for cannabis and several hundred kilograms for cocaine and heroin) then the stakes are high and organisers wish to have competent people involved (source: interview with the head of OCTRIS). As a result, in general, involvement within this level of drug markets is on the basis of specialisms. For example, individuals who specialise in armed robberies may take part in some drug transporting operations, or other security or warehousing operations (Colombié, Lalam and Schiray, 1999). The porous nature of boundaries between different illegal activities has been shown in another study.
(Colombié, Lalam and Schiray, 2000). Since not all specialisms will be contained within a group, contracting- out of key tasks is common. Throughout the last twenty years, two different types of contracting out (French: *externalisation*) seem to have taken place in the organisation of upper level drug trafficking (Ferreira, 2002). The first can be described as weak externalisation. Here, most roles are kept ‘in house’, within the group. The second type of externalisation, said to be stronger, corresponds to flexible, multi-layered structures (Rapports OCRB, 1999, 2000). Here, it is clear that externalisation occurs as a result of a building up of trust, through fulfilment of small contracts at first.

The Spanish language literature on 'traquetos' – Colombian groups currently involved in the production and international trafficking of cocaine – also refers to specialisms. One group controls precursors, another laboratories, another routes, and another laundering the money and managing investments ('testaferros': front men). The chain, in addition, is made up of financial accountants, lawyers, smugglers, pilots, advisers, bodyguards and hired gunmen with a background of common criminality who are in charge of internal controls and the settling of scores. Reportedly, at least 4,000 traquetos work in the business (Semana, 2003). This new generation has links with organised groups in Mexico. Action by the authorities including against money laundering has forced the new networks to constitute small regional structures, working in partnership to make shipments. An enquiry carried out by Colombian and American authorities found that some traffickers use the Internet to get in contact with each other, using firewalls to protect their communications (JIFE, 2001).

The Italian literature contains several views, based on sustained attempts to identify the dynamics of criminal group formation. According to Arlacchi, 1988, p 149, there were permanent groups on the Italian heroin market of the 1980s. They then had competitive advantages in relation to three main resources: the financial resources necessary to start trading on a significant scale (although this point has been criticised by Becchi and Turvani, 1993, p 89, who remark that it is not difficult for traffickers to find “upperworld finance” for their activities); the capability to avoid police action (such as abilities to maintain secrecy, to corrupt public officials and/or gaining political protections); and capabilities in relation to violence (useful to discourage competitors and possible witnesses in any future court cases). Nowadays, mafia groups maintain a very high permanence in Italy, and participate in trafficking networks at every level. According to Paoli, in northern Italy, professional traffickers who do not belong to mafia or other specific groups can also have high permanence. They are specialists who take roles in trafficking crews, their composition changing over time. Some crews are active for one or two transactions, others continue for longer periods, albeit with new components (Paoli, 2001, p 3). However, Becchi and Turvani, 1993, p 98, are convinced that, generally speaking, permanence "does not pay": the longer illegal activity continues, the greater the possibility of interception by the police. Whether this is true or not, there have been many new entrants. Since the beginning of the 1990s new drug markets (such as the synthetic drug market: Gruppo Abele/Massari et al., 2003) and traditional ones (such as the cocaine and marijuana markets: DGSA, 2002) have been supplied by a growing number of importers/dealers of different social and national backgrounds. They have relationships with producer or transit countries. According to law enforcement officials, the market is much more fragmented and diversified than before (verbal briefing by police officials). However, evidence for an increase of ephemeral enterprise over permanent ones is not robust. Overall, according to a verbal briefing by a high ranking police official, permanence is very difficult to assess.

Summing up on organisational and structural trends over time, on the basis of the English, Dutch, French, German, Italian and Spanish language literatures, it is not easy to come to neat conclusions. Hierarchies and tightly structured organisations come and go. Core groups, drawing in specialists, affiliates and others to do particular jobs, existed in the past and do today. Networking between players is vital today but it was no less so previously. On the basis of the literature, it can be said is that there is variety, as summarised in Figure 2.2.

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7 Briefing, Rome, 30 May 2003.
Figure 2.2: Constituting upper level drug markets: diverse organisational structures and degrees of permanence

| Strongly defended hierarchies, openly operating in their own areas; using cells or 'representatives' outside. | Core groups, centred on relations between principals, durable over several years; others being drawn in as and when needed for specific projects. | Individuals and friends drifting in the market (may sometimes work for core groups). |
| Permanence: high (decades). | Permanence: medium (years). | Permanence: low (mutating by the month or week). |

Positioning in drug markets, other forms of crime and geography

Drug market 'niches', vertical integration and opportunistic variations

It is possible to conceptualise a dimension of vertical integration, running from weak (traffickers are only ever involved at a particular level of upper level drugs markets, i.e. source or exportation or international transit or EU importation or internal EU cross-national or distribution therein), to strong (traffickers groups trade 'end to end', from source down to close to or actually including retail).

However, it is less easy to provide evidence on this question. No English language study is known to have addressed this point in a specific and focused manner with reference to the UK. The best that could be said on the basis of the English language research literature (Dorn et al., 1998; Dorn et al., 1992; Harnden, 1999; Hobbs and D unnighan, 1998; Hobbs, 1998; Pearson and Hobbs, 2001; Ruggiero, 2000) is that all patterns of involvement have been observed. Likewise, LEA reporting (NCIS, 2003) points to a rather mixed – indeed shifting – picture. Three possibilities are summarised in Figure 2.3, including an intervening possibility and opportunistic variation (trafficker does a number of trades at a particular level, then does some across levels).

Figure 2.3: Constituting upper level drug markets: vertical integration

| Specific and fixed levels or niches in drug markets: production or export or transit or distribution (depending on political base). Clean splits between levels of drug markets | Moderate vertical integration: some production groups also involved in export; some exporting groups have EU presence, some UK distributors go to source zones, etc. | Strong vertical integration: 'end to end', from source to EU/UK regional 'hub' distribution, occasionally down to retail (unusual for UK). |
| Opponistic positioning: any part of the market ~ also common for UK, especially for 'adventurers'. |

Likewise, scrutiny of other language literatures suggests a rather varied picture. Available Dutch language sources address the question of vertical integration mainly through the question of nationality or other background of trafficking groups: Turkish groups and their stake in the heroin market; Colombian groups and their stake in the cocaine market; Moroccan crime groups and their stake in the illegal trade in hashish; and Dutch networks and their synthetic drug specialisation (basis: verbal briefings by senior law enforcement officer, in combination with Ministerie van Justitie, 2001). The literature indicates that trafficking groups, operating in different parts of drug markets, can be driven by the opportunities that present themselves (Van Traa, 1996).
Likewise, in the Italian language literature, vertical integration is quite often described by police, less so by academics. Examples are some Italian networks managed by 'ndrangheta (or other mafia-type) members who directly organise and supervise import activities in source countries and manage all the phases of distribution into northern and southern Italy. Vertical integration strategies have been developed by large Nigerian groups (cocaíne from Latin America producers to Italian consumers, see DIA, 2000), smaller groups from Albania (marijuana produced in Albania to Italian consumers, see DIA, 1999) and even from China (cocaíne and ecstasy bought in the Netherlands and Colombia for the Chinese community living in Italy: see DNA, 2002, p 129; verbal briefing by law enforcement officials). All of them keep a strict control over all of the commercial chain: from purchase or production sites, to transportation into Italy and the final distribution channels. Other sources, however, maintain that vertical integration is rare and short-term (Becchi and Turvani, 1993, p 88). These authors emphasise the 'untidy' nature of the Italian market, with 'ant trafficking', traffickers from source and transit countries, and independent and mafia networks co-existing in the same arena (Becchi, Turvani, 1993, pp 106-112). Italian national (mafia groups and others) and foreign traffickers occupy different niches of the market and co-operate to maximise gains and minimise risks (Santino, 2002; and Jamieson 2002). Foreign nationals are increasingly specialised in the import operations, Italians in large wholesale distribution. However, the divisions of roles are often blurred, and mixed groups may act in different parts of the market, depending on opportunity.

Broadly speaking, French traffickers historically and today seem to have occupied an intermediate level of the international market. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the police and media were kept busy by the 'French connection': refining of base morphine into heroin and its transportation from French laboratories to North America (Lambert et al, 1972). Teams of traffickers forged close links 'upstream' with morphine suppliers in the Near and Middle East and 'downstream' with criminal groups in North America (ibid). Corsicans have been implicated in criminal organisations of the Cosa Nostra type which operate in North America, and Franco-Armenians have had contacts with Turks and Syrians. At the end of the 1990s, a weakening heroin market contributed to an increase in demand for cannabis and an increase in small-scale trafficking in cannabis. Some of those traffickers gradually moved upmarket to wholesale trafficking, either going to the south of Spain in order to get supplies or settling in the regions of Malaga and Marbella, in order to look after warehousing, security, despatch of supplies in vehicles, etc. (Duprez et al, 2000). Some are working for themselves, others are representatives of particular groups. In any case, the structure of the heroin market feeding into France seems to be relatively complex, with many (possibly shifting) 'levels'. By contrast, in respect of synthetic drugs, fewer people are involved between production and final sale. In the south of France, a lab producing MDMA was dismantled in the second half of the 1990s. The investigation showed that persons buying precursors and distributing pills in discothèques were actually part of the same organisation (Colombié, 2000).

According to the Spanish literature, there are groups of traffickers which operate at all levels of the market – production, international transit, wholesale, and down to city level – as well as groups operating at specific levels, depending on opportunities. According to Resa-Nestares, 1990, p 49, 'Spanish groups have served primarily as second-level subsidiaries in drug trafficking'. Prospects for easy money laundering are said to have assisted the growth of organised crime in Spain, together with its geography and language (linkage to Latin America), a tradition of smuggling in parts of the country, government's favourable attitude to investments, familiarity of the banking system with cash transactions, partly due to tourism, and many LEAs without much co-ordination (ibid, pp 57-59).

It seems safe to conclude that each of the patterns described in figure 2.3 above exists generally in Europe and in trafficking into the UK. However, the relative weight of these patterns is not clear and may vary somewhat from drug to drug as well as from time to time.

Drug trafficking and other types of crime

For the UK situation in the late 1990s, a short internal paper of HMCE, 1999, asked whether cannabis smugglers are moving into cigarette smuggling. It identifies four patterns of smuggling:
cannabis only; cigarettes only; cannabis and cigarettes; and cigarette runs to fund cannabis trafficking (‘diversifying’ as the team describes it). It concluded that although the available cases indicate some interconnectedness, and possibly some movement of cannabis smugglers into cigarettes, at that time ‘such movements are not extensive’ (ibid).

A primary source for the UK is NCIS’s annual UK Threat Assessment. Successive editions have concluded that half or more of the organised crime groups in the UK which are known to LEAs are involved in more than one kind of criminal activity (NCIS, 2003). In particular, drug traffickers are involved in a range of other forms of crime (ibid). This may be an increasing trend (i.e. from involvement in one type of crime, to involvement in several).

It should be noted that some apparently ‘independent’ research is rather indebted to LEA sources, so corroboration can have a rather circular quality. For example, work conducted at European and international levels by Schloendhardt, 1999 and by Adamoli et al., 1998, contends that there is a link between drug trafficking and trafficking in persons. Schloendhardt suggests that ‘strong connections have been found between drug and migrant trafficking activities’, and that ‘large transnational networks often follow well-tested routes which are also used for drug trafficking and smuggling [of persons]’. Adamoli says that a ‘horizontal interconnection can be seen in the activities of Turkish organised crime groups, which use the wider network of corruption created while conducting their classic illegal activities (drug trafficking, protection, prostitution, the sale of false documents) to undertake their relatively new activity of alien trafficking from Eastern and Central Asia to Western Europe’ (pp 17-18). Adamoli also contends that Eastern European crime groups are undertaking trafficking in both people and drugs, and are active in the UK. These opinions have as their basis ‘talks with law enforcement agencies in many European countries’ (p 37). Somewhat similarly, Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues, 1998/99, provides anecdotal evidence of links between tobacco and cigarette smuggling. It states that the ‘use of contraband cigarettes networks by cocaine traffickers ... has become a structural feature of trafficking in Galicia today. Thus, the ton of cocaine seized in Galicia ‘belonged to a connection specialising in American cigarettes’ (ibid, p 2). The report goes much further in saying that such ‘mixed networks’ have become ‘a trafficking method popular all over the world’.

A variety of independent UK research studies explore a seemingly general tendency for illicit and licit markets to merge. Sutton and others, 1998, have brought together quite extensive quantitative survey data from the British Crime Survey with some limited qualitative perspectives derived from interviews with buyers and sellers of stolen goods. Whilst the research does not have a direct bearing on the question of higher level interconnectedness of crime markets, it would be compatible with a general thesis that theft, drug use-driven crime, fencing, drug trafficking and other crimes are somewhat intertwined at both lower and upper levels. Similarly, Ruggiero's work regarding London in the 1990s describes broad strata of criminality from the streets upwards, and is notable for its emphasis on continuities between and also movement of individuals between licit and illicit economies (‘occupational commuting’: Ruggiero, 2000, p 12). Likewise, in relation to the Netherlands, Van Duyne states:

‘The permeability of and interaction with the legitimate industry can take diverse forms. [...] we have seen wholesale drug dealers have gained experience with the upper world economy because of their need for companies (usually for transport) and for laundering their criminal profits. The next step - [to] enter the market of legal goods and services - may therefore not be too big. [...] In this way some marihuana dealers entered the [grey] meat industry with starting capital from their drug enterprise. Some continued their drug trafficking activities next to their upper world meat trade; frozen food transportation [has] the advantage that drugs can be concealed in a manner that make detection by 'sniffer dog[s]' difficult. Some drug dealers also entered the construction industry as subcontractors by defrauding the Inland Revenue service and the social insurance agencies... [...] and some of the crime entrepreneurs shifted to upper world business opportunities, like VAT import-export fraud between the Netherlands and Belgium and VAT fraud involving gold. [...] I also regularly observed German and English participation.’ (Van Duyne, 1991)
An unpublished review by Dorn, 2000, analysed the above sources and others as far as the late 1990s. It suggested that ‘crossovers’ between drug trafficking and other forms of criminality may be most commonly found amongst providers of specialist services (security, counter-surveillance, money laundering, etc.) to core groups, because such specialists may be contracted by one crime group, then by another. However that is presented more as a hypothesis drawn from secondary data than as a firm conclusion.

In conclusion, a minority of drug trafficking groups might in principle restrict themselves to drugs, forgoing other opportunities. This may be the case particularly for groups which are vertically integrated, source-to-street: for the US, Natarajan and Belanger, 1998, describe such a pattern and there may be examples in Europe, for example concerning importations of crack. However the European literature suggest that a more common pattern is an openness to be involved in other crimes too, as opportunities present themselves.

Geographical location of core functions

Some rather obvious generalities can safely be made on the basis of the literature, such as core functions of cocaine exporting groups being more commonly located in the western than eastern hemisphere. Beyond that, few general statements can be made about geographical location of core trafficking functions. This is partly because geographical locations of core functions can change over time, partly because different types of trafficker utilise geography in different ways (including in order to maximise safety), and partly because much of the current information is operational intelligence.

In the English language literature, the location of the principals (owners, beneficiaries) is often different from that of operational management (of trafficking and/or production). For example Colombian, Asian or Eastern European criminal entrepreneurs may find a margin of safety in those countries, whilst their operational managers necessarily have to travel more widely (NCIS, 2003). Similarly, according to the Spanish literature, the strategy is usually to locate management functions and production in countries with lower risk, where they have some control over the institutional environment. The Dutch language literature distinguishes between the following: groups with headquarters in production countries; groups with headquarters in countries where drugs are illegally traded and consumed; and groups involved in a variety of smuggling activities (Van Traa, 1996). Turning briefly to synthetic drugs, the Italian literature suggests that the early European laboratories were operated by individuals and small groups who were also the principals (working for themselves), located particularly in the Benelux countries (Gruppo Abele/Massari et al., 2003, p 43), this location being due to local smuggling traditions (prior to the formation of the Common Market) and alleged police corruption in Belgium (Korf and Verbaeck, 1993, p 152). Subsequently, synthetic drug production has become more geographically widespread, as indeed has opium poppy cultivation and heroin production (coca and cocaine less so).

In summary, as time goes on, it is increasingly difficult to make neat and tidy statements about geographical locations of either the principals, financial assets, production facilities or transit routes.

Three approaches to security: seclusion, violence, ‘trust your luck’

Seclusion, counter-surveillance, misinformation, corruption

On a general note, and not surprisingly, the literature emphasises the learning capabilities of drug traffickers. If law enforcement does X, then at least some traffickers will notice and will respond with either -X (a neutralisation) or Y (adaptation via a novel approach): see for example Cave and Reuter, 1988, pp vi-viii; Hess, 1992; Kenny, 1999; Dorn et al., 1992, 1998; and for criminals generally, Edwards and Gill, 2002. This learning process also goes on within trafficking groups, and between groups because of interactions between them in and around the market and within prison (Kleemans and van de Bunt, 1999; Kenny, 1999), a point to be returned to at the end of this review.11

11 LEA briefings refer to trafficker learning via specialist solicitors but no literature focused on that topic was encountered and it was not part of this brief to start digging though cases.
One consequence, noted by national studies (see reportage on the French Dutch, German, Italian and Spanish literatures, preceding sections) and by international research projects (UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, 2002, p 26) is the breakdown of linguistic, national, ethnic and cultural barriers between traffickers. This means that traffickers with diverse origins find it increasingly easy to learn from each other’s transnational and trans-regional experiences; beyond that, they find it easier to work together (a point taken up later).

Most traffickers do their best to keep a low profile, as illustrated by the following ‘rules for dealing’.
1. Do not use [drugs].
2. Do not keep drugs close at hand.
3. Select customers carefully.
4. Keep your identity secret.
5. Keep a low profile and lead a modest life (Tamura, 1992, pp 11-12). Another ‘primer’, attributed to the Cali group, gives advice including keeping the lawn cut, going to the movies and generally acting like regular folks (cited in Kenny, 1999, p 106). These are the most elementary aspects of security (and it is a measure of adventurers that they tend to break them).

Whilst such general advice is applicable to all involved in trafficking, additional safeguards apply for business criminal/core groups and European ‘branches’ or cells of politico-military groups. Research suggests that ‘cut outs’ between the principals (core) and more exposed parts of such groups is typically achieved by having a ‘Number Two’ who is reliable, shields the identity and operational methods of core persons from non-core ‘employees’, competitors and LEAs, and can be trusted not to betray them if captured (Dorn, Oette and White 1998; Zaitch, 2001, 2002; Colombié et al., 1999).

The literature also refers to specific aspects of security employed by many groups within Europe, utilising tactics in movement and communications and feeding (mis)information to LEAs.

- Precautions involving communications and movements include the one-time or very short-term use of mobile phones (increasingly common), discussing business matters in public places that are too noisy to be ‘bugged’ and, when travelling on foot or by transport, exercising simple precautions to see if one is being followed (Colombié, 2002, 2003; Marks, 1998).

- Evasion tactics, using feints and gestures to divert any LEAs that may be watching away from drugs and the money are routine (McLagan, 2003, describes several in passing, see also Marks, 1998, and Dorn et al., 1998). One reported for France (Colombié et al., 1999) is for a person to be paid to let himself be caught by enforcement agencies whilst carrying (for example) thousands of pills which look as if they might be ecstasy. The arrest is provoked at the time when many LEA operational and laboratory staff are off duty or when there is a change of rota, so taking up the attention of a maximum proportion of LEA resources. Whilst the lab is carrying out the analysis of a sample, and whilst investigators are chasing false leads given them by the suspect, traffickers move the actual drugs.

- Traffickers use various surveillance and counter-surveillance techniques on enforcement agencies (Colombié et al., 1999). In situations of importance to traffickers, LEAs are carefully watched by observers using methods with the same level of sophistication as police officers (infrared glasses, cameras, video cameras, etc.). Scanners make it possible to receive radio transmissions from police cars and to find out where they are on the road. In the field, traffickers use two cars: the driver of reconnaissance vehicle A detects where police are and, using CB radio, warns vehicle B, which is carrying drugs.

- Feeding misinformation to LEAs, for example via informants, tasked to mislead (Dorn et al., 1998). Until recently, in the UK at least, informant handing was not very strongly managed, as noted by a study by the National Crime Squad, 1998. For example, ‘A significant number of low grade operations were embarked upon [...] simply to maintain police credibility with the informant. There was also anecdotal evidence suggesting informants "controlling" their handlers’ (ibid, p 12). This was seen as an aspect of the broader problem of police resource-
allocation being insufficiently tightly managed (ibid). Tightening up of procedures has since taken place within the context of RIPPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act).

- Feeding true but distracting information to LEAs. This may include sacrifices of adventurers or of serious competitors (Dorn et al., 1998) and may also sometimes involve corrupt officers acting in concert with informants and other criminals (McLagan, 2003). A form of diversion is described by Colombié et al., 1999. Established and well-financed traffickers recruit a small team of less adroit traffickers, co-operating in trade with them for a short time whilst keeping them at arms length, then passing information on them to the police. When the arrested group looks for a legal defence team, it finds that the best ones have been retained by the more sophisticated traffickers. (Often an advocate will be reluctant to act for several groups of traffickers at the same time, a reluctance that recently may have been increased by concern amongst solicitors about allegations of money laundering and the potential for confiscation of legal fees derived from criminal sources.) The police are thereby assisted to 'get a result' and the more established trafficking firm goes forward (ibid).

- In addition to this 'external' type of surveillance, the literature refers to traffickers' 'internal' of surveillance of police agencies, by way of corruption (Korf and Verbaeck, 1993, p 152; Resa-Nestares, 1999; Colombié et al., 1999, pp 57-59; McLagan, 2003). A recent case before the UK Court of Appeal, following a reference to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, 2003, illustrates aspects of the problem. It is difficult to get evidence of such corruption because of threats of violence (Colombié et al., 1999), and/or linkages between corrupt officers and traffickers (ibid), and/or 'closing of ranks' that historically has occurred in units within LEAs which are investigated for suspected corruption (McLagan, 2003). On the closing of ranks, a corrupt but repentant officer from the UK's then South East Regional Crime Squad explained that: "I mean, for an officer to become an informant against other officers is a horrendous step to take, because he faces being ostracised throughout the police service. Since the day I joined, there's been this musketeers' attitude. All for one and one for all. You just don't grass up your mates." (Detective Constable Neil Putman, cited in McLagan, 2003, p 192; for context see ibid pp 185-206). It is claimed for the UK that, whereas corruption of some LEA units previously had an institutional character, involving many or most officers within some unit, nowadays it is more a case of individuals (ibid).

One possible implication that can only be noted in this review is the difficulty that is raised for any typology of upper level drug trafficking that does not link at least one category or subcategory of traffickers to informants, including participating informants and LEA staff who may act in an unprofessional and/or frankly corrupt manner in relation to those informants and other criminals.

It would take further work to develop this. The UK literature to some extent discusses organisational factors (National Crime Squad, 1998) and cultural factors within LEAs (McLagan, 2003) that may open the door to corruption and hence encourage LEA-corrupting drug traffickers. The non-UK literature pays more attention than the UK literature to the broader social, cultural and political conditions that either support or reduce corruption. For example the studies of Italian mafia by Schneider and Schneider, 2003, suggest that corruption thrives when historical circumstances favour the emergence of ambiguous intermediaries between the state and local populations, when economic crisis discourages investment in the licit economy, and when unregulated or under-regulated channels facilitate enjoyment of the proceeds of crime (see also Naylor, 1989). Thoumi, 1999, draws attention to the importance of concomitant social attitudes, including admiration for those who 'make it'. Schneider and Schneider, 2003, comment on the rarity of moments of 'transparency' regarding corruption, an example being the 'clean hands' movement in Italy in the 1980s, propelled by public revulsion over murders of public figures. Public support for action against Pablo Escobar in Colombia in the 1980s (Strong, 1995) provides another example. Something similar happened in Peru in 2000, as the Fujimori government fell amongst allegations of corruption and complicity in drug trafficking (Catán, 2003). In May 2001, the president of the Supreme Court and nine senior judges were removed from their posts over alleged links with former intelligence chief Montesinos. Mr Montesinos himself was apprehended on charges of drug trafficking, arms dealing and human rights violations. A Peruvian Supreme Court judge issued an international arrest warrant for former president Alberto Fujimori, self-exiled in Japan (ibid and also Chawla et al., forthcoming, Chapter 4). Understanding the embeddedness of upper level drug trafficking in political and social
attitudes towards public tolerance/intolerance of crime may be helpful for the development of prevention policy.

Violence: diverse sources

A useful review of organised crime and violence has been published by Hobbs (2004). In relation to upper level drug trafficking, as can be seen from the first two sections of this chapter, in an analytic sense the broad category of violence may to be broken down into several categories, including: political violence (transformational violence by politico-military groups); violence against the judiciary etc. (violence as a means of negotiating a change in a country's justice system and processes); an easy recourse to violence not only within the trade but in social life (decayed politico-militaries and some adventurers influenced by their example); and 'warnings', backed up by the capacity for violence, in the case of betrayal etc. (business criminals). In reality, however, the mixing together of diverse groups in drug markets may lead to mixed forms of violence.

UK and wider European drug traffickers have diverse origins (see beginning of this chapter). Amongst those described here as organised business criminals are some armed robbers of previous decades who came into drug trafficking from the 1970s onwards, partly in order to reduce their use of weapons and the police attention it drew (Dorn et al., 1992). A similar development occurred in France in the 1990s (Campagnola, 1999). For them and for other trafficking groups, a capacity for the deployment of violence has been described by some researchers as a reputational asset, because it makes others less likely to try to betray or cheat them (Arlacchi, 1986, 1988; Dorn et al., 1988). On the other hand, it can be a disadvantage in the sense that some others may be too wary of them to wish to do business with them (see, for example Zaitch, 2001), as can be the case with groups in source zones (Strong, 1993, 1995). Within the UK context, the literature generally suggests that exercising violence is a sign that something went wrong: violence is 'bad for business' because it leads affiliates, subordinates and other trafficking groups to be very wary of one, and attracts too much attention from LEAs:

Overt violence within the drugs trade, as opposed to the threat of implied violence, is a category of transgression best understood as a result of market dysfunction and instability. While drug markets (i.e. supplier-purchaser relations) are functioning and drugs are being bought and sold, not only is there no need for violence because everybody involved is making money, it is to be positively avoided. Violence and killings attract police attention and leave traces, as well as attracting retaliation. Violence is therefore strictly 'bad for business'.
(Pearson and Hobbs, 2001, p 56)

Nevertheless, within European groups, however dysfunctional it may be for stable criminal organisations and profits, an increase in violence is currently described by LEA sources (briefings; underlying documentation referred to but not available). The reported increase in violence in the UK is largely ascribed to individuals and groups having links to transit zones in which violence is relatively common (ibid).

To sum up on security and violence, the literature suggests that, whilst too strong a taint of violence induces strong patterns of avoidance in most other traffickers, making trading difficult, nevertheless having a capacity for deploying violence (for example, having knowledge of how to contract external providers of violence and being willing to let this be known) may improve the viability and permanence of a trafficking group.

Tusting your luck

Whilst no security strategy available to traffickers can totally eliminate the risk from LEAs, available research suggests that many traffickers think the risks are low. This is true for Europe and source zones. Two pieces of research can be cited here. In a study of drug smuggling into the UK and the prospects of deterrence conducted in the late 1990s for HMCE, interviewees stated that, in relation to any particular 'job', they thought that, per importation, the chance of a risk-tolerant trafficker or operative being caught might be around ten per cent, whilst the risk to the risk-averse and well-protected manager or principal might be around one per cent, the odds worsening with repeated
importations (Dorn et al., 1998, pp 556-558). This is compatible with the (independently arrived at) findings of Crane et al., 1997, in the Americas (to be referred to at greater length under What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerabilities below), also drawn from interviews with traffickers. In summary, US traffickers interviewed estimated that they would be deterred from action if they thought that the chance of losing the load might be 30 per cent or higher, or if they thought that the probability of their capture was more than a few percent (see Figure 2.4). The implication from continuing trafficking in many circumstances is that traffickers think the odds in their favour are better than this. In other words, that the chances of self not being caught are better than 95 per cent. This review now turns to the question of in what circumstances these odds may change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprehension consequences</th>
<th>Deterrence threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug loss only</td>
<td>30% or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs and transport loss</td>
<td>13-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated caught</td>
<td>4-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self caught</td>
<td>2-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death to self</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crane et al., 1997, Table III-1, page III-5.

What makes traffickers change? Qualitative studies on vulnerabilities

Whilst the distinction in the literature between qualitative and quantitative approaches is not absolute, most studies are either mostly one or the other. Here the qualitative materials are reported on first, then quantitative studies, and finally an attempt to link the two is made.

Creating and taking advantage of potential vulnerabilities of politico-military traffickers

Vulnerability cannot simply be ‘read off’ a static manner (as if all vulnerabilities were inherent in traffickers) but have to be understood, more dynamically, as being amplified or reduced by governments and LEAs. The literature suggests that successful action against well-entrenched politico-military traffickers involves chiselling away the political and commercial lines of support for the traffickers, maintaining police/military pressure whilst offering negotiations and, sometimes, cultivating their competitors in the short term. A case study is given in Box 2.2 of Khun Sa and action against his group.

Generalising from this particular case study – and from others, for example business criminals who adopt some of the methods of politico-military traffickers, such as Pablo Escobar – successful disruptions and dismantling can be traced through four stages. In the first stage, the target is rather invulnerable because it has regional/local political support mechanisms as well as being well armed. During this time, government develops a strategy. In a second stage, government erodes the political support commanded by the trafficker. This may be done by improving relations with other dissident groups and/or with neighbouring countries, thus reducing the difficulties posed by border zones and/or secessionist movements. It may also involve increasing public support for government policies by pointing out to the public the ways in which traffickers are harming them. (This is easier to accomplish if traffickers act in an outrageous manner, as for example in Colombia.) This increases information flows and bolsters LEA staff morale. In a third stage, government/LEA may make behind-the-scenes compromises with other trafficking groups, who then become competitors with the target. This again increases information flows, as market participants begin to ‘change horses’. In a fourth stage, the by-now weakened target either seeks to negotiate surrender, or is dismantled by police and/or military action, or a mixture of the two. The deal-making process further opens up the trafficker to surveillance, may encourage partners or subordinates to do likewise, and diminishes any remaining support. Subsequent action may be taken against the other trafficking groups with whom government has had to compromise pro tem.
Box 2.2: Politico-military traffickers and their specific vulnerabilities: the example of Khun Sa

‘Since independence in 1948, Burma has been racked by strife between central government and a plethora of ethnic and ideological insurgent groups which control many of the country’s opium cultivation areas. […] various sections of the political environment exist within the framework of the opium industry’ (Liang, 1992, p 366).

‘Poppy cultivation was terminated in China because it had its own government. By the same logic, the termination of poppies in the Shan State [of Burma, now Myanmar] is inseparable with the set up of an independent Shan State government.’ (Khun Sa, no date, p 18).

The origins of the opium economy in South East Asia and its encouragement by the colonial powers are well known. Following the coming to power of the Chinese Communist Government in 1949, the Kuomintang (Chinese nationalist army, henceforth KMT) and, independently, many Chinese cultivators of opium, left China. After several unsuccessful attempts to invade China and depose the new government, the KMT settled in remote areas of Myanmar, encouraging local people to grow opium, which was exported via Thailand. Within this context, Khun Sa began as a minor delinquent, stealing guns as a teenager and trafficking in drugs. After various alliances (McCoy, 1999, op cit) Khun Sa’s fledgling groups eventually went against both the KMT and the military government, throwing in their lot with political separatists in the Shan States. He was elected as leader by the Shan States ‘Congress’ and, for many years, the separatist struggle was financed by proceeds of drug trafficking. It posed an insuperable challenge to the Myanmar military, partly because of his control, direct and indirect, over heroin processing and marketing along the Thai-Burmese [Myanmar] border’ (ibid, p 141) which was geographically inaccessible and characterised by rivalry and non-co-operation between the Governments of Thailand and Myanmar.

However, normalisation of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Thailand made it more difficult for the separatists to play one state off against the other. The Myanmar Government also stimulated other, less politically and militarily threatening groups to compete with Khun Sa in drug trafficking (US State Department, 1998). (Something similar happened in Colombia, where elements in Cali informally and selectively co-operated with the state to the detriment of the more obviously threatening Medellín trafficker, Pablo Escobar: see Strong, 1995, and for cultural background, Roldán, 1999). The financial, military and political position of the Shan State separatists was undermined and in this context Khun Sa negotiated a ceasefire and surrender (albeit on terms that allowed him to continue with some economic activities).

The point of this story for present purposes is that, at the turning point of its power, Khun Sa’s Shan State infrastructure was politically and militarily based. Faced with a change in political strategy by the state (relations with neighbouring states as well as with other groups inside Myanmar), Khun Sa’s set-up became vulnerable (see also: Bolanger, 1989; Chawla, Chapter 4, forthcoming).

Creating and taking advantage of vulnerabilities of business criminals

Unpublished UK documentation read for this review has been interpreted by the reviewers as evidence for a proposition that vulnerability of upper level drug trafficking groups varies inversely with their sophistication in matters of security and corruption (see Three approaches to security above). For ease of presentation, two levels of vulnerability are presented here (though the reader may prefer to think of a continuum of vulnerability):
Highly resistant/invulnerable groups: high ability to corrupt LEAs and others. In 2002, in the context of an exploration of arguments being advanced by the National Crime Squad (NCS) and others for enhanced legislation on organised crime, the NCS supplied the Home Office with detailed and sensitive information on sixteen groups selected to illustrate some problems faced by LEAs (NCS document highly classified, not seen). The Home Office then prepared a summary of these cases (Policing Organised Crime Unit, seen for this review). Most of the groups reported upon were involved in drug trafficking to a great extent. It was reported that all sixteen groups had tightly structured hierarchies, which persisted over time – more than ten years in nearly all cases – with long-term associates of the principal shielding him/her from personal risk. Counter-surveillance behaviour was common and effective in relation to telecommunications, listening and tracking devices ("technical") and preventing LEAs from observing or following the groups. Attempts to corrupt LEAs and to gain information from them via informants were common. Particular difficulties were experienced in relation to corruption of LEAs in other countries in which some of the groups were based or as well as in the UK. The sixteen cases ‘demonstrated a significant amount of [court] inadmissible evidence’. (The content of UK communications intercepts by LEAs cannot at present be used as evidence in court.) In court, sophisticated defence legal teams strongly challenged and attempted to 'disrupt' the prosecution case, there being a 'consistent picture of [these organised crime groups] having strong relationships with particular lawyers'. Intimidation of the jury or witnesses was reported in about half these sixteen cases. All in all, these groups were very resistant to law enforcement.

Less LEA-resistant groups: less ability to corrupt LEAs and others. A separate internal NCS paper reports on the basis of a questionnaire filled out by Unit Commanders in a region of England (National Crime Squad, 2003, unpublished). Most of the groups reported on are involved in drug trafficking to a great extent. However, as characterised by the police reporters, most of these groups do not have well developed capabilities in relation to counter-surveillance or corruption of police officers or others. They proved vulnerable to what is described as conventional investigations leading to prosecution. When it came to court, evidence from undercover operations and from non-technical means of surveillance (e.g. including direct visual and photographic surveillance) were found useful. The defendants' lawyers were described by police as generally not being associates of organised crime groups (unlike the situation in relation to the sixteen more resistant cases described above) and, although they employed routine tactics of delay and disruption of the prosecution case, disclosure handling at court reportedly was a 'big' problem for the prosecution in only a minority of these cases (in contrast to the above cases). Most of the cases had been or were being brought to trial and most outcomes were reported to be 'as expected' by the reporting officer; in other words, not too unsatisfactory. It seems highly probable that such targets, described as having been in business for periods of time between one year and ten years or more, are less hardened and more vulnerable than the sixteen described above. (A commonality, however, was that in neither case were informants found to be very useful.)

There is no doubt that both the more resistant to LEAs and those less resistant (less and more vulnerable), are familiar not only to NCS but also to other European LEAs. Depending on how one samples for crime groups – for highest challenge and difficulty, or for everyday business and case completion – one gets more of one or the other, as the above comparison suggests.

In the Dutch language literature, vulnerability is seen in terms of the precarious relations of trust between partners in crime. Relatedly, short-term result-orientated actions of law enforcement (korte klappen strategie), which aim at disturbing traffickers' routines, are found to pose a threat to their business relations. In some examples, the action of law enforcement led a crime group to hastily change tactics, choosing the next best solution without it being a reliable alternative. In other cases, these tactics caused networks to fall apart, according to Kleemans et al., 2002. The tendency towards looser structures and co-operation seems to lead to more communication errors, less professional functioning and uncontrolled information spreading (basis: verbal briefings by senior law enforcement personnel). However, Dutch language studies of the effects of law enforcement on upper level drug trafficking are notable for their rarity. One recent attempt to assess the effectiveness of special law enforcement strategies is the evaluation of the establishment and functioning of interregional police teams (kernteams) in the Netherlands. These teams invest in developing
specialised investigative skills and knowledge and focus on certain crime market niches and criminal organisations; the research (Klerks et al., 2002) is ongoing.

Spanish sources say that amongst criminal groups the most vulnerable levels are the lowest, that is to say, in police terms 'those who touch the drug'; next, those who get in contact with them, through personal contact or through communications that LEAs are able to intercept. Principals are difficult to detect, their greatest vulnerability being the prospect of being identified by others. To minimise that possibility, they employ a variety of security measures, including intermediaries: individuals, or other groups (Fiscalia, 2003).

According to Italian language sources, in recent years a new international division of labour has emerged, with Italian upper level traffickers becoming less visible and more protected. This is because foreign nationals occupy the most risky positions in international transit/import and in distribution: these are the most vulnerable phases (Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990, p 133, verbal briefing by a law enforcement officer). Among specific vulnerabilities, Beck and Turin, 1993, list high permanence (p 98), peer competition (p112) and, like the Dutch work mentioned above, unplanned changes in trafficking routes (p 82).

Drawing upon the literature in all the languages examined, the following can be suggested.

- **Inherent** vulnerabilities include being close to the drugs or to amateur or sloppy operatives – leading risk-averse criminals to insert 'cut-outs' between core assets (human and other) and exposed parts of operations; and being open to surveillance (visual, telephonic, etc.) – leading risk-averse criminals to discuss 'business' in noisy public places, to change mobile phones frequently, etc. (see Three approaches to security above). Once such issues have been addressed then, according to interviews with traffickers in UK prisons, their remaining greatest concerns are undercover operations, or being spoken about by informants or competitors (Dorn et al., 1998). Other conclusions, reached as a result of discussions with LEAs rather than from work with traffickers, point to the following as effective actions for LEAs: arresting or detaining principals; arresting or detaining operational managers; obtaining information from them; obtaining financial records; and/or seizing proceeds prior to laundering (Zabludoff, 1997, p 40).

- **Dynamic vulnerabilities** arise when governments, LEAs and/or civil partners introduce new aspects to the situation. So far these have fallen into four categories: new information capture methods (via technical advances, or new obligations on the private sector, as is the case in relation to money laundering); new powers (eg, civil confiscation of proceeds); new ways of disrupting traffickers' routines that provoke traffickers into untried actions and mistakes; and new ways of undermining that uncertain but vital element in market transactions: trust.

Unfortunately, the existing literature does not allow the reviewers to distinguish to what extent it may be the new measures per se, or their introduction and the resulting uncertainty for traffickers (need for learning and adaptation) produced, that is most powerful.

There is a continuing debate on what Klerks, 2003, p 106, helpfully refers to as 'short strike' versus 'long haul' approaches by LEAs. The latter (long-running surveillance, repeated controlled deliveries or other approaches aiming to roll up many significant numbers of traffickers) first gained support in the 1980s. However embarrassment has been caused when some such strings of operations never seemed to reach any conclusion and/or raised questions about police conduct (see Van Traa, 1996, for the best known European enquiry into controlled deliveries; Tait and Burns, 2003, for a recent UK judicial decision on 'reverse sting' operations against drug-related money laundering; and Dorn et al., 1992, p 120, for an earlier UK reference to such methods). Such embarrassments may turn some LEA units back to 'short strike' approaches, settling for what may be more modest but surer 'results' in the short term. The main debate here is not so much over whether one or another covert method of policing should be employed but rather what time period and degree of risk is reasonable.

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12 Verbal briefing by staff of Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, Rome, 28 May 2003.
13 See the middle section of the paper by Dom, Bucke, and Goulden, 2003, pp 350–367, and text above on Dutch language literature.
Creating and taking advantage of potential vulnerabilities of adventurers

Specific vulnerabilities of adventurers may include insufficient knowledge, resources, competencies, connections or other 'social capital' to avoid activities which are risky and which expose the person or group to LEAs, predatory other criminals or both. Partly because of their cultural acceptance of risk and partly because of the possibility that others may sometimes employ them in vulnerable positions, even using them as decoys (see Three approaches to security above), the adventurer is clearly the most vulnerable type.

However, some adventurers are aware of the risks they run. Some cultivate a persona of bluff and bravado, 'bobbing and weaving' just beyond the reach of LEAs (Zaitch, 2001; Adler, 1993; Dorn et al., 1998). LEAs are regarded as being fine sport, partly because they are seen to be hamstrung by procedure. As one research respondent put it:

"Yes, I laugh about [the police].... They take their time to build their case, to observe, to follow people for months before doing anything. It is just like gambling to know the space you have to move, but they let you work. I don't give a shit about the cops". (Zaitch, 2001, p 89, citing a trafficker, emphasis added)

Because of the vicissitudes of good and bad luck experienced by adventurers, their senses of self and ways of operating in drug markets may swing wildly, from gloating, preening and calculated action (as in the quote above), to panic and totally unplanned moves (Zaitch, 2001; Adler, 1993). The frequency of such 'ups and downs' marks adventurers out from both politico-military and business criminals, whose modus operandi are much more stable. On the face of it, there should be implications for law enforcement. However, the relative unpredictability of adventurers poses problems for intelligence gathering and development by LEAs, which indeed can 'take their time to build their case, to observe, to follow people for months before doing anything'. Even if very large (possibly disproportionately large) surveillance and other resources are applied, the rainbow activities of adventurers may be difficult to build up into a pattern.

What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerabilities

Quantitative work on interventions against upper level drug trafficking (and in some cases interventions at other levels of drug markets) is mostly from the United States. The evidence is almost exclusively concerned with markets in general and with the impacts thereon of interventions, not with particular types of traffickers. Many reservations on these market studies are in order. It should be noted that the data are somewhat malleable. Differences appear to exist between authors in their assumptions and ways of modelling market situations. Broadly speaking, as what follows shows, earlier and rather theoretical studies reached generally discouraging conclusions about such interventions, whilst later studies of specific interventions are more encouraging.14 First, the early studies.

The sceptical tradition

In a series of reports and reviews from 1986 to 1994, Reuter and others working at the Rand Corporation took a sceptical approach and drew quite pessimistic conclusions about the impact of interdiction on drug prices. These economic studies were mostly theoretical models and initially concerned marijuana (cannabis), cocaine and heroin, but later the focus moved almost entirely to cocaine.

- For example Reuter and Kleiman, 1986, provided data on the drug market in the US in the period 1980 to 1984, including arrests, seizures and drug prices at producer, importer and user levels. They described the scale and organisation of the markets, the relationship between price and scale, the theoretical relations between cost and risk and the costs of trafficking. Although it was

14 Note that what is discussed here is law enforcement interdiction – in source and/or transit zones – not crop substitution, nor (the related but broader concept of) alternative development.
recognised that, apart from price, interdiction could have other effects such as increased social approbation, these did not lend themselves to empirical analysis. The authors find that, where law enforcement has impacted on the heroin market in the US, this has been a result of local activity. In contrast to the typically middle class user of cocaine, heroin users form a smaller and more exposed user group. It was noted that the price of cocaine had persistently decreased in the period under study, but this was not true of heroin or marijuana. A general conclusion made by Reuter and Kleiman is that high level Federal efforts can have little impact on the cost of mass market drugs: the primary production and distribution costs of cocaine, for example, are only ten per cent of the retail price. In other words, nearly all profit is gained at the domestic level. Furthermore, the economic model suggests that for international couriers, doubling the risk of arrest and imprisonment would increase domestic prices by a mere 0.2 per cent. Somewhat surprisingly, their model also portrays the domestic market as being quite insensitive to the risk of arrest. The authors suggest that the US decline in marijuana use can probably be attributed to changed attitudes towards the health consequences of smoking.

- Cave and Reuter, 1988, observed that in recent years increased interdiction had led to increased seizures and arrests of cocaine traffickers, but that import and retail prices had fallen. This led Cave and Reuter to express a view on the dynamics of the market: law enforcement activities act as a spur to improve the efficiency of smuggling. This partly arises because novice smugglers are liable to have higher operating costs and be more vulnerable to interdiction, but pure competition amongst traffickers acts to depress prices. Furthermore, the increased success of large and sophisticated trafficking 'firms' draws in more novices who effectively protect the better-established players by acting as a buffer between law enforcement and those large operators.

- In a well-known 1989 study, Reuter focused on and favoured drug prices as an economic indicator and attacked the idea that up-market seizures could be such an indicator. Despite the many constraints operating on illegal transactions, in the mid-1980s the price of cocaine was subject to no greater local variation than is observed in some normal (licit) consumer markets. Prices in the US showed a predictable geographical variation: they were lowest in Florida (closest to the main importation routes) and highest in New York. What is more, prices were lower for larger transactions. Reuter makes some assumptions (i) that the cocaine market operates on the well-known principle of supply and demand, (ii) that federal interdiction efforts operate mostly at the importation stage and, (iii) about price elasticity. On that basis, he concluded that interdiction may account for only about eight per cent of the total price of cocaine. The reason advanced for this disappointing result is due to smuggler adaptation, whereby drugs may be divided into smaller consignments, or transportation may move from one mode (e.g. air) to another (e.g. sea borne). The author concludes that the use of seizures as an indicator is a “quantity illusion” and that Federal activity is usurping the traditional role of the State in crime prevention.

- The relationship between cocaine seizures, usage and price in the US was investigated by DiNardo, 1993. He drew on the DEA STRIDE database on drug prices and on data from the survey Monitoring the Future. Not only was there was no significant correlation between price and law enforcement activity as measured by cocaine seizures, but the relationship between usage amongst high school seniors and price was weakly positive. However, several confounding effects were recognised. Firstly, the data in STRIDE were extremely ‘noisy’ – the greatest random variable was the size of drug purchases. Secondly, there had been little change in price in the period 1977 to 1987 and year-to-year changes were hardly significant. Finally, the possibility of ‘endogeneity’ was recognised: higher supply might call forth higher enforcement.

- Cocaine production in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia was modelled by Kennedy et al., 1993, using data from 1989. The main variables were drug output, price, intermediate inputs, labour costs, total employment, wage rates and capital stock. It was found that crop substitution programmes have a negligible effect on the world market. The reason for this is that the displacement of labour into other industries will initially reduce the supply and increase the cost of cocaine. However, equilibrium is reached as cocaine producers then offer competitive wages to re-employ labour. The model also finds that, if the total level of production is unaffected, then removing less than 70 per cent of supply will also have little impact on the market. Changes in the size of the world cocaine market would have only a modest impact on the standard of living of workers in these countries.
A spreadsheet approach to modelling the flow of illegal drugs was developed by Dombey-Moore et al., 1994. Separate elements were allocated to production, international transportation and distribution in the US. Each of these was further divided such that production, for example, covered nearly thirty separate variables ranging from the yield of coca leaf, through seizures of coca paste to the quantity of hydrochloric acid consumed in the country. These were further divided into the main producer countries. A similar level of detail was applied to the other main elements. The paper discusses the uncertainties in the variables and provides a sensitivity analysis, that is to say an estimate of how changes in the input parameters affect the outputs of the model. However, there is no discussion of critical factors or how, for example, interdiction by law enforcement might have the greatest impact.

Favourable outcomes

Whereas the authors at RAND often used theoretical models of drug flows, Crane and others at the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) used an empirical approach. They presented evidence that interdiction efforts had greater impact on the cocaine market than reports from the RAND Corporation and elsewhere had previously suggested.

- Operation Frontier Shield (Crane, 1999) was carried out by the Coast Guard in conjunction with the US Customs Service in the Eastern Caribbean over a 90-day period from October 1996. It was primarily concerned with the interdiction of sea traffic leaving the north coast of South America and heading north-east towards Puerto Rico. At the same time, the Puerto Rico National Guard carried out sweeps to arrest drug dealers in local housing. Because aircraft are readily detected, fast boats were transporting a significant proportion of cocaine. During the operation, 648 vessels were boarded, seven were seized, there were 19 arrests and six tonnes of cocaine were seized. Interviews with arrested traffickers were conducted to establish which elements of interdiction were perceived as the greatest threat to their business. These showed that the greatest threats to traffickers in order of decreasing impact were: lethal force; arrest and imprisonment of self; arrest and imprisonment of associates; loss of boat or aircraft; loss of drugs; interdiction only.

- In 1997, Crane et al., mapped the street price of cocaine in the US against a number of source-zone interdiction activities over the period 1983 to 1997. They concluded that, against a general downward drift in price over the period, significant upward price 'spikes' had occurred since 1983; that external interdiction was the likely cause; that street price rises were responsible for reductions in cocaine usage; and thus that external interdiction was an effective approach. Data on prices were taken from the DEA STRIDE database and a number of other sources including the Drug Abuse Early Warning Network (DAWN) and drug testing programmes. However, the way in which the IDA price series is structured is unlike that developed by other groups.

- The study on Operation Frontier Shield (Crane, 1999) provided two lines of evidence that drug supply to the Eastern Caribbean changed as a result of interdiction. Firstly, air and sea borne trafficking was reduced by two-thirds. However, this was a displacement effect, as an increased level of traffic took the northern route towards Hispaniola. Secondly, in the year following the start of the Frontier Shield, there was more than a 50 per cent reduction in the availability of cocaine in Puerto Rico as measured by drug screening tests on military inductees.

Explanations for the different findings

Clearly, the findings of Crane et al., were in contrast to the work of DiNardo referred to above. A few comments on the possible reasons for the differences in findings between these studies are called for.

First, it should be observed that DiNardo studied the period up to 1987, whereas the major source and transit zone interdictions took place after 1987. So the general conclusions of the studies are not incompatible.
Second, however, the earlier economic models of RAND and others had assumed a linear relationship between price changes in the early stage of the drug flow and subsequent changes at street level: the so-called *additive* effect, meaning that even a sizable rise in source zone price would result in a very small proportion of street price (charged to the consumer). However, Crane *et al.*, present evidence that the relationship is in fact multiplicative, meaning that a rise in source zone price would result in a roughly proportional rise in street price. It is argued by Crane *et al.*, 1997, that the mechanism whereby US street prices rose was through lowered purity, and indeed the purity data do show an inverse correlation with prices insofar as major price rises coincided with falls in purity. These authors go on to show that there is a statistically significant relation between, on the one hand, price and, on the other hand, indirect measures of usage such as hospital admissions, incidence of positive tests in drug screening and demand for treatment.

However, a number of reservations are in order. If it is accepted that there are occasions when price changes along the supply chain can be explained by specific near-source interdiction events – a link highlighted and queried by Manski *et al.*, 1999 – it must be recognised that most of these rises were quite modest and short term. In all cases they fell back to the trend-line within about 12 months. Over the period studied, there was a general decline in cocaine prices, with the price upspikes failing to overcome that general trend (although without those interventions and upspikes, the general price decline could possibly have been greater).

**If it sometimes works, how and why?**

Crane and his colleagues also put forward plausible (if not always pleasing) explanations for near-source interdictions having the observed impacts on US prices and availability.

- In the mid to late 1990s the Peruvian Air Force, with support from the US Government, carried out a ‘force down/shoot down’ policy towards suspicious air traffic flying from northern Peru into Colombia. The objective of this activity was to cut the supply of coca paste from its major production centres in the Huallaga valley of Peru to the cocaine hydrochloride laboratories mostly located in southern Colombia. The first phase of air interdiction above Peru, covering the period 1989 to 1995, was judged to have had only limited success. A detailed account of the deterrence effects of the second phase of interdiction operations, which took place throughout the late 1990s, was reported by Anthony *et al.*, in 2000. This was found to be more successful, for the following reason: to be at all effective, the interdiction rate had to achieve a certain minimum level, and any increased interdiction beyond that level became highly effective. Thus in 1995, the interdiction rate was 13 per cent, deterring almost two-thirds of flights (compared with earlier periods when the interdiction rate was lower). This induced a 70-80 per cent collapse of the price of coca paste (i.e. in the production zone), effectively reducing it to a level below production costs. Following this, after a lag of five months, the street price of cocaine in the US increased by 40 per cent, according to the IDA price series (although other versions of the price data show a smaller increase) and it stayed high for several months. Concurrent with that, usage rates in the US, as estimated by urine screening, fell by 15 per cent. Finally, by 1999, after four years of air interdiction, Peruvian farmers had abandoned 66 per cent of their illicit coca fields. A side effect of this loss was to force coca farmers into ever more concentrated pockets for both economic and security reasons. This in turn makes them even more susceptible to alternative, ground-based interdiction efforts. A negative consequence of the policy arose when Colombian drug producers adapted by developing new areas of cultivation. It is estimated that, to date, these have just managed to compensate for the loss of coca paste from Peru.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) Anthony *et al* also commented on what they believed were a number of misconceptions and false assumptions about the dynamics of the cocaine business: assumptions often associated with the earlier work above from the RAND corporation. For example, they challenged: the additive price model (see above); the “taxation” hypothesis – which would cause source-zone prices to rise following interdiction (in fact prices fell, understandably, because there were fewer buyers for the commodity); the concept that the market is in equilibrium; and the dispersion theory (refuted by the opposite effect of concentration of production).
Implications

The arguments put by Crane et al., 1997, are rather convincing, for a number of reasons.

- The causal mechanisms described and the steps in the argument can readily be understood.
- These studies are based on a large amount of data (there were around 40,000 US test purchases recorded since 1980).
- The studies are based on a wide number of data sources.
- The authors recognised the non-parametric nature of many statistical distributions (for example, the distribution of price per gram and the amount purchased are both positively skewed).
- They gave empirical support to the multiplicative, as opposed to additive, effects of interdiction at an early stage in the drug flow (see above).

However, three reservations are in order. First, despite having received something of a welcome in some policy circles for the more encouraging conclusions of the IDA work, in comparison with the RAND work, considerable differences in approach of the two streams of work, in the assumptions they employ and in their treatment of data make for continuing uncertainties (cf observations made above). Reviewing two of the earliest studies (one each from IDA and RAND), Manski et al., 1999, suggest that neither of the two was sound enough for its findings to be taken as a basis for policy. The present authors observe that it would be unlikely that any one study, taken alone, could ever be taken as basis for wide-ranging policy conclusions. However, taking all the studies together and placing them alongside the qualitative literature, certain careful and delimited conclusions may be drawn.

Second, these studies are fully compatible with commonly made observations about the likelihood of displacement of trafficking routes and *modus operandi*. In one sense, the history of successful interventions is also the history of such unintended consequences (McCoy, 2000).

Third, the studies make no particular claims regarding maintenance of a low or moderate level of interdictions: significant and noticeable (to traffickers) *increases* in intervention to particular levels are what 'works', not enforcement in general.

In conclusion, the more recent and better evidenced quantitative studies focusing upon changes in patterns of interdiction support a proposition that, in order to maximise impacts on drug availability to lower drug markets, quite sudden *increases* in enforcement would need to be applied within some current upper level trafficking conduits, followed quite smartly by increases in enforcement in *alternative* (displacement) conduits. This might imply a hitherto rather unfamiliar process of highly flexible, strongly managed, substantial, *interagency redeployment* of enforcement resources. The sort of enforcement resource appropriate for intervention in one conduit might be quite different from those required in the next one.
3. Conclusions

Synthesis and summary of findings

Upper level drug traffickers are diverse: typology

A central requirement for this review is to develop a typology. It is well established on the basis of the literature, published and grey, that upper level markets in heroin and cocaine are complex, changing over time and not easy to comprehend. In particular, trafficking routes and modus operandi develop and vary in response to geopolitical events, developments in international trade and technology, population movements, technical developments and law enforcement (including the closing off of some routes and subsequent so-called displacement effects). However, certain key elements in this changing picture remain stable. The following (summarised from Chapter 2) could be seen as clearly thirty years ago as they can today.

- Insurgent groups and/or paramilitaries in some source zones impose 'taxes' on producers/traffickers or involve themselves in trafficking directly, supporting their political and military activities out of the proceeds. These 'politico-military' traffickers have aims either of restructuring the political field, or achieving or maintaining a dominant position in existing political structures/states/failed states. They are most commonly hierarchical in structure and may persist for decades (as long as the underlying secessionist movement, regional warlordism or insurrection persists). Examples from the past include Shining Path in Peru, and Khun Sa in Myanmar; examples today include the FARC in Colombia, regional commanders in Afghanistan and elements in ex-Yugoslavia, Spain and Northern Ireland. Whilst the headquarters and main operations of most such groups are usually outside the UK and other European Union countries, small and discreet European branch offices, cells or representatives exist.

- 'Business criminals' are driven by financial considerations. Their aspirations are limited to their own quiet enjoyment of the proceeds of crime and they do not seek wider political change. They may attempt limited political involvements for defensive reasons. The principals may continue in business for many years, drawing in other human and technical resources as required for particular jobs. They typically adopt the structure described here as 'core group' and may persist for years. Examples from the past include Cali traffickers and some in Medellin, such as the Ochoa brothers; today there are a multiplicity of loosely co-operating enterprises in South America, South East Asia and Europe, bringing drugs though transit zones, their principals being located in source zones, transit zones or the EU. Generally, this is a highly risk-averse group, as far as the safety of the principals and other core assets are concerned, and some are highly resistant to law enforcement (see Chapter 2). Of those operating within the UK, the more sophisticated groups pose a serious threat to the integrity of LEAs.

- 'Adventurers' are involved in the trade in a variety of positions, working for self, working for others, drifting around seeking opportunities, generally on a relatively precarious basis. For them, a relatively high level of risk-taking is the norm, either because they experience little choice (due to debt and/or coercion), or because challenge and beating the authorities are as important to them as financial aims. The roles taken by these individuals may vary by the month (see first four sections of Chapter 2). Examples include Afghan villagers trying their luck as traffickers, Latin American and Caribbean-based individuals, and migrant and other 'give it a try' traffickers in Spain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and other countries.

- Variants on the above types include alliances, mixed types, and one type 'nesting' within another in positions of domination or subordination. Table 3.1 summarises what on the basis of the literature may be said about the positioning of each main 'type' within drug markets, its degree of permanence and typical business practices.

The collective operations of these and 'mixed types' (see main text) make up upper level drug
markets. Table 3.1 summarises what on the basis of the literature may be said about each main type, positioning in drug and other crime markets, degrees of permanence, typical business practices and specific vulnerabilities.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffickers’ priorities</th>
<th>Positioning in crime markets</th>
<th>Structures and degrees of permanence</th>
<th>Business practices</th>
<th>Vulnerabilities to…..</th>
<th>judicial action disruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politico-military</td>
<td>Specific level or niche in a drug market is typical: production, export, transit and/or distribution (depending on political base).</td>
<td>Strongly defended hierarchy in own areas, cells outside.</td>
<td>Aggressive: tendency to use violence against competitors and state; also political bargaining and/or coup attempts.</td>
<td>Inapplicable because of geographical inaccessibility, military power, judicial intimidation and/or political protection.</td>
<td>Short sharp dismantlement – and/or negotiation – after whittling away political allies. (This may involve governments in awkward compromises, e.g. short-term alliances with business criminals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business criminals</td>
<td>Vertical integration is common: from source zone, through transit zones, and sometimes on to distribution (but only rarely on to retail). Groups based in source zones may have discreet European representatives.</td>
<td>Core group is durable over several years, others criminals are drawn in, or external resources contracted, as and when needed for specific projects.</td>
<td>Very careful: principals ‘cut out’; strong counter-surveillance; penetration of LEAs. Europe-based groups opportunistically involved in other criminal markets. Violence is a last resort – it draws too much attention.</td>
<td>With difficulty; principals and main capital of organisation become vulnerable to judicial action only after other (non-core) assets have been degraded (see right).</td>
<td>Organisation is well capitalised and can withstand one-off seizures of drugs or cash. Continuous pressure necessary to increase CODB. Such pressure may expose core assets/principals (but new principals may then arise).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurers</td>
<td>Opportunistic positioning – may arrange importation one time, at other times providing linkages or acting as a courier. Any part of the market.</td>
<td>Individuals and friends.</td>
<td>Risk-taking: individuals work for self or others (depending on events), are quite exposed in both cases.</td>
<td>Yes. Capture of principals of relatively easy, due to inexperience, bravado/over-confidence, risk-taking, exposure, betrayal etc.</td>
<td>Yes. One-off seizures or ‘rip-offs’ (by competitors or LEAs) of drugs or cash may suffice to cause debt and associated problems → exit from the business. But there are new recruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed cases</td>
<td>See text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Abbreviation: CODB – costs of doing business.
Networking, co-operation and convergence: mixing in the international market and in prison

A second objective for the review is to summarise what may be said about changes over time. In this respect, the dynamics of criminal group formation and learning are clearly important. For the UK and the rest of Europe, the importance of business criminals/core groups and variants of them should not be underestimated. It is European business criminals who have the most sophisticated understandings of and abilities to counter/corrupt European LEAs. Furthermore, some of them at least are likely to come into contact both with politico-military types (or decayed elements thereof) and with adventurers (as independent operators or as occasional subcontractors). Such contacts occur not only in the market but also in prison – which inevitably offers opportunities for exchange of market lore and criminal techniques, as well being a laboratory for observing people's abilities to deal with a variety of pressures. Being at the crossroads of international trafficking, and having interactions with and knowledge of other criminal 'types' and with LEAs, the role of business criminals in the development and dissemination of criminal knowledge and techniques looks set to be very considerable.

One probable consequence of increased mixing between hitherto different traffickers is the breakdown of linguistic, national, and cultural barriers between traffickers. Shared experience facilitates new bonds, trust and, on release from prison, closer co-operation between 'different' groups, and the easier formation of multicultural/multinational teams. As a result, the old barriers are breaking down fast. Whilst in the past it may have been an option for LEA reports to categorise some varieties of criminality along ethnic, national or related lines, it is no longer. Networking no longer runs in traditional channels, it has split over.

Traffickers' vulnerabilities – some hypotheses

A further objective of the review is to summarise what can be said about trafficker vulnerabilities and, correspondingly, effectiveness of LEA methods.

Traffickers' vulnerabilities can usefully be understood in terms of how the various 'types' (see above) respond to the operational methods of LEAs. Various ways of categorising LEA methods have been offered in the literature (see for example Fiorentini and Peltzman, 1995, p 19; Dorn, 2003). For the sake of simplicity of presentation, the present reviewers boil these down to two: (a) law enforcement leading to judicial proceedings (against persons and/or the capital of trafficking groups, including civil and administrative mechanisms) and, (b) disruptions not focusing upon judicial proceedings. In practice, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, it being more a question of emphasis or balancing of resources. For example, LEA operations leading to judicial action against non-core assets of trafficking groups can have a disruptive effect (eg, prosecution of junior employees of trafficking enterprises or confiscation or forfeiture of cash can cause the enterprise to slow its activities). Equally, disruption tactics may in some circumstances cause sufficient loss, confusion, distress and uncertainty ("what is going on?") as to stimulate the making of mistakes, which in turn may make further disruption and/or successful prosecution possible.

The question for present purposes is what aspects of such actions may bear most heavily upon the various trafficker types. Some broad hypotheses on this question, drawn from this review, are presented in the right-hand column in Table 3.1.

Effectiveness of law enforcement in total

As for the aggregate impacts of all law enforcement actions upon upper level drug markets, it would be wrong on the basis of available evidence to say that evidence is lacking or that success has never been demonstrated. There are instances of success but these appear against a background of

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17 The literature and the daily experience of European LEAs are replete with examples of these. Understandably, European law enforcement reports have focused on this middle ground. By contrast, the energies of many European academic researchers have been taken up in a rather polarised debate over the existence of Mafia (highly structured and highly organised), versus networked individuals (unstructured and "disorganised"). That dichotomisation tends to occlude the intermediate range and reduces understanding of the market as a whole and of its reproduction. A similar point is made in relation to the German situation and literature by Klaus von Lampe, 1998.
increasing difficulties. It appears from the quantitative literature that near-source 'pinch point' action can, if intensively applied, considerably reduce drug flows. However displacement follows in the medium term and may result in more broadly dispersed patterns of trafficking that lack such geographical pinch points (see What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerability above).

The qualitative literature (see What makes traffickers change? Qualitative studies on vulnerability above) suggests that near-source intervention is most likely to have sustained effects when embedded in a wider political strategy which may include: erosion of any political support enjoyed by the trafficking groups; making behind-the-scenes compromises with other trafficking groups, who then become competitors with the target (this increases intelligence flows, as market participants begin to 'change horses'); and dismantlement of or deal-making with the target. Subsequent action may then be taken against the trafficking groups with whom government has had to compromise for the time being. In transit zones and Europe, where business criminals are significant, according to research, technical methods of surveillance and undercover officers or participating informants may be useful, as may the introduction by LEAs of novel aspects to the situation, which may provoke traffickers into untried actions and mistakes. Deterrence of adventurers remains problematic, not least because of their very varied backgrounds, relatively high level of risk taking and sheer numbers.

Upper level drug traffickers: quick summary

Putting things in the simplest form possible, the following 'types' are found (with corresponding responses by government).

1. Politically-motivated groups, using drug proceeds as a fighting fund and having 'cells' within Europe (in response to which the state deploys political, anti-insurgency and policing responses).
2. Socially-integrated, small but skilled business groups, motivated by personal enrichment (in response the state uses disruption, imprisonment and asset confiscation).
3. Marginal groups and individuals, trying amateurish and sometimes dangerous short cuts (in relation to whom the state deploys a mix of deterrence and social policy).
4. Increasingly, reciprocal learning, co-operation between, and combinations of the above types arise, with business criminals playing a key role in market linkage and learning.
5. Nevertheless, the different trafficker ‘types’ still have specific vulnerabilities to law enforcement methods, with the politically motivated groups being most resistant.
6. The overall impact of law enforcement upon upper level drug markets requires sustained high intensity and novelty of operational methodologies in the context of broader political strategy.

Research possibilities

Research on traffickers

- Motivation and recruitment into trafficking. For example, exploration of reasons business criminals start: is it lack of alternative opportunities (in licit economies or in other areas of OC); or a perception of superior rewards being available from crime (and from drug trafficking in particular); or superior knowledge of and access to means of neutralising LEAs, hence reducing risk; or cultural means of denying wrong/harm caused by their actions? Similar questions for adventurers, except in their case, exploring appetite for/tolerance of risk. Similar questions for both regarding exiting from drug trafficking. Possible methods for both might include (a) biographical research with individuals, (b) case studies of past events, (c) role playing and scenario running.
• Traffickers’ construction of self and absorption of knowledge and skills. Cultural capital from their own background and experiences; learning from other traffickers whilst in business (networking); learning in prison; learning from law enforcement agencies (via surveillance or informants); learning from popular entertainment, traffickers’ autobiographies, media and/or research reports (including Internet-posted research). Construct a profile of ‘educational’ sources and processes and explore prospects for counter-measures.

• Vulnerabilities of traffickers. The recognition that groups and the key individuals in them (the principals) may evolve over time raises the question of which current or historical biographical ‘slices’ should be focused upon in future research. Where a research objective is exploration of traffickers’ vulnerabilities to law enforcement, studies of traffickers should pay particular attention to their situation at their turning point: that is to say, when their vulnerabilities were increasing and their descent commenced.

• Desistance. (1) Traffickers’ perceptions of chances of apprehension or disruption by LEAs. Noting that it is the subjective estimation of adverse consequences (probability and severity) that may be involved in traffickers’ decisions to desist, and that perceived probabilities are generally quite low (see Three approaches to security above), consideration could be given to ways of increasing the perceived probability of adverse consequences – at criminal court and elsewhere. Given the introduction in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 of civil ‘recovery’, independent of prosecution or conviction, separate questions have to be asked about criminals’ perceptions of such risks. (2) Social and cultural incentives to desistance (not liking changes in the drug market?); possible impediments to desistance (criminal contacts requesting assistance; fear of being at risk from former competitors or from ‘new kids on the block’ if one retires?).

Research on objectives and consequences of law enforcement

• Price and product. Historical, case-by-case study of the relationship between prices and volume of supply, in source, transits and distribution zones, before and after significant interventions that changed either price or supply in drugs targeted on the UK. (However, this would require considerable improvements in measurement both of prices and volumes.) Exploration of the implications of policy objectives aiming at decreases in price in source zones (see What makes traffickers change? Quantitative studies on vulnerability above) and increases in prices close to and at retail level – what would be the expectation at intermediate stages in the supply chain? Should decreases be the aim at all levels of the market (low price means less potential for profit)? Exploration of the extent to which (a) very low prices and/or (b) big price drops might reduce profits sufficiently to discourage traffickers. Exploration of whether different traffickers respond differently to such price changes.⁴⁸

• Impacts of law enforcement strategies. The UK and other European member states need information on the impacts of law enforcement strategies against upper level drug trafficking, at two levels: (i) short-term outcomes of particular strategies (packages of resources aiming to disrupt groups, confiscate working capital and assets, or seize drugs); (ii) longer-term outcomes in relation to the market as a whole. In order to do such research there would need to be clear identification of LEA actions. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods would be required (see What makes traffickers change? sections above).

• Go for short-term results or focus resources on fewier, longer-running operations? In What makes traffickers change? Qualitative studies on vulnerability above, reference was made to the difficulties raised in choosing between ‘short strike’ and ‘long haul’ enforcement approaches. This question is one of time-frames, patience and risk: it cuts across questions about specific policing

⁴⁸ In terms of measurement of impact, it is not clear that domestic price is appropriate, nor that it is very practical. In relation to practicalities, calculations made in unpublished UK work suggests that, if there might be an intention to use UK drug prices as a measure of interdiction efforts, then unless the impact on seizures is considerable (greater than ten per cent) and assuming a 1:1 connection between reduction in supply and increase in prices, then it would be necessary to collect thousands of data points (source: King, 2003, unpublished). This arises simply because the spread in unit price is so large – a point previously noted by Crane et al in respect of US STRIDE data (1997). In other words the costs of data collection would be high. See also questions in the text about the desirable direction of change in prices from the point of view of reducing trafficking.
methodologies (surveillance, technical informants, undercover, etc.). Strong opinions are sometimes held on this question within LEAs (as within the legal profession) but research on the question is sparse. Such research could contrast short-term/long-term approaches in source zones and in Atlantic, Asian and European transit zones. It would be useful to develop a coherent framework for researching the question, accepting that the conduct of such research is likely to be carried out in-house by LEAs. The purpose of the framework would be to underpin the validity and value of such work.

- Identification of the circumstances and factors in source, transit and distribution zones that may facilitate/retard contacts, co-operation, alliances, mixed types and reciprocal learning between politico-military groups involved in trafficking, business criminals and adventurers.

Management issues in research

- The literature confirms that the relationship between trafficking and government/LEAs remains of fundamental importance. The political science, historical, regional studies and some of the economic literature demonstrates this in relation to broad patterns of state breakdown, conflict, compromise and penetration by traffickers; the criminological and ethnographic literatures show it in relation to interactions between traffickers and LEAs. Thus, understanding vulnerabilities requires not a focus on trafficking per se but an interactionist approach. However, such an approach is only partly developed so far.

- An analytic point arising from the literature concerns what now appear to be rather sterile debates between, on the one hand, economic (rational person) models of markets and behaviours and, on the other hand, social approaches (cultural likeness and trust). Taking the literature as a whole it is clear that, of course, people traffic in drugs for money and for things that can be done with money. Yet, equally, the diverse ways in which they motivate, structure and legitimise trafficking has much deeper roots, in specific social origins, cultural experiences and political objectives – as well as in multinational and multicultural ‘borrowings’. What is needed therefore by way of analysis is an attempt to capture and integrate both economic and social strands. This raises the issue of management if consortia involve different research disciplines.

- A continuing constraint is that LEAs are understandably chary of revealing to the external research community anything more than a broad brush of their activities. Consideration might be given to embedding a few social scientists in LEAs, with suitable safeguards, alongside but with a distinct role from in-house analysts. However, external, independent research on drug trafficking and other aspects of serious crime will continue to be needed. No easy solution is seen to the question of balancing independence and security; it requires careful and continuing attention by all concerned. More co-operation is needed.

- On the other hand, more challenges are needed. As noted earlier in this review, many apparently research-based concepts and propositions come to the published (including academic) literature from law enforcement sources. This does not make them wrong; it just suggests a need for caution, because it would be unhelpful for the development of future research if academics and other independent researchers took the published literature as if it had been arrived at in a completely independent fashion. Guidelines or canons for attributing conclusions to specific sources may need to be developed. Furthermore, different teams of researchers – or their readers – may think that they can ‘triangulate’ a general finding from several independent sets of data when, in fact, each may have been fishing in the same corner of the pond. Happily or unhappily, senior LEA staff do commonly recognise this issue, sometimes describing it as another instance of "being told what we already know". By this, they mean such research is not wrong, just not helpful. But the wider problem is that the research may actually be wrong, being too close to LEA fashions of thought and blind spots. More innovation is needed.
Summary of possibilities for future research

- Trafficker 'careers', including recruitment, learning, networking, building of mutual trust amongst diverse traffickers (e.g. whilst in prison), key turning points and desistance.
- Better understanding of impacts of specific operational methods, 'crime proofing' and political strategies in source, transit and importation zones.
- Research to compare outcomes of committing financial resources to 'short strike' and 'long haul' approaches.
- Better understanding of what directions and degrees of change in drug prices (distinguishing changes at source, transit and lower levels) would reduce drug trafficking.

Research should be interdisciplinary; have qualitative and quantitative strands; conceptualise trafficking in relation to enforcement; be sensitive to issues around security; avoid merely recycling LEA practitioners’ knowledge.
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