Offending Patterns of those involved in Serious Organised Crime

CRIME AND JUSTICE

social
research

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

This research study was undertaken to provide a greater understanding of the offending behaviour of people who are classified as organised criminals (known as 'nominals') by law enforcement agencies. This categorisation is based on police intelligence of organised criminals and the nature of their activities. It examined the range and nature of offending behaviour, the types of crimes that were committed, and their severity and potential impact. This was to understand in more detail the connections between different types of offending, and the implications of this for how organised crime is understood and addressed.

It was focussed on the following questions:

- What are the demographics of Serious Organised Crime (SOC) nominals (age, gender, employment status, location)?
- How much offending is committed by SOC nominals and what types of crimes are they responsible for?
- Do organised criminals undertake only SOC crimes or are there other forms of offending that occur?
- Are there connections between specifically SOC-offending and other types of criminal offending such as antisocial behaviour, violence, property crime?
- What do findings about offending profiles tell us about the nature of SOC offenders?

Methods

The method of analysis involved looking at all of the crimes that were reported for a 10% sample of people who were classified as organised criminals in a single financial year (2013-2014). Data were examined to enhance understanding of SOC in terms of those involved and the nature of their offending. The project used information about nominals from the Serious Organised Crime Group Mapping Project (SOCGM) – an intelligence database used by law enforcement partners, and data on offending from Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

The intelligence data from the police includes only the people who have been prioritised as important from an operational point of view, and this is necessarily limited by the available resources and information that law enforcement agencies have. It therefore does not provide a complete account of all SOC offending in Scotland; not all crime is reported or documented by the police, and the nature of serious crime offending means that it is clearly not always apparent to law enforcement officers, or classified in this way. Also, intelligence may itself be driven by operational activity, and the intelligence

picture is therefore uneven. This study therefore refers to SOC solely in terms of how it was documented within the intelligence base at the time (2013-14).

A ten per cent sample of those identified as being involved in SOC (490 from an overall database of 4892 individuals) was randomly selected. This sample was then checked against the COPFS database and where the individuals had offended in 2013-14, each charge was recorded and a brief description extracted from the police reports[1]. Details about the nature of the offending were then analysed and the findings presented in this report.

Key Findings

Just under half of the total sample (48%) were reported to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) for crimes in 2013-14. These 235 accused were charged for 799 crimes in 2013-14. To the extent that this sample reflects the nature of the overall population, this finding suggests that there may have been approximately 8,000 charges for the complete population of 4,892 nominals over the same period. Individuals within the sample were typically reported for 2 criminal charges (median figure) although the number of crimes for each person ranged from 1 to 26[2].

The average age of the accused was 34, with the highest proportion aged 21-30 (40%), followed by 31-40 (33%). A small minority were aged under 20 or over 61. Of those accused, the vast majority were men (only 11% of those accused were women). Men also recorded a higher number of offences overall than women.

At the time of the crime committed, the majority (54%) of those who were charged were recorded as unemployed[3]. Forty-three per cent were recorded as employed (a small minority were recorded as students or were retired). Examination of employment status revealed that offenders were represented in almost all of the major employment groups, and across a wide range of occupations. This may reflect the dynamics of SOC groups and support other analysis, e.g. according to recent Police Scotland Management Information data, an estimated 66% of SOCGs are involved in seemingly legitimate businesses[4].

Examination of where the charges were made by local authority area showed that Glasgow had the highest number of charges accounting for just under a quarter (24%) of those recorded. This may be related to Glasgow being the largest population centre in Scotland and also to the fact that an estimated 67% of SOCGs remain located in the

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[1] Although people could have been placed on the database prior to 2013-14.

[2] The average number of charges against the 235 who had offended in 2013-14 was 3.4. However this figure is skewed by those who have conducted a larger number of offences.

[3] Employment status is recorded by the Police on the report submitted to COPFS. It will relate to the status at the time of the arrest or report. It will usually be based on information provided by the accused, or sometimes by other witnesses in the case.

[4] Scottish Government (2016). *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2016 Annual Report*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government

West of Scotland (compared with 22% in the East and 11% in the North)[5]. The next highest number of charges was in Fife, which recorded 16% of charges, followed by Edinburgh which recorded 14% of charges.

Combined, North and South Lanarkshire recorded 10% of charges, For a number of local authorities, no charges were recorded (including East Dunbartonshire, Eilean Siar etc.).

Further breakdown of charges by local authority area revealed different patterns in the types of charges across the three local authorities with the highest number of charges. Reasons for this are unclear, but these differences are likely to reflect police operational strategy and activity in different areas and local policing priorities.

Examination of the home postcodes for people who were charged provides insight into the relationship between SOC and different locations. For offender records where postcode was available, analysis showed that SOC offenders within the sample came from 25 local authorities across Scotland, the highest proportion of whom resided in Glasgow, followed by Edinburgh and Fife. These proportions are likely to reflect a combination of factors including the population concentration in these areas, SOC activity, as well as police operational activity. Broadly speaking these patterns reflect the location of charges by local authority, which suggests that offenders are particularly active in the local authorities where they reside[6].

Examination of postcode data by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation also suggests a correlation between involvement in SOC and inequality. A high proportion of those accused of criminal offending were recorded as residing in areas characterised by multiple deprivation, although some caution should be attached to this finding as it is may be reflective of police activity in certain areas, and the identification of groups and individuals who are more conspicuous. Nonetheless, a recent review of the literature recognized that while SOC exacerbates inequality, it is also a symptom of it, with a stronger presence in areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged[7].

Charge data was broken down by crimes and offences employing the standard system of classification used in the recorded crime in Scotland bulletin series. "Crime" is generally used for the more serious criminal acts; the less serious are termed "offences". Examination of charges shows a slightly higher proportion of offence charges (52%) than crimes (48%) and reveals therefore that individuals involved in SOC are involved in a range of different criminal activities, just under half of which may generally be described as more serious in nature.

An important caveat to bear in mind in consideration of the charge data is that: while offenders were identified as having involvement in SOC, and some of the charges are

[5] Scottish Government (2016). *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2016 Annual Report*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[6] However, this is based on overall patterns and not on personal data linked to charges.

[7] Scottish Government. (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A Summary of the Evidence*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

likely to be related to SOC offending, it is not possible to establish with certainty whether these charges relate directly to SOC or not (with the exception of where a SOC aggravation was added in a small minority [2%] of cases). For example, charges of vandalism, breach of the peace and motor vehicle offences may be part of wider criminal offending behaviour (which may, or may not, be a part of core SOC group business), whereas crimes involving the supply of drugs, and fraud are more clearly associated with operational definitions of SOC and therefore likely to directly involve it directly. However, police often charge more minor offending as part of their strategic approach in order to disrupt and proactively deal with offenders/SOCGs. Developing a better awareness of all the offending behaviour of those identified as being involved in SOC is relevant in understanding how to address it, and reduce associated societal harm.

Examination of offending data shows that, SOC nominals are typically involved in criminal activity across all crime categories, including vandalism, anti-social behaviour and motor vehicle crime, which suggests general offending (some of which may be indirectly connected to SOC), as well as potential specialist offending for this group. Motor vehicle offences (group 7) account for the highest proportion of all charges (30%) and involve a range of offending behaviours including unlawful use of a vehicle, seatbelt and mobile phone offences and speeding (constituting 71% of charges within this group). Just over a quarter of charges (26%) fall under group 5: 'other crimes' of which drug related charges constitute the highest number (82% of charges within this group). Indeed a quarter (25%) of those identified as involved in SOC activity who had offended in 2013-14 faced drug crime (either supply or misuse) charges.

Just over a fifth of charges (22%) are within group 6 'Miscellaneous offences'; the majority of which involve common assault and breach of the peace etc. A slightly smaller proportion of charges (18.6%) fall into category 3 – crimes of dishonesty – over half of which involve shoplifting and other theft.

Only a small minority of the overall crimes/offences fall into the first two categories, non-sexual crimes of violence and sexual crimes (1.4%).

Examination of recorded crime data for the same period to assess whether the offending patterns of those involved in SOC differ from the general offending population shows that a relatively high proportion of crimes for SOC offenders (26%) fall under group 5, 'other crimes' of which drug related charges constitute the highest number[8]. This is considerably higher than the proportion of crimes in group 5 for all recorded crime (8%) and is likely attributable to the higher proportion of drug related offences committed by serious organised criminals[9]. Otherwise, offending patterns are broadly comparable, albeit with higher proportions of charges recorded in the general offending population for group 6, 'miscellaneous offences' and group 7 'motor vehicle offences'.

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[8] Scottish Government. (2014) *Recorded Crime in Scotland 2013-14*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[9] For SOC offending charges drug crimes constituted 82% within the 'other' crime category compared with 56% for the total offending population in the recorded crime statistics.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, and to the extent that these recorded crimes reflect the behaviour and activities of the people who were studied (as opposed to being a consequence of policing activity), this would suggest that the impact of the behaviour of organised criminals is not isolated to the crimes they commit, within a narrow definition of organised criminal offending. Indeed offending data suggests that there are likely to be a range of negative impacts and harms arising from the criminal activity of those identified as being involved in serious organised crime, including anti-social behaviour, common assault, driving offences etc. This involvement in a wide range of offending behaviour may have consequences for both how SOC problems, and wider community safety problems are understood, categorised, and managed, i.e. it may be important to adapt understandings of SOC to include impact at a community level, and its contribution to antisocial behaviour, as well as its effect on community cohesion, fear of crime, and the way in which it might exacerbate social and economic disadvantage. While the nature of offending ranges in degrees of seriousness, it is important to bear in mind the complexity of impacts, which can be broad. Indeed, the wider literature shows that wider societal harm can include more widespread effects, such as increasing and exacerbating societal unease and fear of crime, which may impact on a range of social behaviours in terms of influencing where people choose to live, work and socialise. It may also have adverse impacts on public services and local businesses in terms of financial revenue and reputation[10].

Analysis of these records provide insight into the characteristics and offending behaviour of those involved in SOC, however, there are a number of limitations attached. Intelligence data from the police comprises those who have been prioritised as important from an operational point of view, information is therefore shaped by the resources available to law enforcement agencies. While helpful, the mapping system presents an incomplete account of all SOC offending in Scotland; as not all crime is reported or documented by the police. The covert nature of serious crime offending means that it may go under the radar of law enforcement agencies, or not be recognised as such. This analysis should therefore be understood in terms of how SOC was documented within the intelligence base at the time (2013-14). During this time, Police Scotland operated performance targets, one of which entailed the arrest of individuals involved in SOC. This may have led to the inclusion of a high proportion of lower-level nominals who are on the fringes of serious organised crime group activities, but it is also important to recognise that police might make decisions to charge people for more 'minor' crimes for the purposes of disruption and in the knowledge that they are involved in larger crimes. Relatedly, more serious SOC criminals are less likely to be caught for discrete individual offences, with less senior members of the group responsible for more routine and riskier forms of offending. Therefore those offenders who are more routinely identified and targeted by police may be over-represented within the sample.

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[10] Bruce J. Doran, Melissa B. Burgess. *Why is fear of crime a serious social problem?* In: Bruce J. Doran, Melissa B. Burgess. Putting fear of crime on the map : Investigating Perceptions of Crime Using Geographic Information Systems. (Springer Series on Evidence-Based Crime Policy), New York: Springer, 2012.

Future research to build on this exploratory analysis would benefit from the incorporation of appropriately anonymised qualitative indicators drawn from police intelligence (such as offender's role in SOCG and their level of seniority within the group, areas of core criminality etc.). Additionally, longitudinal analysis of offenders data and stratification of the sample (as identified on the SOCG map) would allow understanding of offenders criminal career trajectories over time, and those involved in more prolific and serious offending. While this analysis focussed on those SOC nominals who had offended in 2013/14, it would also be beneficial to explore the records of those who were not reported for any offences to explore possible differences between the groups.

2. Introduction

This report presents findings of a research project that aimed to enhance understanding of organised crime in Scotland, by looking at the offending behaviour of people who are classified as organised criminals by law enforcement agencies. It examined the kinds of offending that those identified as being involved in serious organised crime (SOC) are involved in, to better understand in more detail the connections between different types of offending and what this means for how organised crime is understood and addressed. It did this by examining the offending patterns in 2013-14 of those identified as being engaged in serious organised crime by law enforcement agencies, after an assessment of intelligence. Details of those identified as such are included in the Police Scotland Serious Organised Crime Group Mapping Project.

This research is exploratory in nature and aims to provide a summary of the nature and level of offending of those who have been identified as being involved in SOC. It also looks at the type of offending and the extent of this, as well as the likely impact and the extent to which it may contribute to other problems for society – e.g. anti-social behaviour (ASB), violence, environmental crime etc.

There are a number of limitations to this method, which are expanded on in a later section. Firstly, it is reliant on the quality of the intelligence assessment of law enforcement agencies. It therefore only includes those who have come to the attention of the authorities and where there is intelligence about offending which allows assessment as a SOC risk in Scotland. Secondly, the sample is comprised of a 10% randomised sub-sample of the offenders. Although this constitutes a minority of the total number of offenders identified as part of the mapping project, it constitutes a sufficiently representative randomised sample to enable robust conclusions to be drawn regarding the nature of the larger group, with a margin of error. Thirdly, this is drawn from a period of time 2013-14 to allow charges to have been dealt with, and have proceeded through the courts, where relevant.

The intelligence and law enforcement arrangements for dealing with this group are therefore influenced by the circumstances of the time, and the tactical and strategic priorities of law enforcement for this period. Police Senior Investigating Officers determine the strategy for the investigation of SOC for each separate operation although it is important to bear in mind that the patterns of offending may in part reflect the approach to policing at the time, whereby Police Scotland operated performance targets, one of which entailed the arrest of individuals involved in SOC. However, the time period of analysis is relatively recent and confers a number of relevant insights into SOC in Scotland.

A further associated caveat to note is that the research was not intended to provide an assessment of the particular problem, or the policing and prosecution of SOC at the time. Rather, it is intended to provide insights into the more general nature of SOC as it relates to the people who were identified as being involved in it. This allows consideration of the impact of organised crime, the victims, and the demands on the criminal justice system, in terms of those who were charged during the period.

The research was conducted by the Justice Analytical Services division of the Scottish Government in conjunction with Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Police Scotland. This report will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the offending patterns of those involved in serious organised crime and the harm this creates for communities.

3. Background

Serious organised crime – understood as being groups or individuals working together to maximise the benefits they derive from their criminal activity – has a significant negative impact on the social and economic wellbeing of Scottish communities. It involves a wide range of criminal activity (including drug crime, violence, a range of types of fraud, money laundering, immigration crime, human trafficking, organised theft, bogus workmen, counterfeit goods and cybercrime), all of which involve generating income at the expense of others. It is estimated that serious organised crime costs the Scottish economy up to £2 billion annually (Scottish Police Authority 2013[11]), and has a wide range of impacts on local communities beyond financial implications, ranging, from fear, environmental damage, and exploitation of vulnerable groups[12].

Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy (2015[13]) committed to conducting research on the prevalence of serious organised crime in Scotland and its impact on communities. This commitment was made to ensure an evidence-based understanding of the issue and to help develop an effective programme to counter it in order to achieve the Government's strategic vision of a 'safer, fairer and more prosperous country free from the harm caused by serious organised crime'[14]. This research used data provided by COPFS databases and Police Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Group Mapping Project[15].

The SOC mapping project was established in 2008 and is a collaboration between partner law enforcement agencies across the UK and internationally. Intelligence is gathered on those involved in, or suspected to be involved in, criminal activities such as drugs, money laundering, violence, fraud and human trafficking. Data is collated every quarter from the thirteen local policing divisions across Police Scotland, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE).

Groups are placed on to, or removed from mapping via the National Peer Review Group (NPRG) which meets bi-monthly and is jointly chaired by DCS Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism and DCS Intelligence. The purpose of the NPRG is to provide tactical and operational governance for the management of SOC groups which feature on mapping to ensure that any changes to groups and their status is captured within the SOCG mapping process. The principle criteria for inclusion is the threat score attributed to the group which is identified by applying a threat score matrix to the information and intelligence held by the group. When a group qualifies for SOC

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[11] Scottish Police Authority (2013), 'Item Number 5' Presented By Assistant Chief Constable Nicolson For Approval Meeting SPA Board Meeting December 2013.

[12] Scottish Government (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A Summary of the Evidence*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[13] Scottish Government (2015) *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[14] Scottish Government (2016) *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2016 Annual Report*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[15] Scottish Government (2013) *Mapping Organised Crime*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government

mapping via NPRG, all those identified as part of the group (regardless of hierarchy or role within the OCG) are included.

The NPRG are responsible for the addition of new groups onto the mapping system, the archiving of disrupted groups (and therefore removal from the SOCG mapping database) and the transfer of groups (from the existing owner to another division/agency), this can include the merging of one group into another. All SOCG's are mapped across Scotland and allocated to a Lead Responsible Officer (LRO) and a Lead Managing Officer (LMO) who devise tactics to disrupt the group and its nominals.

Mapping data is primarily used for operational purposes within the complex system of policing and addressing serious organised crime rather than measurement or analysis. There are therefore limitations to the data which should be borne in mind. These are set out in further detail below.

Aims and Objectives

In seeking to understand more about the extent and nature of serious organised crime, the research aimed to explore the scale and nature of offending of the people who are involved in it, as identified by law enforcement agencies, in terms of who they are, the nature of their offending behaviour and level of seriousness, as well as the degree of harm and impact. One method of doing this is via the analysis of offenders recorded on the serious organised crime database. To this end the research specifically explored the key demographic characteristics of offenders in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and geographical location (local authority) as well as their socio-economic background based on employment status and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

It also aimed to provide a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the wider offending behaviour of those involved in serious organised crime and its impacts on Scottish communities (in terms of the scale and type of offending/criminality), and ultimately contribute to the overall evidence-base which can used to develop more effective programmes to counter serious organised crime. It therefore examined all offending behaviour, i.e. including those that may not appear to be immediately related to SOC.

The specific questions addressed are as follows:

- What are the demographics of SOC nominals (age, gender, employment status, location)

- How much offending is committed by SOC nominals and what types of crimes are they responsible for?

- Do organised criminals undertake only SOC or are there other types of offending that occur?

- Are there connections between specifically SOC-offending and other types of criminal offending such as anti-social behaviour, violence property crime?

- What do findings about offending profiles tell us about the nature of SOC offenders?

While useful in terms of furthering knowledge in this area, there are also a number of limitations attached to the methodology, which are outlined below.

Methods

Police Scotland provided a list of the offending records of 4,892 individuals (nominals) on the Serious Organised Crime Mapping Project.

A ten per cent sample of these nominals (490 unique accused) were extracted using a random number generator. This sample was then checked against the COPFS database and where the individuals had offended in 2013-14 each charge was recorded and a brief description extracted from the police reports. There were 235 of the total sample (48%) who had committed at least one offence in 2013-14. These 235 accused were charged for 799 offences in 2013-14. Nominals within the sample typically committed 2 offences (median figure) although the number of offences committed by each person ranged from 1 to 26[16].

Based on the findings from the 10% sample, the confidence interval is +/- 4.2%. We are therefore able to estimate that between 43.8% and 52.2% of the nominals from the Serious organised Crime Mapping Project) had committed at least one offence in 2013-14. This equates to between 2142 and 2554 nominals.

All relevant information relating to each charge was noted, including details of the accused (age, gender, employment status, employment type) and the charge (crime / offence, date, time, location, locus, legislation, aggravations). Any identifying details were removed in the final report to ensure anonymity.

Limitations of the data

It is important to note here that mapping data is used as an operational tool within the complex system of policing and addressing serious organised crime, rather than for measurement or analysis. Moreover, the data is limited by the intelligence gathered: for example, the Police Foundation recently identified that only a small portion of incidents categorised as organised crime in England and Wales featured individuals who were recorded on the mapping system[17]. This means that numbers may be under-estimated, but also that the emergent characteristics and trends are shaped by the intelligence that is gathered and the underlying definitions and assumptions. However, it is the most robust data available for assessing the criminal offending behaviour of those identified as being involved in SOC. Another important caveat to bear in mind in consideration of the charge data and the impact on individuals and the wider community is that, while

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[16] The average number of charges against the 235 who had offended in 2013-14 was 3.4. However this figure is skewed by those who have conducted a larger number of offences.

[17] The Police Foundation. (2016) *Reducing the impact of Serious Organised Crime In Local Communities, The Impact of organised crime on local communities Briefing 4*

offenders were identified as having involvement in SOC, and the purpose of the study was to look at all offending, it was not possible to break down charges related specifically to SOC (because recording practices do not include this within charge descriptions (with the exception of where a SOC aggravation was added in a small minority of cases). For example, charges of vandalism, breach of the peace and motor vehicle offences may be part of wider criminal offending behaviour (possibly indirectly linked to SOC), whereas crimes involving the supply of drugs, and fraud are more clearly associated with SOC and therefore likely to directly involve it directly. It is also important to bear in mind that police might make decisions to charge people for more 'minor' crimes for the purposes of disruption and in the knowledge that they are involved in larger crimes. Relatedly, the SOC criminals operating at a more serious level of criminality may be likely to be caught for discrete individual offences, and the sample may therefore over-represent those offenders who are more routinely identified and charged by police. The patterns of offending also reflect the circumstances of the time, and the tactical and strategic priorities of law enforcement for this period. Police Scotland previously operated performance targets, one of which entailed the arrest of individuals involved in SOC. This may have led to the inclusion of a high proportion of lower-level nominals who are more peripherally linked to serious organised crime group activities.

Despite these limitations, the insights mapping data bring combined with other research work in this area, help to build an overall picture of serious organised crime in Scotland and where it fits within a wider profile of criminal offending.[18]

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[18] The Police Foundation. (2016) *Reducing the impact of Serious Organised Crime In Local Communities, The Impact of organised crime on local communities Briefing 4*

4. Details of the offenders

This section sets out the key demographic characteristics of those 235 of the 490 (10%) sample) who had committed at least one offence in 2013-14 in terms of age, gender, residence (by local authority area) and socio-economic background (based on employment status and type, and analysis of residence by SIMD). Although, it is important to bear in mind that there may have been other offending that was not identified or reported to COPFS by the authorities. Limited information which exists on ethnicity is discussed although it is recognised that this is an area which requires further investigation.

Age

The average age of the SOC nominals who had been reported for at least one crime in the study year was 34. As demonstrated in table 1, the highest proportion were aged 21-30 (40%) followed by 31-40 (33%). A minority were aged twenty or under (4% of total accused). A similarly small proportion were aged over 61 (1%). This echoes findings from a Home Office report (2015) which found that small minorities were aged under 17 (1%) or over 61 (3%) and that the highest proportion of individuals involved in organised crime were aged between 26 and 35 (36%)[19]. This provides tentative support to the finding that, in relation to serious organised crime, it may take longer for individuals to become involved – or for their involvement to be identified as SOC-related by police or other agencies, compared with other serious offences[20].

Table 1: Age breakdown of offenders in 2013/14[21]

Age cat.	≤16	17 – 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 – 50	51 - 60	≥61	Total
No. of accused	2	7	93	78	39	14	2	235
%	1	3	40	33	16	6	1	100

Gender

Of the accused 210 were men (89%) and a small minority, 25, were women (11%). This reflects patterns of crime more generally, with men much more likely to be recorded as perpetrators than women (SCJS 2014/15).

Examination of charge data by gender revealed that male offenders on the mapping system were responsible for 738 charges. On average, men within the sample each typically committed 2 offences (median figure), although the number of offences

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[19] Home Office. (2015) *Individuals at risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime – a Prevent Guide*, Strategic Centre for Organised Crime, Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism.

[20] E.R Kleemans and C.J. de Poot (2008) *Criminal Careers in Organised Crime and Social Opportunity Structure,* European Journal of Criminology 5(1)

[21] Some individuals were reported for multiple charges within the time period.

committed by men ranged from 1-26[22]. Women on the mapping system were less prolific in their offending. They (11%) were responsible for 61 charges in total and each offender typically committed 1.5 offences (median figure), with the number of offences ranging from 1-11[23].

Ethnicity

Information on the accused ethnicity is not always recorded in police reports and may be based on the assessment made by the police after arrest (i.e. is not information actually given by the accused). A lack of consistency was found in terms of classification, 'Scottish' was recorded for the majority of offenders (176) but without further specific detail (e.g. in terms of ethnicity: White, Mixed, Asian, African, Caribbean or Black or other Ethnic group). Similarly nine offenders were recorded as 'British, White', while other categories were broad and non-specific (e.g. a small number of offenders were recorded as Asian, Caribbean or African without further detail). Without greater consistency and standardisation in recording of this data in line with individuals' ethnic group and cultural background[24], it is not possible to draw conclusions.

Employment status and type

Employment status is recorded by the Police on the report submitted to COPFS. It will relate to the status at the time of the arrest of the report and is normally based on information provided by the accused, or sometimes by other witnesses in the case. At the time of the offence, the majority (54%) of those who had offended were recorded as being unemployed[25]. Forty-three per cent (102 people) were recorded as employed, and 2% were recorded as either students or retired. Table 2 shows the broad employment types of the offenders sampled.

Table 2: Employment types of offenders in 2013-2014[26]

Major Group Type	Number of SOC offenders	% Total
Major Group 1: Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	18	17
Major Group 2: Professional Occupations	3	3
Major Group 3: Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	3	3
Major Group 5: Skilled Trades Occupations	31	30
Major Group 6: Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	3	3
Major Group 7: Sales and Customer Service	12	12

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[22] The average number of charges against the 210 men who had offended in 2013-14 was 3.5 However this figure is skewed by those who have conducted a larger number of offences.

[23] The average number of charges against the 25 women who offended in 2013-14 was 2.4 Again, this figure is skewed by a minority who committed a higher number of offences.

[24] In line with the census question on ethnicity: http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/variables-classification/ethnic-group

[25] It is important to note that some of the unemployed may have previously been in employment prior to acquiring a criminal record.

[26] 'Major Group 4: Administrative and Secretarial Occupations' had no representation within this sample.

Occupations		
Major Group 8: Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	16	16
Major Group 9: Elementary Occupations	16	16
Total	102	100

Those who said they were employed provided a basic description of their occupation. These occupations (e.g. shop-keeper, factory worker) were cross referenced with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Standard Occupational Classification 2010. This classification system enables all types of occupation to fit into 9 major groups. Within this system are 25 sub major groups, 90 minor groups and 369 unit groups. For the purposes of simple comparison, only the major group occupations are provided and discussed here.

Given the small sample size, and the even smaller sample size of offenders who said that they were employed, there are limits to the generalisability of these findings. In addition, information on employment status was reliant on the offender disclosing that he or she was in employment at the time of the offence; it is possible that not all offenders disclosed this information accurately, which may potentially skew the results.

While it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the data provided in the table, the data presented suggest that these offenders were represented in all but one of the major groups, and as such held a wide range of occupations. The table shows that 12% of offenders held occupations in in group 7: Sales and Customer Service Occupations and that equal proportions 16% respectively were employed in groups 8 or 9: process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations. The highest proportion of offenders were employed in occupations within Group 5: skilled trades occupations (30% of the total). Further, just under a fifth (17%) held occupations within Group 1: managers, directors and senior officials. Data from the table also indicate that fewer proportions of offenders worked within the professional, associate professional and technical and caring, leisure and other service occupations (Groups 2, 3 and 6), and that no offenders captured in this sample held administrative and secretarial occupations (Group 4). It is worth noting that these findings are also likely to be reflective of the gender composition of the offending sample (89% of whom are men), and patterns of occupational gender segregation more widely, with men more likely to be employed in skilled trades than women, and less likely to be employed in caring and administrative and secretarial occupations[27].

Bearing in mind the limitations, the data suggests that offenders are employed in a broad range of occupations. This perhaps reflects the dynamics of SOC groups and that, according to recent Police Scotland Management Information, an estimated 66% of SOCGs are involved in seemingly legitimate businesses. The most common business types were identified as licensed premises, restaurants, building/construction companies, shops, garage repairs and vehicle maintenance, taxis and nail bars[28].

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[27] Office of National Statistics (2017) *Annual Population Survey*, NOMIS https://www.nomisweb.co.uk

[28] Scottish Government (2016) *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2016 Annual Report*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

However, it is not possible to say, without further investigation, what proportion of the accused have connections to serious organised crime through their employment.

Residence of offenders by local authority

Analysis of the postcode of offenders by local authority provides some indication of the spread of SOC offenders across Scotland. However, some caution should be attached to these findings given that postcodes were not available for just under a fifth of the sample[29]. For those offender records where postcode was available (table 3), analysis showed that SOC offenders within the sample were drawn from 25 local authorities across Scotland. The highest proportion of offenders, just over a quarter (26%), resided in Glasgow, followed by Edinburgh (12%) and Fife (11%). These proportions may partly reflect the concentration of the population in the cities, but also SOC activity and operational policing. Combined, 13% of offenders came from North and South Lanarkshire, while other local authority areas comprised less than 5% of the total (including Aberdeenshire, Dundee city, Highland and West Lothian). These patterns broadly reflect the location of charges by local authority, which suggests that offenders may be particularly active in the local authorities where they reside (see table 8 for further detail).

Table 3: Local authority residence of offenders

Local authority	No.	%
Aberdeen city	8	4
Aberdeenshire	0	0
Angus	2	1
Argyll and Bute	0	0
Clackmannanshire	1	0.5
Dumfries & Galloway	5	3
Dundee city	5	3
East Ayrshire	0	0
East Dunbartonshire	4	2
East Lothian	3	2
East Renfrewshire	1	0.5
Edinburgh, City of	23	12
Eilean Siar	0	0
Falkirk	1	0.5
Fife	21	11
Glasgow	50	26
Highland	6	3
Inverclyde	1	0.5
Midlothian	3	2
Moray	4	2
North Ayrshire	3	2
North Lanarkshire	14	7
Orkney Islands	0	0
Perth & Kinross	3	1.5
Scottish Borders	0	0
Shetland Islands	0	0
Renfrewshire	5	3

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[29] Four offenders were recorded as having no fixed address and for 41 the postcode was not available..

South Ayrshire	3	1.5
South Lanarkshire	12	6
Stirling	2	1
West Dunbartonshire	4	2
West Lothian	6	3
Total	190	100

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Analysis of offenders' home postcodes provides an insight into the proportions who are drawn from areas of multiple deprivation. Although again, some caution should be attached to these findings given that postcodes were not available for approximately a fifth of the sample. The Scottish index of multiple deprivation (SIMD) provides a relative measure of deprivation and is based on indicators from a number of domains (income, employment, health, education, geographic access, housing and crime). Deprivation decile 1 represents the most deprived 10% within a population, while decile 10 represents 10% of the population in the least deprived circumstances.

Examination of offender postcode data for the 10% sample suggests a clear correlation between residing in areas of multiple deprivation and involvement in serious organised crime. Although caution should be attached to this finding as it is based on a relatively small sample (and may also be reflective of police activity in certain areas and the identification of groups which are more visible), research into neighbourhood safety by Sampson and Radenbush found that concentrated disadvantage was the most salient predictor of crime and disorder. However, the research also found that higher levels of collective efficacy, defined as 'linkages of cohesion and mutual trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighbourhood social control' were associated with lower rates of crime overall.[30]

Table 4 and chart 1 demonstrate that just over a quarter (26%) of offenders come from the most deprived decile. Fifteen per cent of offenders are drawn from the second most deprived decile, with over half (58%) of offenders being drawn from the three most deprived deciles. Only a small proportion (2%) come from the least deprived decile[31]. Comparison of the proportion of the general working age population by residence in SIMD deciles (table 5 below) shows that there is an even distribution, with approximately 10% of the population in each decile. This comparison shows that SOC offenders are more likely to reside in more deprived areas than the general population. It also reflects findings more widely on poorer justice outcomes (in terms of the crime and imprisonment rate for the population) and the underlying factors associated with them, which tend to be concentrated in areas of multiple deprivation[32].

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[30] Sampson and Radenbush cited in Scottish Government (2014). *What works to reduce crime*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[31] However, it is worth noting that this is based on current residence, and that many in the more affluent postcodes may have originated in more deprived deciles.

[32] For example, datazone comparisons from the 2009 SIMD found that the rate of prisoners per 100,000 of the population was 692 from the most deprived data zones compared with 140 for the least deprived datazones and 218 for the Scotland average. Similarly 'SIMD Crime" rate per 10,000 of the population was

This may possibly be understood in terms of the employment opportunities SOC may offer, highlighted in a Joseph Rowntree Foundation report into contemporary workless families[33]. It found that, in the absence of legitimate employment, and in the face of low qualifications and limited formal education, for some, opportunities to work in the drugs trade were particularly attractive. In addition, a review of the literature on serious organised crime suggested that in Scotland, individuals living in deprived areas or those who may be disadvantaged in other ways are more likely to have been offered illicit drugs, to use illicit drugs and experience drug dependency than those living in less deprived areas[34]. Areas characterised by deprivation therefore not only offer a ready customer base for selling illicit drugs, they also present opportunities for serious organised criminals to take advantage of vulnerable individuals who can be victimised/exploited. That said, offenders were not drawn exclusively from areas characterised by high levels of deprivation, indeed, 20% of offenders were drawn from SIMD deciles 6-10 (i.e. lesser deprived areas), suggesting that the problem is more widespread.

A review of public attitudes into serious organised crime in Scotland, conducted in 2013, sheds further light on the relationship between deprivation and SOC. It revealed that while just over a quarter (27%) perceived it to be a serious issue in their neighbourhood, those in the most deprived areas, alongside those living in urban areas were most likely to perceive it as a problem (46% and 31% respectively)[35]. This is an area that may benefit from further investigation but these findings suggest that reducing disadvantage and deprivation in communities, alongside developing worthwhile and legitimate job opportunities and building community efficacy, may be key in tackling SOC.

Table 4 – Offender residence by 2016 SIMD decile

Decile	Frequency	Percentage
1	50	26%
2	29	15%
3	33	17%
4	20	11%

1026 for the most deprived datazones and 405 for the least deprived datazones and 495 for the Scotland average. Scottish Government (2012) *Strategy for Justice in Scotland, Evidence*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government.

[33] Scottish Government (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A summary of the evidence,* Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[34] Scottish Government (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A summary of the evidence,* Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.

[35] Scottish Government (2013), *Public Perceptions of Organised Crime in Scotland*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government.

5	18	10%
6	12	6%
7	8	4%
8	8	4%
9	7	4%
10	4	2%
Total	189[36]	100%[37]

Chart 1 Offender residence by SIMD decile

Percentage of offenders residing in areas categorised by area SIMD decile
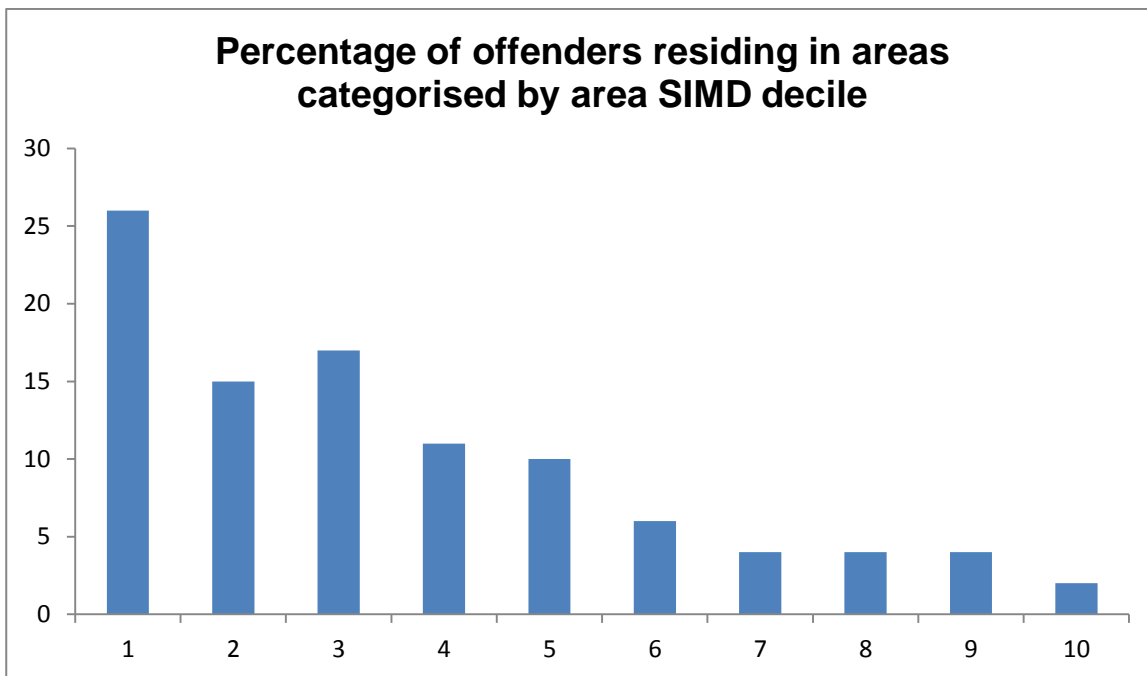
Table 5 – Working age population by 2016 SIMD decile

SIMD Decile	Working age pop. (2014)	% pop.
1	336,884	9.8%
2	341,265	9.9%
3	333,558	9.7%
4	336,059	9.8%

[36] Only 189 of a possible 235 accused recorded a valid postcode. Four offenders were recorded as having no fixed address while a number of postcodes were found invalid by the SIMD postcode finder. The remainder were recorded as not available.

[37] Total does not sum to 100% due to rounding

5	343,098	10.0%
6	341,019	9.9%
7	345,804	10.1%
8	351,139	10.2%
9	348,647	10.1%
10	362,381	10.5%

5. Details of the incidents

Charge types: crimes and offences

Of the 48% of the sub-sample who had committed at least one offence in 2013-14, those 235 accused were charged with 799 offences in 2013-14. The composition of these charges were explored on the basis that the 10% sample would provide insight into the total sample of nominal from the SOC mapping project. Based on the 10% sample size, the confidence interval is +/- 4.2%, therefore we are able to estimate that SOC offenders in the mapping project may have been responsible for approximately 8,000 charges nationally overall in the time period.

Information on the type of charges is broken down by crimes and offences employing the standard system of classification used in the recorded crime in Scotland bulletin series (see table 5 below). "Crime" is generally used for the more serious criminal acts; the less serious are termed "offences". However, this distinction is only made for statistical reporting and does not impact on the police investigation of criminal activity. The "seriousness" of the offence can be analysed or understood in relation to the maximum sentence that can be imposed. Although again, there are limitations related to this, including that how severe sentences are will reflect a range of factors and may not be attributed solely to the harm of the offence itself[38]. A further distinction worth noting, although there may be exceptions, is that the numbers of offences recorded by the police generally tends to be affected more by police activity and operational decisions than the numbers of crimes. Relatedly, practical considerations may influence the number of crimes/offences recorded, with those which are well-evidenced more likely to be taken forward to prosecution. It should also be noted that while the legislation cited was the primary source of reference to categorise crimes and charges, information from the police reports provided additional information.

An important caveat to bear in mind in consideration of the charge data is that: while offenders were identified as having involvement in SOC, and some of the charges are likely to be related to SOC offending, it is not possible to establish with certainty whether these charges relate directly to SOC or not (with the exception of where a SOC aggravation was added in a small minority of cases). For example, charges of vandalism, breach of the peace and motor vehicle offences may be part of wider criminal offending behaviour (and relate to proactive policing and attempts to disrupt activity), whereas crimes involving the supply of drugs, and fraud are more clearly associated with SOC and therefore likely to be directly related to SOC. That said, some offences which may seem unrelated to SOC may in fact be indirectly related. Examples include acquisitive crime to support a drug habit, or local violence and disorder that, while not directly related to SOC business, may be related to SOC nominals and a wider culture of violence often found in communities where SOC is prevalent.

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[38]Sherman, L et. al (2016) *The Cambridge Crime Harm Index: Measuring Total Harm from Crime Based on Sentencing Guidelines*, Policing Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 171-183, Oxford University Press.

Table 6 shows that there is a slightly higher proportion of offence charges (52%) than crime charges (48%). Within the crime charges, groups 3 and 5 'Crimes of dishonesty' and 'Other crimes' account for the highest number of charges. Within these two categories drug related charges (supply and misuse) have the highest number of charges with 171 (44% of all crime charges), shoplifting constitutes the second highest at 58 (15% of all crime charges) and other theft the third highest with 31 charges (8% of all crime charges).

In terms of group 6: 'Miscellaneous offences' and group 7: 'Motor vehicle offences', the table shows that the most common offences within these categories constituted breach of the peace (70 offence charges), common assault (60 offence charges) and unlawful use of a motor vehicle (64 charges). Collectively these offences account for a high number of offences, constituting half (50%) of the total offence charges.

Table 6: Number of charges by crime/offence category

Crime/Offence Group	Category of charge	No. of charges	% of charges
Group 1: Non-sexual crimes of violence	Homicide etc.	0	
	Attempted murder and serious assault	5	
	Robbery	2	
	Other	1	
	Total	**8**	**1.%**
Group 2: Sexual crimes	Rape and attempted rape	0	
	Sexual assault	0	
	Crimes associated with prostitution	2	
	Other sexual crimes	1	
	Total	**3**	**0.4%**
Group 3: Crimes of dishonesty	Housebreaking	21	
	Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	11	
	Theft from a motor vehicle (OLP)	5	
	Theft of a motor vehicle	7	
	Shoplifting	58	
	Other theft	31	
	Fraud	9	
	Other dishonesty	7	
	Total	**149**	**18.6%**
Group 4: Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	Fire-raising	0	
	Vandalism etc.	18	
	Total	**18**	**2%**
Group 5: Other crimes	Crimes against public justice	25	
	Handling offensive weapons	6	
	Drugs (of which 84 charges related to supply and 87 to misuse)	171	
	Other	6	
	Total	**208**	**26%**
Group 6: Miscellaneous offences	Common assault	60	

	Breach of the peace etc.	70	
	Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	7	
	Urinating etc.	1	
	Other	38	
	Total	**176**	**22%**
Group 7: Motor vehicle offences	Dangerous and careless driving	17	
	Driving under the influence	2	
	Speeding	31	
	Unlawful use of vehicle	64	
	Vehicle defect offences	7	
	Seat belt offences	37	
	Mobile phone offences	36	
	Other	43	
	Total	**237**	**30%**
Total		799	100%

Chart 2 provides comparison between the percentage of charges by crime/offence group against those identified as being involved in SOC with the total crimes recorded by the police in 2013-14[39] in order to assess whether the offending patterns of those involved in SOC differ from the general offending population. This shows that overall, the types of offending committed by serious organised criminals is broadly comparable to the general offending population, with a few notable differences. The highest proportion of crimes for SOC offenders (26%) fall under group 5, 'other crimes' of which drug related charges constitute the highest number. This is considerably higher than the proportion of crimes in group 5 for all recorded crime (8%). The highest number of offences for SOC offenders are motor vehicle related (group 7), which account for just under a third (30%) of all charges and involve a range of offending behaviour, including unlawful use of a vehicle, seatbelt and mobile phone offences and speeding (constituting 71% of charges within this group). This pattern is also apparent for all recorded crime, with a slightly higher proportion in this category (38%). Just over a fifth of charges against SOC offenders (22%) are within group 6 'Miscellaneous offences', a majority of which involve common assault and breach of the peace etc. (68%). A slightly higher proportion (27%) of recorded crimes are miscellaneous offences. Just under a fifth of charges against SOC Offenders (18.6) fall into category 3 – crimes of dishonesty – over half of which involves shoplifting and other theft, which is broadly comparable with the figures for recorded crime.

Only a small minority of the overall crimes/offences committed by SOC offenders fall into the first two categories, non-sexual crimes of violence and sexual crimes (1.4%). Similarly small proportions are found for all recorded crime. A further minority of SOC offending falls under fire raising, vandalism etc. (2%), although figures for all recorded crime are slightly higher (7%).

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[39] In 2013/14 a total of 771,678 crimes and offences were recorded by the police:
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/11/6350/0

Chart 2: % of charges by crime/offence group – SOC data and recorded crime 2013/14
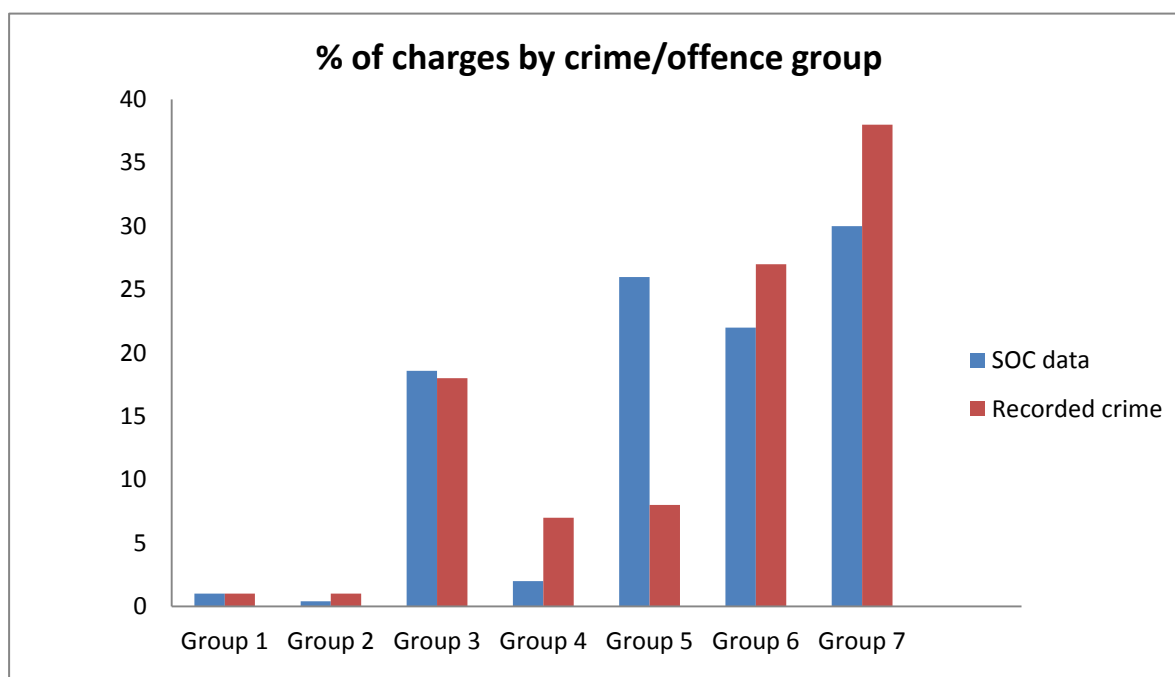
Based on this evidence (and to the extent that these recorded crimes reflect the behaviour and activities of the offender population, as opposed to being a consequence of policing activity), it is clear that the offending of SOC nominals is varied and across the whole offending spectrum. This includes a high volume of 'lower level' crimes, which may impact substantially on local communities (e.g. antisocial behaviour, vehicle crime, crimes against businesses, as well as drugs crimes). There are therefore likely to be a range of negative impacts and harms arising from the offending behaviour of those identified as being involved in serious organised crime.

Crimes in the first two categories: non-sexual crimes of violence and sexual crime; are comparatively low compared with other types of crimes and offences. However, it should also be recognised that a lot of serious violence associated with SOC is likely to be under-reported (for example violence used as punishment against SOC associates may be less likely to come to the attention of police than that directed towards the general population). Despite the relatively low level of recorded crime in the first two categories, the seriousness of these types of crimes and their physical and emotional impacts are likely to be significant, both in terms of individuals involved and the wider community (for example evidence from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey showed that victims of violent crime were more likely to express strong negative emotions like shock (50%), fear (26%) or a loss of confidence (16%) than other types of crime)[40]. It is also important to recognise that the impact of crime may also be affected by factors other than the type of crime and perceived seriousness of the offence. Indeed a recent review on what works to support victims of crime highlighted how the degree of impact and ability to cope may also depend on demographic factors such as age, gender and

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[40] Scottish Government (2016), *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014-15*

ethnicity as well as socio-economic factors as well as the degree of support available from family and friends[41].

In terms of the wider spectrum of violent behaviour, common assault charges constitute a relatively high proportion of the miscellaneous offences category (34%). Again, as opposed to violence committed for other reasons (and the relatively high number of charges for common assault may in fact be related to police operations and activities targeting this type of offending in certain areas), a review of the literature on SOC found that violence (including the fear of violence) is an integral part of the operation of SOC groups and can facilitate criminal activities. It can also help control elements of the criminal market and inhibit the reporting of SOC activity, and has a high impact on the wider community and public sector agencies such as health and justice services.

In terms of crimes of dishonesty, 60% of these crimes relate to shoplifting and other theft. When taken in isolation these charges may be considered low level, but can sometimes be part of wider rings of activity and therefore have a larger impact on businesses and the local economy.

The high proportion of drug crime charges (44% of all crime charges) is likely to reflect the fact that the supply and distribution of illegal drugs is a common activity for SOC groups. Indeed a quarter (25%) of those identified as involved in SOC activity who had offended in 2013-14 faced drug crime (either supply or misuse) charges. A review of the literature on SOC found that an estimated 65% of Scottish SOC groups are thought to be involved in the supply and distribution of illegal drugs, and that the total societal and economic cost of illicit drug use in Scotland is considerable (estimated to be just under £3.5 billion in 2009).

Separating drug crime charges into those judged to be 'supplying' and those 'misusing' allows insight into the potentially more damaging (to the local community) offence of 'supplying', where the accused was in possession of large amounts of drugs or involved / suspected of being involved in the drugs trade, than 'misuse' which was related to smaller amounts of drugs more likely to be for personal use (and potentially less damaging to the local community). Examination of these charges showed that a slightly lower number were found to be related to supply than misuse (84 compared with 87). Recorded crime data for 2015-16 showed that there were 3,976 crimes recorded of 'possession of drugs with intent to supply'. There were also high numbers of crimes of drug possession (29,929)[42]. These figures demonstrate the vast scale of drug crime in Scotland and may suggest that the numbers of charges within the 2013/14 sample are in fact relatively small in relation to what is known about drug-related SOC activity. This may be related to some of the data limitations described at the outset of this report.

The high proportion of motor vehicle offences; 30% of the total number of charges is likely to be reflective of police activity and operational decisions more generally and is less likely to specifically relate to SOC activity. This explanation may also account for

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[41] Wedlock, E, Tapley, J (2016) What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment

[42] Scottish Government (2016) *Recorded Crime in Scotland 2015-16*

the relatively high proportion of breach of the peace charges which constitute 40% of the total number of offences contained within the miscellaneous offending category.

A recent review of the literature on SOC and its impacts warned against conceptualising SOC as the aggregate of individual crimes perpetrated against individuals. Rather, it highlighted the range of activities of groups and the complexity of impacts which can be broad, and affect many more people than those directly involved. Wider societal harms can include fear of crime as well as the loss of revenue for public services, and negative impacts on business, therefore a true assessment of harm has to account for impacts that go beyond a straightforward number of victims[43]. Indeed Innes argues that some crimes act as 'signals' alerting the public to the fact that there are problems in the community. Although a crime itself may be relatively minor, it may create social anxiety around the fact that things may get worse, particularly if 'signal' crimes are perceived as not being adequately dealt with. Thus even relatively minor offences can be seen to have a significant impact on community wellbeing[44].

Aggravations added to charges

Aggravations were added to just under a third of the total number of charges (31%). Table 7 sets out the main aggravations. While the majority of charges had no aggravation added, the most common aggravation was offending whilst on bail, which was added to 186 charges, constituting just over a fifth (23%) of charges overall. A previous study analysing the use and impact of aggravated sentences for bail offenders provides some context for this finding, which found the overall rate of offending on bail across 7 courts was 29% in 2001 and that accused bailed for crimes of dishonesty (with a 40% rate of offending whilst on bail) were more likely to offend on bail than any other group. It also found that men were more likely to offend whilst on bail than women and that younger accused were more likely to offend on bail than older accused[45].

A small percentage of aggravations were connected to serious organised crime (2% of the overall charges). The aggravation referred to is section 29 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. An offence is aggravated by a connection with serious organised crime if the person committing the offence is motivated by the objective of committing or conspiring to commit serious organised crime. This aggravation could potentially apply to a wide variety of offences, across a whole range of criminal activities connected to organised crime. For example; driving offences, theft, drug offences, assaults (motivated by intimidation or "enforcement" action) and murder. The aggravation can be proved by a single source of evidence. This aggravation will be recorded in the criminal history record, highlighting the connection to serious organised crime[46].

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[43] Scottish Government. (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A Summary of the Evidence*

[44] Innes, M (2014) *Signal crimes, social reactions to crime, disorder and control*, Oxford University Press

[45] Scottish Government (2001) *Offending on bail, an analysis of the use and impact of aggravated sentences for bail offenders*

[46] In the process of plea adjustment the aggravation in a charge should not be removed by a prosecutor where there still exists available and admissible evidence which is sufficient to secure a conviction.

Domestic abuse aggravations were added to 4% of charges, while breach of undertaking aggravations were added to 1% of the overall charges. Undertakings are issued by the police and involve liberating the accused on an undertaking to attend court on a specified date (usually within one month of their release[47]). Other offending aggravations were attached to less than 1% of charges.

Table 7: Aggravations added to charges

Aggravation type	No.	%
No aggravation	551	69%
Offending whilst on bail	186	23%
Domestic abuse	31	4%
Connected to SOC*	18	2%
Breach of undertaking	9	1%
Other offending **	4	0.5%
Total**	**799**	100

*Includes duplicate aggravations (for example 3 included bail connected with SOC which was classified under 'connected to SOC')

** Other includes offence against a child, racially and religiously aggravated offending and prejudice relating to transgender identity.

Location of charges by local authority

Table 8 shows where the charges were made by local authority area in 2013/14. Glasgow had the highest number of charges accounting for just under a quarter (24%) of those recorded (194 in total). This may be related to Glasgow being the largest population centre in Scotland and also to the fact that an estimated 67% of SOCGs remain located in the West of Scotland (compared with 22% in the East and 11% in the North)[48]. The next highest number of charges was in Fife, which recorded 16% of charges (128 in total), followed by Edinburgh which recorded 14% of charges (110). Combined, North and South Lanarkshire recorded 10% of charges (78 in total), while other local authority areas accounted for 5% or less of the total charges (including Aberdeen city, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dumfries and Galloway etc.). For a number of local authorities, no charges were recorded (including East Dunbartonshire, Eilean Siar etc.).

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[47] Scottish Government (2012) *Summary Justice Reform, Undertakings evaluation*

[48] Scottish Government (2016) *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy – Annual Report - 2016*

Table 8: Charges by local authority area 2013/14

Local authority	No.	%
Aberdeen city	27	3
Aberdeenshire	10	1
Angus	30	4
Argyll and Bute	3	0
Clackmannanshire	1	0
Dumfries & Galloway	20	2
Dundee city	24	3
East Ayrshire	18	2
East Dunbartonshire	0	0
East Lothian	13	2
East Renfrewshire	1	0
Edinburgh, City of	110	14
Eilean Siar	0	0
Falkirk	3	0
Fife	128	16
Glasgow	194	24
Highland	28	5
Inverclyde	4	0.5
Midlothian	7	1
Moray	7	1
North Ayrshire	3	0
North Lanarkshire	40	5
Orkney Islands	0	0
Perth & Kinross	4	0.5
Scottish Borders	0	0
Shetland Islands	0	0
Renfrewshire	17	2
South Ayrshire	15	2
South Lanarkshire	38	5
Stirling	21	3
West Dunbartonshire	16	2
West Lothian	17	2
Total	799	100%

Further breakdown of charges by local authority area reveals different patterns in the types of charges across the three local authorities with the highest number of charges. Chart 3 sets out the percentage of charges by the 7 key crime / offence groups broken down by Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow local authorities. This shows that Fife has the highest proportion of 'crimes of dishonesty': 35% (mainly accounted for by charges for shoplifting and other theft - 26 of the total 45 charges in this category), whereas Glasgow has the highest proportion of 'other crimes (including drugs)': 30%. The majority of charges in Glasgow within this crime category relate to drugs with a higher number involving the misuse of drugs than supply (40 of the total 59 charges in this category are for drug supply/misuse). Glasgow also has the highest proportion of charges relating to motor vehicle offences (41%). Edinburgh has a slightly higher proportion of miscellaneous offences: 33%, largely accounted for by common assault and breach of the peace charges (26 of the total 36 charges in this category). As well as differences in the profile of offending, these differences may possibly reflect different police activity and operations in different areas and local policing priorities. These patterns also broadly reflect the residence of offenders by local authority, which

suggests that offenders may be particularly active in the local authorities where they reside (see table 3 for further detail).

Chart 3 Percentage of charges by crime / offence group broken down Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow local authorities
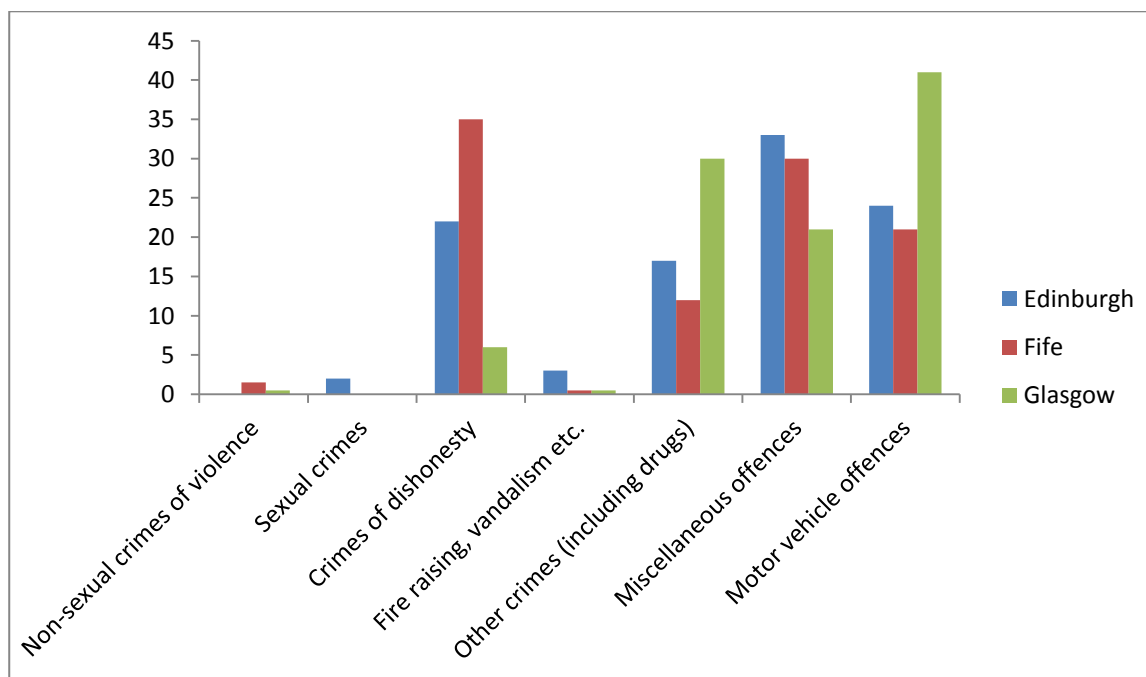
Locus of offence

Table 9 shows the locus of where the offences occurred. The most common location for the offences was on a road with 262 charges in 2013-14 (33% of total locus). This is likely to reflect the high number of motor vehicle offences. The second most common locus for offences was domestic dwelling with 248 charges in 2013-14 (31% of total locus). This is likely to be attributed to the high number of drug supplying and drug misuse crimes (see table 6). Just over a tenth (13%) were recorded as occurring in a place of business.

Table 9: Locus of offence

| Locus	No.	%
Communication[49]	9	1
Domestic dwelling	248	31
Main street	69	9
Place of business	101	13
Police station	13	2
Prison/Court	21	3
Pub / club	8	1
Residential area	49	6
Road	262	33
Other[50]	19	2
Total	799	100

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[49] These charges relate to abusive and threatening communications by phone or social media.

[50] Other includes: Online fraud (3), council building (1), Music festival (1), Place of worship (1), Public Park (2), Sheltered Housing (1), Hospital (2), Field (2) and Public Transport (2). 4 relate to pollution related charges involving potential harm to the local environment.

Day of the week and time

Chart 4 shows the days of the week that the charges occurred. The weekend days of Saturday and Sunday had the lowest number of charges. This is likely to be a reflection of proactive operational police activity with police arrests more likely to be spread through the week in comparison with night-time economy related crime.

Chart 4: Percentage of charges by day of the week
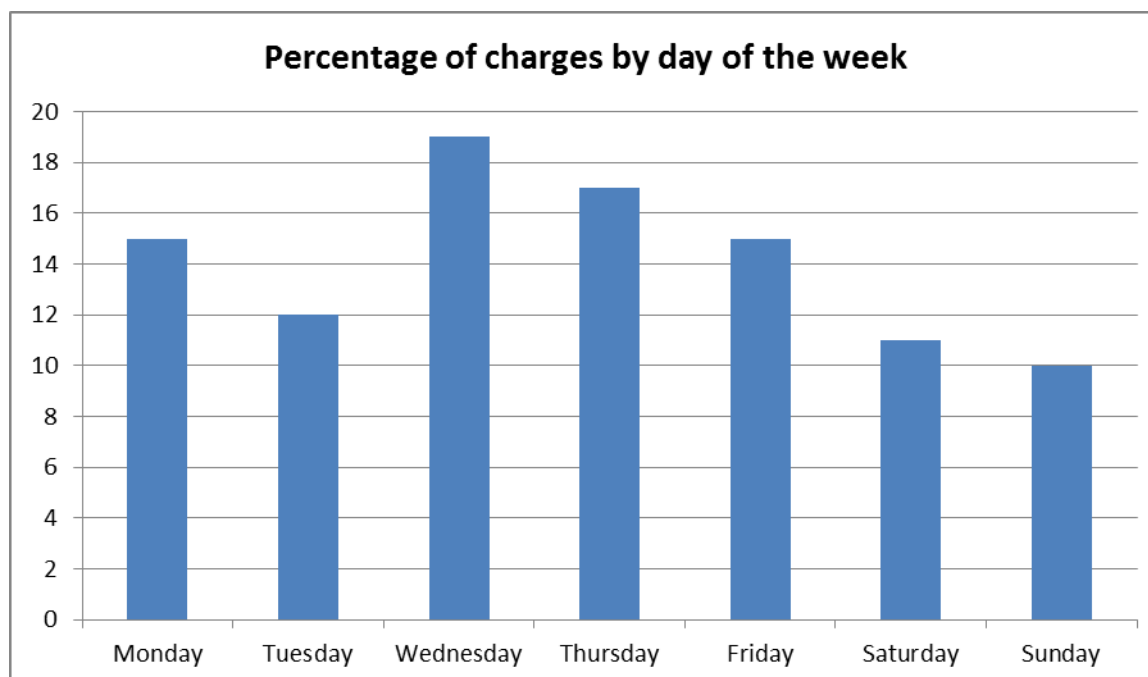
Similarly, examination of the time offences occurred shows that midday – four pm was the peak time for charges to occur, with just under a quarter of charges (23%) happening at this time (table 10). Again this may be reflective of police operational activity.

Table 10: Time charge occurred

Time charge occurred	No.	%
00:00 – 3:59	79	10
04:00 – 07:59	34	4
08:00 - 11:59	149	19
12:00 - 15:59	183	23
16:00 - 19:59	123	15
20:00 - 23:59	123	15
Unavailable	108	14
Total	799	100

6. Conclusions/Summary of Key Findings

This research study was undertaken to provide a greater understanding of the offending behaviour of people who are classified as organised criminals. It examined the range and nature of offending behaviour, the types of crimes that were committed and their severity. This was to understand in more detail the connections between different types of offending, and the implications of this for how organised crime is understood and addressed.

Under half of the total sample (48%) were reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) for crimes in 2013-14. This constituted 235 accused who were charged for 799 crimes in 2013/14. Based on estimates for the overall population this finding suggests that there may have been somewhere in the region of 8,000 charges for the complete population of 4,892 nominals over the same period. Individuals within the sample were typically reported for 2 criminal charges (median figure) although the number of crimes for each person ranged from 1 to 26.

The majority of offenders were aged 21-30 (40%) followed by (33%) A small minority were aged under 20 or over 61. Of those accused, the vast majority were men (only 11% of those accused were women). Men recorded a higher number of offences overall.

At the time of the crime committed, the majority (54%) of those who were charged were recorded as unemployed and forty-three per cent were recorded as employed. Offenders were represented in almost all of the major employment groups, and were represented across a wide range of occupations. This may reflect the dynamics of SOC groups and support other analysis, e.g. according to recent Police Scotland Management Information data, an estimated 66% of SOCGs are involved in seemingly legitimate businesses.

Examination of charges by local authority area showed that Glasgow had the highest number of charges accounting for just under a quarter (24%) of those recorded. This may be related to Glasgow being the largest population centre in Scotland and also to the fact that an estimated 67% of SOCGs remain located in the West of Scotland (compared with 22% in the East and 11% in the North)[51]. The next highest number of charges was in Fife, which recorded 16% of charges, followed by Edinburgh which recorded 14% of charges.

Further breakdown of charges by local authority area revealed different patterns in the types of charges across the three local authorities with the highest number of charges. Reasons for this is unclear, but these differences are likely to reflect police operational strategy and activity in different areas and local policing priorities.

Examination of the home postcodes for people who were charged provides insight into the relationship between SOC and location. For offender records where postcode was available, analysis showed that SOC offenders within the sample came from 25 local authorities across Scotland, the highest proportion of whom resided in Glasgow, followed by Edinburgh and Fife. These proportions are likely to reflect a combination of factors including the population concentration in these areas, SOC activity, as well as police operational activity. Broadly speaking these patterns reflect the location of charges by local authority, which may suggest that offenders are particularly active in the local authorities where they reside.

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[51] Scottish Government (2016) *Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy – Annual Report - 2016*

Examination of postcode data by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation also suggests a correlation between involvement in SOC and inequality. A high proportion of those accused of criminal offending were recorded as residing in areas characterised by multiple deprivation, although some caution should be attached to this finding as it is may be reflective of police activity in certain areas, and the identification of groups and individuals who are more conspicuous. Nonetheless, a recent review of the literature recognized that while SOC exacerbates inequality, it is also a symptom of it, with a stronger presence in areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged[52].

Charge data was broken down by crimes and offences employing the standard system of classification used in the recorded crime in Scotland bulletin series. "Crime" is generally used for the more serious criminal acts; the less serious are termed "offences". Examination of charges shows a slightly higher proportion of offence charges (52%) than crimes (48%) and reveals therefore that individuals involved in SOC are involved in a range of different criminal activities, just under half of which may generally be described as more serious in nature.

An important caveat to bear in mind in consideration of the charge data is that: while offenders were identified as having involvement in SOC, and the purpose of the study was to look at all offending, it was not possible to break down charges related specifically to SOC (because recording practices do not include this within charge descriptions) with the exception of where a SOC aggravation was added in a small minority (2%) of cases. For example, charges of vandalism, breach of the peace and motor vehicle offences may be part of wider criminal offending behaviour (and relate to proactive policing and attempts to disrupt activity), whereas crimes involving the supply of drugs, and fraud are more clearly associated with operational definitions of SOC and therefore likely to involve it directly. However, developing a better awareness of all the offending behaviour of those identified as being involved in SOC is relevant in understanding how to address it, and reduce associated societal harm.

Examination of offending data shows that, SOC nominals are typically involved in criminal activity across all crime categories, including vandalism, anti-social behaviour and motor vehicle crime, which suggests general offending as well as potential specialist offending for this group. Motor vehicle offences (group 7) account for the highest proportion of all charges (30%) and involve a range of offending behaviours including unlawful use of a vehicle, seatbelt and mobile phone offences and speeding (constituting 71% of charges within this group). Just over a quarter of charges (26%) fall under group 5: 'other crimes' of which drug related charges constitute the highest number (82% of charges within this group). Indeed a quarter (25%) of those identified as involved in SOC activity who had offended in 2013-14 faced drug crime (either supply or misuse) charges.

Just over a fifth of charges (22%) are within group 6 'Miscellaneous offences'; the majority of which involve common assault and breach of the peace etc. A slightly smaller proportion of charges (18.6%) fall into category 3 – crimes of dishonesty – over half of which involve shoplifting and other theft.

Only a small minority of the overall crimes/offences fall into the first (and most serious) two categories, non-sexual crimes of violence and sexual crimes (1.4%).

Comparison with recorded crime data for the same period was also conducted, to assess whether the offending patterns of those involved in SOC differ from the general offending

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[52] Scottish Government. (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A Summary of the Evidence*

population. This revealed that a high proportion of crimes for SOC offenders (26%) fall under group 5, 'other crimes' of which drug related charges constitute the highest number. This is considerably higher than the proportion of crimes in group 5 for all recorded crime (8%) and is likely to be attributable to the higher proportion of drug related offences committed by serious organised criminals[53]. Indeed, an estimated 65% of Scottish SOC groups are thought to be involved in the supply and distribution of illegal drugs[54]. Otherwise, offending patterns are broadly comparable, albeit with higher proportions of charges recorded in the general offending population for group 6, 'miscellaneous offences' and group 7 'motor vehicle offences'.

Based on this evidence, and to the extent that these recorded crimes reflect the behaviour and activities of the people who were studied (as opposed to being a consequence of policing activity), then this suggests that the impact of the behaviour of organised criminals is not isolated to the crimes they commit within a narrow definition of organised criminal offending. Indeed, offending data suggests that there are likely to be a range of negative impacts and harms arising from the criminal activity of those identified as being involved in serious organised crime, including anti-social behaviour, common assault, driving offences etc. This involvement in a wide range of offending behaviour may have consequences for both how SOC problems, and wider community safety problems are managed.   While the nature of offending ranges in degrees of seriousness, it is important to bear in mind the complexity of impacts, which can be broad. The wider literature suggests that societal harm can include more widespread effects, such as increasing and exacerbating societal unease and fear of crime, which may impact on a range of social behaviours in terms of influencing where people choose to live, work and socialise. It may also have adverse impacts on public services and local businesses in terms of financial revenue and reputation[55].

While analysis of these records provide some insight into the characteristics and offending behaviour of those involved in SOC, it is clear that there are a number of limitations attached. The intelligence data from the police comprises those who have been prioritised as important from an operational point of view, this means that information is limited by the available resources and information available to law enforcement agencies. The mapping system therefore does not provide a complete account of all SOC offending in Scotland; as not all crime is reported or documented by the police. In addition, the covert nature of serious organised crime offending means that it may not always be apparent to law enforcement officers, or in fact classified in this way. This analysis should therefore be understood in terms of how SOC was documented within the intelligence base at the time (2013-14), during which Police Scotland operated performance targets, one of which entailed the arrest of individuals involved in SOC. This may have led to the inclusion of a high proportion of lower-level nominals who are more peripherally linked to serious organised crime group activities, but it is also important to recognise that police might make decisions to charge people for more 'minor' crimes for the purposes of disruption and in the knowledge that they are involved in larger crimes. Relatedly, more serious SOC criminals are less likely to be caught for discrete individual offences, with less senior

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[53] For SOC offending charges drug crimes constituted 82% within the 'other' crime category compared with 56% for the total offending population in the recorded crime statistics.

[54] Scottish Government. (2017) *Serious Organised Crime in Scotland: A Summary of the Evidence*

[55] Bruce J. Doran, Melissa B. Burgess. (2012) *Why is fear of crime a serious social problem?* In: Bruce J. Doran, Melissa B. Burgess. Putting fear of crime on the map : Investigating Perceptions of Crime Using Geographic Information Systems. (Springer Series on Evidence-Based Crime Policy)

members of the group responsible for more routine and riskier forms of offending. The sample may therefore over-represent those offenders who are more routinely identified and targeted by police.

Future research in this area may benefit from the incorporation of appropriately anonymised qualitative indicators drawn from police intelligence (such as offender's role in SOCG and whether they are considered low, mid or high level operatives within the group, areas of core criminality etc.). In addition, longitudinal analysis of data and stratification of the sample (as identified on the SOCG map) would allow better understanding of offenders criminal career trajectories over time and those involved in more prolific/serious offending. Finally, while this analysis has focussed on those SOC nominals who had offended in 2013/14, it would also be beneficial to explore the records of those who were not reported for any offences in the sampled year to explore possible differences between the two groups.

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