

# Preface

In countering serious and organized crime, including terrorism, foresight of emerging threats is extremely important as it provides a strategic advantage over the potential adversaries, allowing the security and law enforcement forces to organize their capacity as needed to meet the threats. The emergence of such threats is to a high degree driven by the development of a combination of certain factors in the environment of the PESTLE (political, economic, social and demographic, technological, legal, and environmental) situation in a region.

Open data provide a rich basis for extracting information and deriving strategic intelligence, allowing us to spot development of such crime-relevant factors early and thereby to foresee threats that are likely to emerge. For our purpose, the open data comprise publicly available data and information in any form, in particular electronically through the Internet, which can be accessed legally and ethically.

Due to the huge amount of open source information, in various forms and of various qualities, there is a need for a system solution for monitoring the sources and extracting valid relevant information in due time. The project ePOOLICE ([www.epoolice.eu](http://www.epoolice.eu)), is a project in the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union, aimed at developing such a solution.

This book contains a collection of papers on a topic considered particularly important for this purpose, namely “factors driving future crime,” which was the topic of one of the ePOOLICE workshops held as discussion fora among technicians, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders. The aim of the workshop was to highlight and review some factors considered as catalyzer of organized crime. The objective was to evaluate the trend of the selected factors, identify the potential weak signals, and suggest the appropriate response (e.g., combination of technological resources and human actors that serves to improve the process of assessing new organized crime threats).

This book comprises both relevant theory (strategic analysis, measures of crime, methodology, etc.) and presentation of practical cases with focus on relevant aspects of these cases. It describes several interesting results and ideas that were presented and discussed during the workshop. Several issues and questions provide challenges for future work. This book is organized as follows:

## Chapters 1–2 Introduce Some Key Concepts

Chapter “[Organised Crime as a Framework Concept](#)” provides an overview of the situation of the research of organized crime in its different dimensions. It provides a discussion of organized crime as a reference framework, in order to delimit the scope of this crime as complex criminological phenomena, and then presents and analyzes some key issues in organized crime research.

Chapter “[Measuring Organised Crime: Complexities of the Quantitative and Factorial Analysis](#)” focusses on the measurement of organized crime and the need for a quantitative approach; it further proposes and discusses a methodological approach to quantitative data and the development of trustworthy indicators.

## Chapters 3–9 Focus Methodological Aspects

Chapter “[Scanning of Open Data for Detection of Emerging Organized Crime Threats—The ePOOLICE Project](#)” presents the ePOOLICE project that was aimed at developing efficient and effective system for scanning the open data detection emerging organized crime threats. It introduces the problem and the methodological framework considered and outlines the principles of the solution developed and how the project was organized.

Chapter “[Foresight and the Future of Crime: Advancing Environmental Scanning Approaches](#)” introduces and provides a detailed outline of environmental scanning and the early warning systems’ framework for crime detection and prevention in a predictive policing context using foresight methodology such as weak signals, facilitating factors, horizon scanning, and leading indicators.

Chapter “[Big Data—Fighting Organized Crime Threats While Preserving Privacy](#)” deals with the challenge of balancing privacy and national security in connection with big data-driven sense-making systems for crime fighting. Throughout, it refers to the prototype system from the ePOOLICE project to illustrate the various issues discussed.

Chapter “[Horizon Scanning for Law Enforcement Agencies: Identifying Factors Driving the Future of Organized Crime](#)” proposes and articulates a methodology for law enforcement agencies to identify factors driving future crime. For this purpose, it outlines the use of horizon scanning for Open Sources of Information (OSINF), i.e., open data, leading to the development of actionable Open Sources of Intelligence (OSINT), which is fast becoming an integral part of the prevention, investigation, and detection of contemporary organized crime.

Chapter “[Macro-environmental Factors Driving Organised Crime](#)” proposes a new methodological model, as an intelligence process, for analyzing the future of organized crime in the times of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) environments. The model provides a schematic view on trends and security outcomes for different PESTLE dimensions. For each trend, the framework

applied shows drivers, indicators, degree of evidence, time range and outcomes, qualified by the degree of uncertainty. This model allows monitoring future development of identified trends, generating knowledge and intelligence to support decision making.

Chapter “[Extracting Future Crime Indicators from Social Media](#)” introduces a generic intelligence-driven process for extracting indicators from social media, describes a concrete implementation, and illustrates its interest and strength on two experiments. Based on the experimental findings, it proposes a generic framework for the construction of crime indicators from social media feeds.

Chapter “[Organised Crime, Wild Cards and Dystopias](#)” considers the challenges for foresight of future organized crime threats and presents a methodological approach, including techniques and tools that can help to create this vision of the future from the future (and not from the present, as proposed in previous chapters): wild cards, scenarios, backcasting, “what if,” and dystopias. Imagination and creativity must be a part of the sources of knowledge and the methodological approaches are needed to understand and manage the future.

## **Chapters 10–12 Present and Analyze Some Concrete Use Cases**

Chapter “[Operation Golf: A Human Trafficking Case Study](#)” presents a UK and Romania Joint Investigation, Operation Golf, tackling Romanian organized crime and child trafficking. It provides detailed information about how the investigation was organized and run, as well as about the outcome of the investigation. In a prologue by the editors, it is outlined how open data intelligence can help such investigations in several ways.

Chapter “[Radicalization in a Regional Context: Future Perspective on Possible Terrorist Threats and Radicalization](#)” deals with several theories of radicalization and the extremist ideologies behind. It presents a number of possible future radicalization scenarios and highlights drivers and indicators. It also focuses on the role of the media to illustrate the use and abuse of the media by violent extremist groups.

Chapter “[Why Do Links Between Terrorism and Crime Increase?](#)” examines the nexus terror crime and the various insights in the field, its possible forms, and the main criminal activities involved. The factors and enhancers of the current convergence between terrorism and crime are analyzed. Special attention is given to the causes that enable and prompt terrorist involvement in criminal acts and relationships with criminal groups.

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Factors Driving Future Crime

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