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Criminal Organizing

Studies in the sociology of organized crime

Amir Rostami

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To my mother, for her sacrifices, guidance, and faith.

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List of original studies

- Study I:** Rostami, A., Leinfelt, F., & Holgersson, S. (2012). An Exploratory Analysis of Swedish Street Gangs: Applying the Maxson and Klein Typology to a Swedish Gang Dataset. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 28 (3), 426–445.
- Study II:** Rostami, A., Leinfelt, F., & Brotherton, D. C. (2012). Understanding gang leaders: Characteristics and driving forces of street gang leaders in Sweden. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*, 40 (2), 1–20.
- Study III:** Rostami, A., Melde, C., & Holgersson, S. (2015). The myth of success: the emergence and maintenance of a specialized gang unit in Stockholm, Sweden. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 39 (3), 199–217.
- Study IV:** Rostami, A., & Mondani, H. (2015). The Complexity of Crime Network Data: A Case Study of Its Consequences for Crime Control and the Study of Networks. *PLoS ONE*, 10 (3).
- Study V:** Rostami, A., Mondani, H., Liljeros, F., & Edling, C. (Manuscript). Criminal organizing: Applying the theory of partial organization to four cases of criminal collaboration.

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Amir Rostami
Stockholm, April 2016

“The chief problem in any community cursed with crime is not the punishment of the criminals, but the preventing of the young from being trained to crime.”

—W. E. B. Du Bois

Introduction

“This is organized crime.”

May 2014, in a case against the left-wing extremist group Revolutionära Fronten (*Revolutionary Front*) (Åklagarmyndigheten 2014), the public prosecutor declared in her closing argument to the Stockholm district court:

“They are always several [people], they are almost always hooded, they move in a block, and publicize afterward what they have done. They even spray RF [Revolutionary Front], sign under their crimes, and say, ‘Look, here we are.’ This is organized crime”¹ (Svenska Dagbladet 2014).

The label and concept of organized crime is used in empirical investigations, policy planning, and legal instruments as if it were obvious and clearly defined. However, the statement made by the public prosecutor is one example among many of how organized crime has become an umbrella term used to label various forms of group-oriented criminality as “organized crime,” irrespective of whether the criminal act was conducted by a highly organized criminal enterprise, such as an outlaw motorcycle-gang, or by an institutionalized organization, such as a mafia, or by a loosely structured gang, such as a street gang, or was an ideologically motivated criminal act carried out by violent extremists (e.g., SOU 2014a:63). The interlock of terrorism, extremism, and organized crime, sometimes labeled “narco-terrorism,” “hybrid movements,” or “political-social organized crime,” is nothing new in crime policy narratives. In fact, everything from extreme right to extreme left movements, from takfirists to other ideologically inspired extremists, are often lumped together with traditional forms of crime under the rubric of organized crime (Albini and McIlwain 2012; Ceccarelli 2007; von Lampe 2016; Levi 2007; Sullivan and Bunker 2002). However, it often seems that only forms of blue-collar crime are framed as organized crime. For no substantive reason, white-collar crime—sometimes labeled financial crime—committed by groups with a higher social status tends to fall outside this framing. It is implicitly clear that the label “organized crime” is used to denote law-breaking acts committed by underprivileged groups rather than as a

¹ Original quote in Swedish: “De är alltid flera personer, de är nästan alltid maskerade, rör sig i klump och sprider efteråt information kring vad man gjort. Man till och med sprayar “RF,” signerar sina brott och säger “titta här är vi!” (Svenska Dagbladet 2014).

framework for criminal collaboration overall.² Since there is no common understanding of organized crime, the concept is reified as an objective reality with the assumption of clear characteristics and boundaries (Calster 2010; Peterson 2016), and actors in the policy sector, e.g., politicians and judicial and penal institutions can—intentionally or unintentionally—interpret and use the term *organized crime* politically, as a tool to stir the emotions and fears of a target audience. The public prosecutor quoted above, for example, used the specter of organized crime to influence the members of the court, while politicians use such statements to instill fear in the general public as a prelude to introducing controversial coercive measures (Altheide 2006; Flyghed 2002; Hörnqvist and Flyghed 2012).

A similar pattern is found in the study of organized crime, where organized crime is understood and presented as an objective reality rather than what it actually is, a collection of abstractions of underlying concepts, all too often based on anecdotal evidence and generic descriptions (Albanese 1994; von Lampe 2016). When the concept of organized crime is deconstructed, it becomes evident that organized crime is an overarching abstraction for a range of underlying concepts, such as “gang,” “mafia,” and “network,” which in turn, constitute semi-overarching and overlapping abstractions of different criminal phenomena, such as “syndicates,” “street-gangs,” and “drug networks” (see chapter 3). This combination of a generic concept based on underlying dimensions, which are themselves subject to similar conceptual difficulties, has given rise to conceptual confusion surrounding organized crime. In the end, the question of where the boundaries between what is and is not organized crime should be drawn becomes so diffuse and arbitrary that the concept becomes well-nigh useless as an analytical or descriptive framework for understanding aspects of criminal collaboration, irrespective of whether the focus is on its genesis, composition, degree, or societal impact. Despite many attempts, research on organized crime, criminal justice systems, and criminal policy has failed to provide a shared, recognized conceptual definition of organized crime.

In this dissertation I argue that organized crime is an overarching concept based on an abstraction of underlying dimensions—such as mafias, gangs, and crime networks, which I describe as forms of criminal collaboration—but which does not fulfill the intrinsic aim of a concept, which is to delineate the characteristics of an entire class of phenomena based on a complete set of empirical manifestations (Becker 2008; Goertz 2012). I argue that “organized crime” has become a “chaotic concept,” a “bad abstraction that arbitrarily divides the indivisible and/or lumps together the unrelated and the inessential, thereby ‘carving up’ the object of study with little or no regard for its structure and form” (Sayer 1992:138). One example of a chaotic con-

² Which would include, for example, the Enron bankruptcy of 2001, the Telia corruption scandal of 2014, and the corruption within FIFA in 2015.

cept, as described by Andrew Sayer, is the concept of “services,” which “covers an enormous variety of activities which neither form structures nor interact causally to any significant degree and many which lack anything significant in common” (Sayer 1992:138).

Organized crime has been understood to be intrinsically different from non-criminal organizational processes, and this has been used to justify treating it as a separate conceptual entity. The insistence on using organized crime as an overarching concept, despite its limitations, has resulted in the absence of a unified understanding of what constitutes organized crime and its underlying dimensions, and has created obstacles to achieving a better understanding of criminal offenses carried out by means of some form of criminal collaboration. The consequences of the conceptual confusion are not an issue of semantics alone, but also involve both legal and policy implications and implications for our understanding of the nature of criminal collaboration. Overall, five consequences are identified in this dissertation: 1) *the coexistence of a variety of definitions and a loss of generalizability and comparability*; 2) *the creation of an umbrella term without any intrinsic analytical power*; 3) *the single-dimensional approach and its limitations in capturing the coexistence of a whole spectrum of criminal collaboration*; and finally 4) *negative policy implications* and 5) *legislative consequences*.

First, more than one hundred attempts (n=131) have been made to define what organized crime is (for the number of definitions see von Lampe 2015; Varese 2010). It is easy to get lost in a jungle of definitions; this brings with it problems of comparability since it is difficult to address all aspects of the more than one hundred definitions of organized crime. This, in turn, hampers our ability to comprehend what types of criminal phenomena are associated with organized crime, since we simply do not know which definition is most appropriate—or why 130 of the 131 definitions should be excluded. Consequently, insisting on the use of organized crime as an analytical concept based on one of these myriad definitions may stymie the development of new research questions in the study of criminal collaboration.

Second, when a variety of crime problems are simply defined as organized crime, organized crime is turned into an umbrella concept with no intrinsic analytical power for understanding the continuum of “crimes” that are somewhat “organized.” For example, as early as 1971, Dwight C. Smith (Smith 1971:10) noted that organized crime was “a concept so overburdened with stereotyped imagery that it cannot meet the basic requirements of a definition—it does not include all the phenomena that are relevant; it does not exclude all the phenomena that are not relevant”. A *third* aspect is that studies of organized crime tend to see crime manifestations through a single lens and as being located at one extreme on a continuum of social relations. Typically, organized crime is described either as a form of social organization, an institution, or a network. This approach is problematic in the sense that analyses of individual cases and individual conceptualizations do not

capture the coexistence of a whole spectrum of criminal collaborations or the social interactions that occur between them. Instead of studying the interplay of different dimensions of criminal collaboration, research on organized crime tends to be restricted to four main models or perspectives: *the bureaucracy model*; *extra-legal governance* or *the patron-client model*; and a perspective focused on sets of *network relations* in the form of an overlapping and intersecting model (Albanese 1994; von Lampe 2016).

A *fourth* aspect is that the conceptual confusion has potential policy implications. The insistence on using a disputed framework based on underlying concepts of illegal enterprises, structures, activities, extra-legal governance, etc., and on definitions of other far less abstract concepts (see von Lampe 2016), creates an array of difficulties in framing any particular crime phenomenon and does not distinguish between various forms of criminal collaboration in terms of social responses and policing (e.g., Goldstein 1990; Klein and Maxson 2006). The vagueness and generic nature of definitions and concepts of organized crime has led to researchers, practitioners, and policy planners being unable to clearly define features that are important for understanding and confronting the challenges presented by criminal groups (Finckenauer 2005; Rostami 2016). There is a broad consensus among scholars that problem identification must be the first step in crime control. Different levels of crime problems require different types of policies and measures. Without assessing the problem and identifying which of its dimensions need to be targeted, policies, laws, and other actions will be based on diffuse and inaccurate assessments, which will in turn have negative policy implications. As a consequence, society's efforts will be misguided, and at best ineffective and at worst downright counterproductive.

A *fifth* aspect is the legal implications. Despite uncertainty as to where the boundaries of organized crime should be drawn, a wide range of societal problems are assessed and labeled as organized crime. From a legal perspective, when these boundaries are overstretched, the result may be a general inflation in the severity of penalties and an erosion of civil rights and personal integrity. For example, if minor offences are linked to an organized crime phenomenon, penal and judicial institutions may seek to impose ever-harsher sentences (Symeonidou-Kastanidou 2007). Another example is found in the policy of "normalizing the exceptional" (Flyghed 2002), which basically occurs when controversial coercive measures are introduced exclusively to counteract organized and serious crime, but are based on a range of different fears. Measures may come to include the preventive use of wire-tapping; over time, however, these coercive measures become normalized, and the fight against organized crime or terrorism becomes an excuse to use the same methods to combat more common offenses (Flyghed 2002:23). In sum, since no common understanding of organized crime exists, actors in the political discourse, penal and judicial system, such as the courts and law enforcement, are able to use the term "organized crime" to their own ad-

vantage, while inadvertently eroding civil rights and freedoms (Kingzig 1998). Despite the lack of a “core understanding of the nature of organized crime” (von Lampe 2016:34), there have been many legislative and operational attempts to frame organized crime as an umbrella concept for criminal collaboration. These efforts have expanded and contracted depending on the context, but have never overcome national and disciplinary differences by introducing a universally recognized framework of organized crime. Sweden is no exception. Although studies of criminal collaboration have been carried out since the 1940s (e.g., Centralförbundet för Socialt arbete 1941), the debate in Sweden has generally revolved around the existence and impact of organized crime rather than its nature, dimensions, and degree (Rostami 2013). A continued insistence on operationalizing current concepts of organized crime and using them as an analytical framework thwarts the development of new research questions and areas that might improve our understanding of criminal collaboration. It has been suggested that one of the main obstacles to conceptualizing organized crime has not been the element of “crime,” but the notion of “organized” (Finckenauer 2005; Gottschalk 2009). However, as far back as ancient Greece people have been curious about why and how order is created—and how disorder can be countered by means of organizing principles (Harle 1998). There is no intrinsic reason to treat criminal organizing principles differently from those considered non-criminal, especially since notions of criminality are fluid, depending on time and context. Instead we need to use the vast amount of research on organizing principles to understand why and how criminal organizing arises and what conditions are conducive to criminal organizing.

The aim of this dissertation is thus to discuss and examine whether organized crime is intrinsically different from social organizing per se, and whether it is or not, how we might use the insights of sociology in general and the vast literature on organizational theory in particular to advance the study of organized crime and to contribute to clarifying the conceptual confusion surrounding the term and concept, thereby addressing its consequences (see chapter 3 and 4). In this dissertation I do this by investigating the interplay between different dimensions of criminal collaboration by asking *What*, *Who*, *Why*, and *How*, in order to shed light on a series of criminal collaborations that occurred in Sweden between 1990 and 2015. *What*, meaning which objects, *who* in the sense of subject actors, *why* meaning risk factors for the emergence of the *what* and the *how*, which focuses on coordination processes. By combining different observers, methods, and empirical materials on dimensions of criminal collaboration, I illustrate the strong analogies that exist between forms of criminal organization and typologies of the theory of social organizations (Ahrne 1994). I argue that “crime” seems to be the only element that distinguishes the organization of various forms of crime from social organization in general (see Smith 1994). Therefore, in addition to the identification of different types of generic criminal

organization, the study of organized crime needs to pay more attention to the various mechanisms of social organization that are common to all types of organizations (Bhaskar 1989; Hedstrom 2005; Sayer 1992). This will lessen the dilemma of overlapping cases since the focus will be directed at the dimension and degree of organizing rather than at finding the “ideal-type” of a complete formal criminal organization (see chapter 4). I further argue that criminal organizing is not intrinsically different from social organizing. Instead, depending on time and context, some actions and forms of organizing are defined as criminal, which is intentionally or unintentionally presumed to be intrinsically different from other forms of social organizing. Since the basis of my argument is that criminal organizing is not intrinsically different from social organizing, I advocate the view that the study of organized crime needs to return to the basic principles of social organization in order to understand the emergence of, and the underlying mechanism that gives rise to, the forms of criminal collaboration that we seek to explain. I do so by presenting an example of a sociological framework for criminal collaborations based on principles of social organization (Ahrne 1990, 1994; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011). This alternative framework—criminal organizing—which is based on social organizational theory, allows different degrees of criminal collaboration to be considered simultaneously—in contrast to previous attempts that have been single-dimensional (e.g., Schelling 1967, 1971)—and constitutes one example of how the study of organized crime can advance and develop a way out of the current conceptual morass.

The outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. After the introduction (chapter 1), I present and discuss the ethics, aims, methods, and empirical materials of the original studies in chapter 2. I devote chapter 3 to exploring the chaotic concept of organized crime and the resultant conceptual confusion, as well as the dimensions and concepts underlying organized crime. My focus will be on the mafia, gangs, and crime networks. This chapter includes a brief discussion of the development of organized crime in Sweden. Chapter 4 constitutes the dissertation’s central chapter and aims to examine whether organized crime is intrinsically different from social organizing. This chapter examines the dimensions of social order and forms of social organizations and presents an alternative conceptual framework, “criminal organizing,” for understanding and analyzing dimensions of criminal collaboration. This framework is viewed as an example how the conceptual confusion resulting from the chaotic concept of organized crime might be clarified. Finally, chapter 5 presents the abstracts of the original studies together with a Swedish summary of the dissertation, and this is followed by the text of the original studies (I-V in chapter 6).

Chapter 2. Comments on ethics, aims, methods, and data

“There are also a number of methodological problems involved in researching this topic. Participants do not want to talk about their illegal activities or admit involvement. Information sources, therefore, must often be circumspect and indirect.” (Lombardo 2012:x)

While organized crime research shares the same challenges as the social sciences in general, such as developing accurate data and questions of reliability, validity, and generalizability, it also faces a unique set of challenges that set limitations on the study of organized crime. One central challenge is the hostility of criminals, who form a largely clandestine sub-population. Those involved in organized crime usually have no interest in sharing their experiences, which could have serious consequences for those who choose to communicate with researchers or journalists, since speaking to outsiders is viewed as revealing secret information. Speaking to outsiders is seen as a kind of betrayal and as “squealing,” no matter who the outsider might be. Not speaking with outsiders, even with other criminals, is one of the main informal rules of the “Code of the Street” (Gambetta 2009). Local populations that are affected by organized crime display a similar collective passivity in relation to discussing organized crime, and people may fear retribution for engaging in social activism against criminal organizations (Travaglino, Abrams, and de Moura 2016).

This challenge makes it difficult to gain access to the field and to primary sources, such as members of criminal organizations, or to conduct survey studies, because no active member would want to risk being discovered participating in a scientific study and having to face potential consequences. For this reason, it is vital to protect the anonymity of those few respondents who dare to participate in such studies. Researchers who study organized crime may themselves be targeted with threats of violence (see Chambliss 1978; Shelley 1998; Williams 2014). Journalists have been murdered for investigating organized crime, including Giuseppe Fava, Mario Francese, Mauro De Mauro, Guillermo Cano Isaza, and Vladislav Listyev, just to name a few (von Lampe 2016).

Other challenges relate to those who are on the front line of the fight against organized crime, namely law enforcement and government officials. These practitioners possess large amounts of information and material on

organized crime activities that are of importance for the study of covert environments. These include wiretapping records, intelligence files, and reports. But this information is generally classified, and is only shared with “outsiders” in exceptional cases. In his study “Organized crime in Chicago” (Lombardo 2012) Robert M. Lombardo, a former member of the Chicago Police Department, explained the reluctance of law enforcement agencies to provide access to data on organized crime. He argued that these agencies have nothing to gain from allowing access to researchers, and that they do not want to “jeopardize their position of dominance in the organized crime control effort” (Lombardo 2012:xi).

Since Sweden has no equivalent to the Certificate of Confidentiality (CoC)—which allows researchers to refuse to disclose the names or other identifying characteristics of research subjects in response to legal demands—law enforcement authorities may demand the material collected by researchers and use it in criminal proceedings. This may create further difficulties in finding respondents who are willing to share their life stories and disclose information that may be important for the study of criminal collaboration.

Despite these challenges and limitations, social scientists have been trying to investigate and understand organized crime for over a century (e.g., Landesco 1929; Pitre 1889; Thrasher 1927). Four primary methods of data collection have typically been used in such research: Interviews, non-participatory field observations, content analysis of official documents, e.g., police records and intelligence files, and quantitative studies of official crime data (Hobbs and Antonopoulos 2014; von Lampe 2016).

Each set of data collection techniques offers its own distinct advantages and entails different methodological challenges. For example, non-participatory observation is more common than participatory observation in research on organized crime; since the primary data involve criminal offenses, participatory observation is ethically problematic, and not usually possible, especially if you have a law enforcement background as I do, which requires the reporting of criminal offenses. Non-participatory observation is therefore the main method of observation, and such data are typically collected by means of surveillance operations. The main limitation of this approach is the inability to ask questions as new information emerges and unanswered questions arise. Interviews are therefore often preferable because they allow researchers to immerse themselves in details in a way that would otherwise not be possible. However, participatory field observation is common when law enforcement itself is studied, as when police officials are followed in their daily work and operations (e.g., Björk 2009).

Interviews are mostly conducted with offenders, former gang members, victims, and experts such as law enforcement officials (e.g., Antonopoulos 2007; Arlacchi 1993; Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Paoli 2003; Rawlinson 2007; Siegel 2008). There are also examples of ethnographic research on

organized crime where the main method of data collection has been field observation, but in combination with interviews (e.g., Adler 1993; Bourgois 2003; Chambliss 1978; Hobbs 1995; Ianni and Reuss-Ianni 1972; Venkatesh 2008; Whyte 1943). A further set of studies on organized crime have been based on some form of analysis of official documents, such as intelligence files and reports (e.g., Blok 1974; Gambetta 1993; Haller 1971; Hess 1973; Kleemans 2013; Kruisbergen, de Jong, and Kleemans 2011) or on quantitative analyses of official crime records, in some cases in the form of network analysis (e.g., Morselli 2009a, 2009b; Natarajan 2006).

In summary, the study of organized crime has its difficulties and limitations, and the main challenge is gaining access to the field and collecting data. Consequently, researchers and investigative journalists engaged in the study of organized crime welcome all kinds of available data that can increase our understanding of the organized crime phenomenon. However, there are ethical dilemmas that need to be addressed when working with offenders, especially with interviews, such as the necessity of obtaining formal consent, taking measures to ensure confidentiality, and explaining the rules for breaking confidentiality as a result of mandatory reporting requirements.

Unfortunately, there is as yet no recognized checklist that can be used to ensure that everything has been taken into consideration. Legal advice can always be obtained by contacting the Ethics Committee, and researchers may also apply for an ethics review, and should prepare every step and aspect of the research as thoroughly as possible.

Despite the challenges of obtaining access to empirical data on organized crime, this dissertation builds on five studies based on sets of qualitative and quantitative empirical material relating to criminal collaboration in Sweden between 1990 and 2015. The data for the dissertation were collected by combining the four main methods for gathering and analyzing empirical material in the field of organized crime research. The empirical materials consist of interviews, field observations obtained through surveillance operations, content analysis of official documents, such as police records, intelligence files and reports, and quantitative studies of official crime data (see table 1).

I have been able to gain access to a field that is hidden from most researchers, mainly thanks to my background as a detective with the Swedish Police, since the material is classified and is accessible only by obtaining special permission. I have been working as a law enforcement officer in the fight against organized crime since 2005 and have continued to do so on a part-time basis in parallel with my doctoral studies. Since the start of my doctoral studies, my work in law enforcement has mainly been in the role of senior advisor rather than as an operational officer. This position has allowed me to access valuable empirical material. I have been able to participate in operations against organized crime and to gain access to surveillance data, wiretapping, and other observations of the illicit activities conducted by

members of criminal groups. Through my position as project manager and intelligence officer I have gained access to intelligence files that have guided me in finding respondents, investigation protocols, court proceedings, and other archival materials. As an interrogator, I have learned to deal with people from different criminal backgrounds, since I am conversant with interrogation techniques and have some basic knowledge on how to approach people who usually do not want to talk to outsiders.

This privileged position is not unique; other researchers have taken a similar path and contributed to the field by gaining access to materials through their positions in law enforcement agencies (e.g., Lombardo 2012).

At first glance, one might question the reliability of empirical material from government agencies. While data from law enforcement agencies may be associated with limitations (see Study IV), it is quite common for researchers to use data gathered from these agencies, particularly in the study of organized crime. In fact, much of our knowledge on criminal collaboration is based on law enforcement data (e.g., Block and Block 1993; Cressey 1969; Lombardo 2012; Decker and Pyrooz 2015:4).

However, opportunities also entail obligations, restraints, and responsibilities. Despite my access to sensitive material, I have been restrictive in my use of references to classified materials in my studies. I have instead waited for court hearings or other public announcements from the Swedish Police and have used these records as references. Since my analysis is based on these records, it is possible for other researchers to study and analyze the same material.

I am aware that my dual role as researcher and detective might be considered problematic to the extent that it may increase the risk of confirmation bias, i.e. the tendency to prefer information that confirms one's own view. My dual role could also be considered problematic because it might encourage dependence, with respondents potentially feeling compelled to participate in interviews. I have therefore made a point of analyzing the data together with co-authors and others in order to reduce the risk of bias. My co-authors have sometimes themselves participated as co-interviewers. Every effort has been made to ensure the confidentiality of each interview, including high-level data encryption. In each instance I have obtained formal consent and explained the rules for breaking confidentiality in cases where reporting is mandatory. I have also applied ethical vetting in accordance with the *Act Concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans* (2003:460) for the parts of my research that involve matching different datasets, and approval has been received from the ethics review board in Stockholm. The application for ethical review was submitted in connection with the research project "*Kriminella nätverk och kriminell organisering*—

En nätverksansats.” (Criminal networks and criminal organizing — A network approach)³

Finally, an overarching challenge associated with the writing of this dissertation has been the issue of how to handle the use of the term “organized crime.” While I criticize the use of the chaotic concept of organized crime, I use the term myself as a general abstraction for a type of study object. Some may find this a careless use of the term. In some instances, its use is inevitable, as is the case when I reference previous research and empirical documentation, or discuss crime policy narratives. I have, however, made a sharp distinction between the term, label, and concept of organized crime and its use as an analytical framework.

Aim and scope

My studies indicate that organized crime has become a chaotic concept (Sayer 1992) in which unrelated aspects of crime are arbitrarily abstracted and combined in a single unbounded concept. The concept is so ambiguous and filled with inconsistent definitions from different research agendas that it has become nigh on useless. This is mainly due to the single-dimensional approaches employed in organized crime research, which has focused on either criminal activity, structure, or the sub-categories mafias, gangs, and networks. In effect, a general model of organized crime has been cobbled together out of this heterogeneous mix.

As a result, and not for lack of trying, organized crime research, the criminal justice system, and criminal policy have failed to deliver a shared and universally recognized concept of what organized crime is. This has created obstacles to achieving a better understanding of criminal offenses carried out through criminal collaboration. Understanding criminal collaboration is of importance since it is viewed as constituting a greater societal problem than crime committed by individual offenders. It is assumed that its consequences affect society as a whole, undermining the state’s monopoly on violence. Society therefore devotes considerable resources to investigating and preventing criminal collaboration. A working analytical framework is vital for research, crime control and policy since it can provide a comparative analytical tool for the investigation of empirical manifestations of crime in an organized form and guide preventive responses to this phenomenon.

In sum, we lack a conceptual framework that captures multiple degrees of criminal collaboration. In this dissertation, I provide an example of an alternative conceptual framework for understanding criminal collaboration that will allow us to avoid the confusion surrounding the concept of organized crime. I do this by returning to the basic principles of social organization and by illustrating one possible way of clarifying the confusion surrounding or-

³ Source: <http://anslag.rj.se/sv/anslag/43453>

ganized crime. By analyzing various criminal activities that occurred in Sweden between 1990 and 2015 that were labeled as organized crime, and by focusing on the interlock of dimensions of ordering principles within these empirical cases, I examine the extent to which it makes sense to subsume them under a unifying definition.

The aim and scope of this dissertation is thus to discuss and examine whether organized crime is intrinsically different from social organizing and if so, how, since it has been suggested that one of the main obstacles to conceptualizing organized crime has been not the element of “crime,” but the notion of “organized” (Finckenauer 2005; Gottschalk 2009). The aim is not to create a new definition or challenge the general, public perception of organized crime based on fiction and journalistic accounts. By analyzing the dimensions of forms of criminal collaboration that appeared in the same time-geographic space (Sweden, 1990-2015) using theories of social organization (Ahrne 1990, 1994; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011), I attempt to identify its objective structures and hidden generative mechanisms, an approach that is based on an assumption of the existence of a social reality that is independent of us (Bhaskar 1989; Sayer 1992).

On the basis of five studies that employ a set of qualitative and quantitative empirical materials, I will illustrate the emergence of degrees of criminal organizing in Sweden between 1990 and 2015. The time-geography of this dissertation is of interest since it can guide us away from the stereotyped conditions under which organized crime has been thought to emerge. This is because Sweden represents a less likely case for the development of a high degree of organized crime, e.g. in the form of corruption. The state is strong and the country has a relatively well-functioning legal system; the political institutions are stable; trust in government is widespread; bureaucratic ethics are high; and associational life is vibrant (Korsell and Larsson 2011; Rothstein, Charron, and Lapuente 2013).

The data employed in the studies

The qualitative data employed in the studies presented in this dissertation consist of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with members of criminal organizations such as gangs (n=42), internal gang- and police documents, intelligence files and reports, and court proceedings (n=730), and ethnographic fieldwork observations based on surveillance data.

The quantitative data employed in the studies are based on four datasets. Two of these datasets contain data on membership in gangs and organized crime, the SGIP⁴-dataset (n=239), and the Swedish Police database on membership in organized crime and gangs, henceforth referred to as the “Swedish gang database” (n=3426).

⁴ Stockholm Gang Intervention and Prevention Project (SGIP) (Leinfelt and Rostami 2012b).

The third dataset consists of data on gang members convicted of offenses (n=2357) and police investigation protocols (n=2299). This dataset is based on been of the membership data from the SGIP dataset and comprises the quantitative empirical material employed in Study I-IV. Study V is the overarching study of this dissertation and is based on all the combined empirical material. For chapter 3 of this dissertation a fourth complementary dataset has been used in the form of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's (Brå) register of persons suspected of offenses 1995-2011 (n=6.7 million registered offenses and 1.25 million individuals, of which 53% have at least one co-offender) henceforth referred to as the Brå-data (see table 1). The empirical data for this dissertation were collected as part of the Stockholm Gang Intervention and Prevention Project (SGIP), a project headed by the Stockholm County Police and the Section against Gang Crime (SGI) and financed by the European Commission's (EU) Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme (Leinfelt and Rostami 2012b; Rostami and Leinfelt 2012a), and also as part of the research project "Kriminella nätverk och kriminell organisering—En nätverksansats,"⁵ financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

⁵ Criminal networks and criminal organizing—A network approach

Table 1 Schematic overview of the methods and materials used in each study and this dissertation.

Study	Data	Method	Key research question
I	SGIP dataset. Individual-level data on 239 gang members. 2299 police investigation protocols and statistical data relating to 2357 cases of prosecution and conviction. Surveillance data	Quantitative crime analysis.	Exploring the structure of Swedish gangs and gang development by applying the Maxson and Klein gang typology
II	Interviews with 12 gang leaders and 12 associates. Surveillance data	In-depth semi-structured interviews. Ethnographic fieldwork observations	Driving forces behind gang leadership and gang membership
II	Interviews. Internal police documents and other relevant documents. SGIP dataset	Content analysis. Semi-structured interviews. Quantitative crime analysis	The consequences and effectiveness of the anti-gang initiative NOVA
IV	Individual-level data on 31 gang members. 384 police investigation protocols (extracted from Study I). Surveillance data	Social network analysis	The complexity and limitations of crime data and its consequences
V	42 interviews, court proceeding, intelligence files and reports (n=720). SGIP dataset. Surveillance data	In-depth semi-structured interviews, content analysis	The organizing dimensions of forms of criminal collaboration
Comp.⁶	Brå-dataset and dataset from Study I	Content, social network, and quantitative crime analysis	The development of organized crime in Sweden

⁶ Complementary dataset used for the “kappa.”

The methods employed in the studies

In each of the five studies, a set of methods has been applied to the data sources presented in the previous section. The main methods employed in Study I-V are interviews, content analysis, field observation (police operations), and quantitative crime and network analysis.

The interviews (n=42) with key actors in organized crime in Sweden are drawn from the Swedish gang database and the SGIP dataset. All interviews were conducted individually. 22 of these 42 interviews were recorded; the others consist of interview notes, since the respondents did not give their consent for the interviews to be recorded. In some instances the interviews were conducted while the respondents were incarcerated, and prison regulations prohibited recording.

I personally interviewed 41 of the 42 respondents. I have mapped, interviewed, and anonymised the collected information into a manageable structure. One of the interviews was conducted by e-mail; even though I knew the identity of the respondent, he wanted to ensure that nothing could be recorded—audio or video—and linked to him. Due to the sensitivity of the material, only I know the real identity of the respondents. Stefan Holgersson conducted one of the interviews, and I conducted three together with Fredrik Leinfelt. Each quote that has been used was encoded, making it virtually impossible to figure out the identity of the respondent or his/her organizational affiliation. These interviews, together with field participation in the form of police operations, form the basis for Study II and V.

Study III compares official statistics related to an anti-gang initiative and police reports on the success of the initiative's activities in and around Stockholm County, Sweden, including media excerpts and official arrest and prosecution statistics. Interviews with key police staff have been used to complement the content analysis of the internal police documents, annual reports, business plans, governmental reports, newsletters, templates, memorandums, evaluations, and other relevant documentation.

In Study IV, the most common data sources employed in studies of criminal networks, such as intelligence, surveillance data, and data on co-offending, have been used to study one specific empirical phenomenon from a social network perspective. Three datasets were extracted from these data sources and used to build three separate networks. These were then compared by computing distance, centrality, and clustering measures.

In Study V, the overarching study evolved from all of the combined empirical materials, particularly the 42 interviews and the content analysis of intelligence files, court protocols, and internal gang documents.

Overall, this dissertation uses a multi-method approach and multiple data sources to study organized crime in Sweden between 1990 and 2015 (see table 1).

Summary of the studies

Study I(Rostami, Fredrik Leinfelt, and Holgersson 2012)(Amir Rostami, Leinfelt, & Holgersson, 2012) (Rostami, Leinfelt, and Holgersson 2012) analyzes the seven most notorious Swedish street gangs consisting of a total of 239 members. In this study we found that the development and structure of Swedish gangs were very similar to those of American and European street gangs. This study is important since in Sweden the debate on gangs and organized crime has ranged from a denial of their existence to colorful depictions of an emerging threat to Swedish democracy from organized criminal entities. This study is the cornerstone of my research, since it shows that while Sweden has a societal problem with street gangs, it is a complex problem that can be alleviated to some extent through preventive measures. And analyzing the preventive efforts used in other countries is a valid approach.

Study II (Rostami, Fredrick Leinfelt, and Brotherton 2012) is the result of ethnographic fieldwork observations combined with in-depth interviews with twelve Swedish gang leaders and twelve associate gang members which were conducted in order to understand the driving forces behind street gang leadership and gang membership. A descriptive analysis of the data suggested four ideal types, each with specific goals, aspirations, and motives. The empirical material in this study, together with additional in-depth interviews with key actors in criminal organizations in Sweden, has provided major insights into the organizing dynamics of criminal collaboration and it functions as the core empirical foundation of the dissertation. These interviews with respondents from different criminal organizations also contributed greatly to Study V.

Study III (Rostami, Melde, and Holgersson 2015) examines the emergence and maintenance of a specialized gang unit in Stockholm through a content analysis of intelligence products, court proceedings, interviews with key project staff, and publicly available sources and internal police documents. The findings of this study suggest that while police officials created a perception in the news media that the specialized gang unit was a success, our analysis of prosecution statistics and internal police documents demonstrates a less than ideal effect. This “decoupling” process is partly linked to the use of generic definitions of organized crime and a lack of definitional boundaries. It is also true that the police often use the media to disseminate information to the public in the hope of accomplishing particular goals and to heighten the legitimacy of the police in the community.

Study IV (Rostami and Mondani 2015) looks at the consequences of the conceptual confusion surrounding organized crime by analyzing one specific street gang on the basis of three separate datasets: intelligence, co-offending, and surveillance data. The results of the study show biases that affect the sources employed in the analysis. Gang members have different importance

rankings depending on the dataset and network measure employed. This has direct implications for crime control, since the question of whom to target in a planned operation becomes difficult to assess.

The overall results of Study III and IV show that instead of single-level analysis based on the chaotic concept of organized crime, researchers and officials need to thoroughly analyze the effects of biases on the assessment process before formulating social responses and crime control measures—and definitely before presenting such analyses as evidence in criminal proceedings.

Study V (Rostami et al. Manuscript) examines four cases of category-defining types of criminal collaboration: the mafia type of organization; the outlaw motorcycle gang; the street gang; and the crime project. Study V draws on all of the empirical material collected during my doctoral studies along with the findings from previous studies. This study proposes the existence of strong analogies between the patterns found in criminal organizations and elements found in other social organizations. The study proposes a new general analytical framework, “criminal organizing,” that brings the different forms of criminal collaboration and their dimensions together under a single analytical tool in order to clarify the conceptual confusion surrounding the concept of organized crime. As such, this framework also contributes to theory development and may also be used in comparative research on other forms of collaboration in different contexts in time and space. By examining and illustrating the interaction of institutions, organizations, and networks in a hard-to-access criminal context, the study advocates the importance of studying organizations that exist outside of formal organizations (see e.g., Ahrne and Brunsson 2011).

Complementary studies (Leinfelt and Rostami 2012a; Rostami 2013, 2016; Rostami and Leinfelt 2012a, 2012b) and data (see table 1) are used to frame the introductory chapter (Kappa) of this compilation dissertation. For example, chapter 3 uses data from the Swedish Gang Database, which were developed over the course of my doctoral studies, when discussing the development of organized crime in Sweden.

Study I and II were also part of my licentiate thesis in social work (Rostami 2013).

Chapter 3. What is organized crime: its definitions, consequences, and dimensions

“A lot of the confusion in the debate can be explained by the failure to realize that there are different ways to conceptualize organized crime and that each approach can lead to different understandings and assessments of the very same situation.” (von Lampe 2016:34)

What exactly is organized crime seems to be the million-dollar question. Today we find the term to be synonymous with the mafias, syndicates, gangs, cartels, and narco rings, etc. When new labels, such as “criminal elite” (Coleman 2005), “mafia gangs” (Expressen 2014), “ethnic gangs” (van Gemert, Peterson, and Lien 2008), “local organized crime” (Brå 2010), “professional crime” (Hobbs 1995), “semi-organized crime” (Hagan 1983), “impermanent micro-criminal organizations” (INHESJ 2012) or “mobile organized crime groups” (Europol 2015) are added to the narrative on organized crime and treated as an analytical framework, it becomes inherently confusing, since each label describes what are simply degrees of criminal collaboration.

The label “organized crime” is used in research, policy narratives, and legal processes without any thoughtful consideration being given to the interlock between dimensions of criminal ordering and the degree of criminal collaboration. As Dwight C. Smith pointed out in 1971, “the choice of a name other than ‘organized crime’ is a deliberate effort to escape from a concept so overburdened with stereotyped imagery that it cannot meet the basic requirements of a definition – it does not include all the phenomena that are relevant; it does not exclude all the phenomena that are not relevant” (Smith 1971:10).

This reality poses a series of complex and interlocking challenges that come with serious consequences. In this chapter I elaborate on the dimensions of organized crime, its conceptualization, and its policy framing in order to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the research on organized crime. At the end this chapter I discuss a brief Swedish overview of “organized crime.”

“Journalists, law enforcement officers, and government officials have written fanciful accounts about organized crime that are not constrained by the rules of careful scientific investigations as are the works of social scientists. In fact, the literature on organized crime contains so many contradictions that the reader can be reduced to a state of complete confusion when reading about this subject. Writers often use the terms Mafia, Camorra, Black Hand, Unione Siciliana, and Cosa Nostra interchangeably even though they denote entirely different groups of people and forms of behavior.” (Lombardo 2012:x–xi)

As Robert M. Lombardo stated, in the discussion of organized crime it is necessary to distinguish between the origins of the term “organized crime,” the history of “organized criminal activities,” and the fanciful imagery employed in accounts of organized crime. The dominant imagery in the public mind is driven largely by fictional and journalistic accounts. *The Godfather* (1972), *Scarface* (1932, 1983), *The Wild One* (1953), *West Side Story* (1957) and other motion pictures and plays have greatly influenced the general perception of organized crime. But when this general perception influences science and policy it creates obstacles to our understanding of organized crime.

It is not surprising that there are major disagreements about where organized crime begins and ends and about which criminal phenomena to include and which to exclude from the concept of organized crime. This boundary issue has certainly been a matter for discussion (Finckenauer 2005; Varese 2010). Single empirical cases are presented as the model of organized crime without considering that the use of different approaches can lead to a different understanding of what constitutes organized crime (von Lampe 2016:34). Throughout history we find plenty of examples of organized activities, such as distinctive affiliations and divisions of labor, that have violated contemporary laws, including Japanese kabukimono, Indian thuggee, Spanish garduna, Persian hashshashin and the gangs in the American Wild West (to indulge in a distortion from popular culture).

The indistinct boundary of the concept of organized crime results therefore in difficulties in framing the origins of organized crime. As an example, we could start with the history of “organized robberies on the high seas” in 75 BC, when Julius Cesar was kidnapped by pirates and then released only once a ransom had been paid (Freeman 2008). Or we could start in the 17th century with the accounts by the British writer Pike about how London was “terrorized by a series of organized gangs calling themselves the Mims, Hectors, Bugles, Dead Boys ... who found amusement in breaking windows, [and] demolishing taverns, [and they] also fought pitched battles among themselves dressed with colored ribbons to distinguish the different factions” (Pearson 1983:188). In fact, organized criminal activities can be traced back to the birth of human civilization (e.g., Grunewald 2004).

Klaus von Lampe (2016) has traced the origin of the term “organized crime” back to the 1800s to the British colonial administration in India (e.g.,

Arnold 1862). However, it seems that the concept of organized crime first took shape in the 1900s as a result of efforts by the Chicago Crime Commission, which was created in 1919 as a non-partisan civic watchdog organization of business leaders dedicated to educating the public about the dangers of organized criminal activity (von Lampe 2001). Henry Chamberlin discussed the efforts of the Chicago Crime Commission in a summary he wrote in 1919. Chamberlin described “a gigantic system organized and protected, reaching into business and politics, and while still subject to indictment and prosecution, [...] largely immune from punishment” (Chamberlin 1920:397). The interesting point in the history of the concept of organized crime is that the terms *mafia* and *organized crime* are used separately up to the 1950s, when the concepts were merged, at least in United States (von Lampe 2001, 2016). However, it seems that the use of these terms has been diffuse since the beginning. While mafia-type organizations were labeled as such during the 1930s, and not predominantly as organized crime, criminals such as Al Capone and Charles “Lucky” Luciano, pioneers of mafia activities in United States, also became identifying markers of organized crime in the dominant popular imagery in the United States.

The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, enacted in the United States in 1970, cemented the concept of organized crime in the official narrative (von Lampe 2001). Historically the concept of organized crime has competed with the concepts of mafias and gangs as forms of criminal activity portrayed as “the enemy of the people,” especially in the United States. A clear-cut notion of organized crime, as a distinct form of criminality, is difficult to find. However, both scholarly and legal attempts have been made to produce a universal definition and concept of organized crime.

Concepts and definitions in the study of organized crime

“A lot of the confusion in the debate can be explained by the failure to realize that there are different ways to conceptualize organized crime and that each approach can lead to different understandings and assessments of the very same situation.” (von Lampe 2016:34)

As has been noted above, the term “organized crime” can be traced back to the 1800s British colonial administration in India (e.g., Arnold 1862; see von Lampe 2016). However, it was not until the 1950s that serious attempts were made to describe what organized crime is (e.g., Kefauver 1951), and this was when the term first came to be used more widely to describe certain forms of criminal activities. One example is the U.S. Senate’s Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce chaired by Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver (Kefauver 1951; Varese 2010). In the committee’s report, gangs, mafias, and syndicates were grouped under the

same umbrella and described as criminal organizations involved in a wide variety of forms of criminal activity, and as being similar in some ways to business organizations.

“Organized crime in the last 30 years has taken on new characteristics. [...] Criminal groups today are multipurpose in character engaging in any racket wherever there is money to be made. [...] Modern crime syndicates and criminal gangs have copied some of the organizational methods found in modern business.” (Kefauver 1951:126)

By analyzing 115 definitions of organized crime, Federico Varese (2010) illustrated how the definitions of organized crime have varied over time, ranging from definitions that emphasize criminal structures with a clear hierarchy and centralized leadership to definitions that define organized crime as criminal enterprises involved in illegal activities, and definitions that focus on criminal network structures (Varese 2010).

Various descriptions and definitions of organized crime have influenced the study of organized crime and can provide insights into how the understanding of organized crime has developed.

Donald Cressey, who was a consultant on the 1967 U.S. President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, introduced a definition that was used for many years by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (Abadinsky 2012). Cressey held that organized crime is a unique form of criminal activity, which he described as “any crime committed by a person occupying, in an established division of labor, a position designed for the commission of crime, providing that such division of labor also includes at least one position for a corrupter, one position for a corruptee, and one position for an enforcer” (Cressey 1969:319). The sociopolitical dimension of organized crime was further developed by Joseph Albin (1971). He instead defined organized crime as “any criminal activity involving two or more individuals specialized or nonspecialized, encompassing some form of social structure, with some form of leadership, utilizing certain modes of operation, in which the ultimate purpose of the organization is found in the enterprises of the particular group” (Albin 1971:37). Albin classified organized crime into four major forms: *political—social organized* (guerrillas, terrorist organizations and other politically motivated groups), *mercenary* (juvenile gangs and robberies), *in-group-oriented* (motorcycle gangs) and *syndicates* (mafias providing illicit goods or services) (Albin 1971).

Although illicit enterprises had been discussed in earlier works on organized crime, such as in the Kefauver Commission in the 1950s, viewing organized crime as illegal enterprises now began to gain more salience. Thomas C. Schelling (1967, 1971, 1984), for example, argued that the crucial characteristic of organized crime groups is their endeavor to achieve monopolistic control over the illegal markets in which they are active through ex-

tortion and protection. He further argued that organized crime is not merely a criminal business, but is rather about illegal governance (Schelling 1984:181–185).

In the *Theory of Enterprise*, Dwight C. Smith (1975, 1978, 1980) defined organized crime in terms of business and argued that organized crime consists in illegal enterprises engaged in law-breaking activities in an extended field of legitimate marketplaces:

“Organized crimes are not simply vice crimes, nor are they part of a deeper criminal conspiracy or a means for ethnic groups to achieve otherwise unattainable success goals. They are rather entrepreneurial, and although they involve law-breaking activity, they are primarily an extension of legitimate marketplace activities into proscribed areas.” (Smith 1978:161)

Frank E. Hagan (1983) continued in the same spirit and described organized crime as an “illicit enterprise that (a) uses force or threats of force, (b) profits from providing illicit services which are in public demand, and (c) assures immunity of operation through corruption” (Hagan 1983:52–53). Alan Block (1983), by contrast, understood organized crime as an illegitimate system of power in the hands of criminals. He argued that, “organized crime is both a social system and a social world. The system is composed of relationships binding professional criminals, politicians, law enforcers, and various entrepreneurs” (Block 1983:vii).

However, the focus on the enterprise model of organized crime was not without its critics. Peter Reuter (1983) argued, against Schelling’s enterprise model, that there was limited empirical support for the hypothesis that the uniqueness of organized crime groups is found in the aspiration to obtain monopolistic control over illegal markets. Instead he presented a more generic definition of organized crime as “consist[ing] of organizations that have durability, hierarchy, and involvement in a multiplicity of criminal activities” (Reuter 1983:175).

Similar criticism was directed against the inclusion of terrorism in the concept of organized crime. Howard Abadinsky (1994), for example, excluded political motivations from the definition of organized crime and introduced a working definition of organized crime as a “non-ideological enterprise involving a number of persons in close social interaction, organized on a hierarchical basis, with at least three levels/ranks, for the purpose of securing profit and power by engaging in illegal and legal activities” (Abadinsky 1994:6).

In an attempt to overcome the definitional challenges surrounding the nature and concept of organized crime, Jay S. Albanese (2000, 2015) has advocated the use of a definition based on the essence of previous definitions. He argues that we are witnessing the emergence of a consensus on what constitutes organized crime, namely “that organized crime functions as a continu-

ing enterprise that rationally works to make a profit through illicit activities and that [...] ensures its existence through the use of threats or force and through corruption of public officials to maintain a degree of immunity from law enforcement [...] [and] organized crime tends to be restricted to those illegal goods and services that are in great public demand through monopoly control of an illicit market” (Albanese 2015:3). There have also been policy attempts to provide a universal legal definition of organized crime.

Table 2 Schematic timeline of definitions of organized crime.

Time	Definition	Concept	Key author
1950s	Types of criminal activity	Activity model	Estes Kefauver
1960s	The corruption and the enforcement	The bureaucratic-hierarchical	Donald Cressey
1970s	Form of leadership, certain modes of operation, including political organizations	The patron-client	Joseph Albin
	Monopolistic control over the illegal markets	Illegal enterprise and governance	Thomas Schelling
	Illegal enterprises engaged in law-breaking activities	Illegal enterprises and governance	Dwight C. Smith
1980s	Force, illicit services, and corruption	Illegal enterprises and governance	Fran E. Hagan
	Involvement in a multiplicity of criminal activities	The bureaucratic-hierarchical	Peter Reuter
	Illegitimate system of power	Illegal governance	Alan Block
1990s	Non-ideological enterprise organized on a hierarchical basis	The bureaucratic-hierarchical	Howard Abadinsky
2000s	The combined definition	Illegal enterprise, governance and activity	Jay S. Albanese

Legal and policy definitions

“The signing of the Convention in Palermo in December 2000 was a watershed event in the reinforcement of our fight against organized crime. I urge all States to ratify the Convention and the Protocols thereto at the earliest possible date and to bring these instruments into force as a matter of urgency.” Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General (United Nations 2004:IV)

At the international policy level in the UN and EU there have been attempts to provide a common legal definition and to promote the harmonization of national legislations in the line with these proposed definitions (Calderoni 2010). In particular, three international legal instruments have defined legal concepts of organized crime: the Joint Action of 1998 (EU), the Palermo Convention of 2000 (UN) and the Framework Decision of 2008 (EU), which aimed to harmonize national legislation in line with these instruments. The instruments are consistent in that they are parts of the same roadmap towards strengthened multilateral cooperation against organized crime. The essence of these legal concepts is that organized crime involves a structured organization, a collaboration of more than two persons, who act in concert with the aim of committing serious crimes that could lead to several years in prison or more to directly or indirectly obtain financial or other material benefits (European Union 2008; United Nations 2004).

The Palermo Convention of 2000 defined organized crime as an “organized criminal group” and as being a “structured group.”

“‘Organized criminal group’ shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit. [...] ‘Structured group’ shall mean a group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure.” (United Nations 2004:5, Article 2 use of terms)

The European Union’s Framework Decision of 2008 defined organized crime as follows:

“1. ‘criminal organisation’ means a structured association, established over a period of time, of more than two persons acting in concert with a view to committing offences which are punishable by deprivation of liberty or a detention order of a maximum of at least four years or a more serious penalty, to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit; 2. ‘structured association’ means an association that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence, nor does it need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership, or a developed structure.”

Despite these efforts to strengthen the international and intergovernmental fight against organized crime, these definitions have been criticized by scholars and practitioners for being generic and ambiguous, thereby creating more legal confusion, with consequences for crime control and criminal proceedings (Calderoni 2010; Greco 2015; Hagan 2006; Leinfelt and Rostami 2012a; Levi 1998).

For example, Levi (1998) criticized these definitions, arguing that they cover everything from Italian mafia cartels to three burglars with different roles in a crooked window cleaning business. Calderoni argued that these definitions are so vague that most EU member states do not even need to change their national legislation to be formally compliant with these conventions (Calderoni 2012:1366).

The general view is that these legal concepts are not empirically grounded and are too generic. Even when clear-cut boundaries exist, such as the length of detention criterion of four years, the legal definitions have misguided analytical and practical consequences, since many highly “organized” criminal activities are not captured by them. For example, certain criminal activities, such as stealing prestige vehicles and exporting them, would not be defined as organized crime because they would not match the length of detention criterion, despite their highly organized nature and international dimension. Furthermore, a highly structured crime project, such as robbing a CIT (Cash-in-transit) only once would probably not meet the definition of “organized crime” because what constitutes “a period of time” is not stipulated (see Study VI). The third example is honor killing, as in the case of 20 year-old Rezai in Högsbo, Sweden, in which the family of his fiancée, her mother, father, and brother, planned and collaborated in torturing Rezai to death because they considered him to have brought shame upon the family and, as a result, to have degraded their social position and status (Loberg 2009). These three perpetrators (father, mother, and brother) may be considered to constitute a structured association (family), established over a period of time (at least 20 years). In effect they were a group of more than two persons (3 persons) acting in concert with a view to committing offences (torture and murder) to defend their social position and status (immaterial profit), which is punishable by deprivation of liberty or detention for at least four years (the parents were sentenced to 10 years in prison for murder and the brother to four years of institutional care) (Aftonbladet 2011). And it is not farfetched to interpret honor as symbolic capital, a source of power (Bourdieu 1991). However, honor killing is not understood as organized crime, even though it might in some cases meet several legal definitions of organized crime, since it lacks the material profit motive.

The difficulty in drawing a firm line between what is and is not organized crime in a legal context may result in serious legal consequences, such as an over-expansion of criminal law, criminal penalties, and criminal policy and

may even lead to restricting civil rights and freedoms (Calderoni 2012:1366).

Over-expansion may occur when the label organized crime becomes overly general and its interpretation becomes a subjective issue, which may result in a general inflation in the severity of a penalty. For example, the Swedish penal code (1962:700), chapter 29 article 2, stipulates that a criminal act committed in an “organized form” is an aggravating circumstance that should be taken into account in assessing the penalty.

The second legal consequence involves the matter of personal integrity. When the boundaries of a legal definition are unclear and can be stretched, civil rights and personal freedoms may be eroded. When minor offenses and crimes are treated as serious and defined as organized crime, harsh coercive measures lead to a “normalization of the exceptional,” as described by Flyghed (Flyghed 2002:23; see also Symeonidou-Kastanidou 2007).

Despite the limited use and possible consequences of these insufficient legal and policy definitions, Swedish and European law enforcement and government agencies insist on using them in their crime prevention strategies (Polismyndigheten 2015). There is also a risk that the legal bodies in Sweden and the EU may introduce more specific legislation to combat organized crime based on these ambiguous definitions, either criminalizing membership in a “criminal organization,” or legislating that participation in a criminal organization should be viewed as an aggravating circumstance in assessing penalties. This would further increase the potential legal consequences and arbitrariness in the interpretation of organized crime legislation (see Calderoni 2010; Thulin 2012).

Mafias

The origin of the term *mafia* is disputed. There are a number of mythological explanations that attempt to associate the word with legends and important historical events from Sicilian history. One of these explanations is that the term originated in the Sicilian Vespers, the rebellion that overthrew French rule in the Kingdom of Sicily in 1282. In this case “mafia” is an acronym for the resistance “Morte Alla Francia, Italia Anela” (“Death to France is Italy’s cry”) (Hess 1973). Another explanation is that the word “mafia” was derived from the Arabic mahias (bold man) when Sicily was under Arab control (Gambetta 1993; Hess 1973; Taylor 2005).

However, the first known mention of mafias specifically in association with crime is in the Sicilian play *I Mafiosi dela Vicaria* (“The Mafiosi of Vicaria”) by Giuseppe Rizzotto and Gaetano Mosca from 1863, which was set among the Camorristi (members of the Camorra) who were imprisoned in Palermo (Dickie 2004; Lupo 2009). The play’s main character is Gioacchino Funciazza, a Camorra leader, who controls other members in the prison of Palermo. The character is inspired by the real-life Camorra leader Gioacchi-

no D'Angelo. The terms Camorra and mafia coexisted but with no reference to regional characteristics. Camorra was used in reference to "illicit systems for control of markets, auctions, competitions for contracts, and voting," while mafia was initially used to refer to "lazy, vagabonds and suspicious individuals in general" (Lupo 2009:3).

During this period (1866-1876) when mafias became associated with crime and corruption, Sicily was forcibly incorporated into the new Italian state, resulting in a power vacuum and insecurity. The Italian state was unable to provide security and the vacuum was filled, among other things, by extra-legal elements. This was when the term mafia became associated with underdevelopment and backwardness, and later, particularly in the narratives of the Italian right, with a criminal organization involved in political infiltration, corruption, and racketeering. It became a "metaphor for something irreconcilable with the values affirmed by the nineteenth-century state" (Lupo 2009:5).

Although "mafia" is used as a sort of umbrella term to describe "criminal elites," up to the 1950s it was mainly associated with the Sicilian mafia, one of many Italian mafia-organizations, such as the Sacra Corona Unita, Basilischi, Mala del Brenta, 'Ndrangheta of Calabria, and the Camorra of Campania.

One example of the distinctive use of the term mafia for the Sicilian-based organizations⁷ is the description of the so-called Mafia-Camorra War in New York for control of Little Italy in the 1910s. The conflict was between the Sicilian Morello family of Manhattan and the Camorra, an old Neapolitan gang with a subgroup near Navy Street in Brooklyn (see Hobsbawm 1965; Nelli 1976). The conflict illustrates that the term mafia was primarily associated with the Sicilian organization later called the Cosa Nostra.⁸ Even today, there are critics who suggest that "mafia" should not have become synonymous with criminal elites. Rather, they hold that "Mafia corresponds to the regional criminality of Sicily, and Camorra corresponds to the regional criminality of Campania" and that they should be detached from their counterparts in other countries, such as in the United States (Lupo 2009:40).

Interestingly, even as far away as in Sweden, and from as early as 1875 and up to the 1930s, there is a clear distinction in Swedish newspaper articles between the term mafia, which is linked to Sicily, and Camorra, which is linked to Campania (Aftonbladet 1875; Dagens Nyheter 1920). Today, the

⁷ Several mafia organizations are based in Sicily and are not affiliated with the Cosa Nosta (Europol 2013).

⁸ Cosa Nostra is a label that appears to have first emerged in North America, not in Italy. The two mafia organizations, the one in the United States composed of immigrants from Sicily, and the Sicilian original, developed independently and parallel to each other in the early 1900s. Collaboration intensified between the organizations that were active in the United States and Italy respectively after World War II (Lupo 2009: 21).

term mafia-type organizations has become a subcategory of organized crime and a sort of umbrella label for “criminal elites” who control and exploit the communities and territories that they reside in, and which have little or nothing in common with the Sicilian original (Dickie 2004:22). A number of different criminal manifestations have thus been labeled as mafias, including the Russian, Japanese, Corsican, Colombian, Chinese, Mexican, and Black Mafias (e.g., Bresler 1984; Hill 2003; Lombardo 2002; Rafael 2013; Serio 2008; Varese 2001).

Diego Gambetta (1993) distinguished the mafia from traditional organized crime by defining it as a protection industry that produces, promotes, and sells private protection, in which violence serves as a means, not an end (Gambetta 1993:1). However, without the capacity for violence, other organized crime groups might come in and replace the function of the mafia. This means that violence gave the mafia the ability to reproduce itself over time within the domain it controlled and to spread out beyond it. Protection is not merely another product, but is a consequence of an environment that facilitates illegal market activity (Gambetta 1993).

Federico Varese (2001) argued that mafias are not unique to Sicily, but that they are “a species of a broader genus, organized crime,” including organizations such as the Japanese Yakuza and Hong Kong Triads (Varese 2001:4). Organized crime, according to Varese, does not mean crime that is organized, but rather that an organized crime group aspires to obtain a monopoly over the production and distribution of a certain commodity in the underworld (Varese 2001:4). Mafia groups differ from other criminal organizations by directly competing with the state’s jurisdiction, and they offer both legal and illegal protection and transactions while other organized criminal groups do not (Varese 2001:5).

In his study of the Japanese mafia, Peter B. Hill (2003) also advanced the position that the “central characteristic shared by mafias is their provision of protection to consumers who are either denied access to protection from the state or who desire types of protection that the state is unprepared to provide” (Hill 2003:35). Hill argued that the emergence of a mafia follows two distinct patterns, one where mafias come into existence due to the existence of illegal markets that lie outside the jurisdiction of the state, with the second being where mafias emerge due to the inability of the state to provide protection within its territory (Hill 2003:15). However, it is important to point out that the various mafias, such as the Japanese, Russian, Mexican, and the many Italian manifestations, have emerged independently of each other.

Others, like Salvatore Lupo (2009), have argued that mafias have many other dimensions in addition to crime. They can be viewed as a mirror of traditional society with a focus on sociocultural factors, as an enterprise or a type of criminal industry, as a centralized secret organization, or as a juridical ordering parallel to the state (Lupo 2009:7).

John Dickie (2004) described mafias in similar terms, as shadow states that exist by infiltrating the legal state and twisting it to their own purposes, and as illegal businesses and sworn secret societies that aim to control territory. And in the same way as a state, a mafia needs a history, heritage, and identity, with which its citizens can identify (Dickie 2004:21–22).

Letizia Paoli (2003) criticized the one-dimensional view of mafias, arguing that the Costa Nostra and ‘Ndrangheta are neither “economic enterprises aiming at the maximization of profits nor an industry for private protection.” Instead, they consist of many organizational units called “families” that “enjoy wide autonomy and have their ruling bodies, [...] but are united by a single collective identity” (Paoli 2003:220–223). These units have employed the strength of their bonds to pursue a plurality of goals and to carry out numerous different functions. One of the most important among these has been the exercise of political dominion within their communities (Paoli 2003:222–223).

Overall, it seems that despite the many different understandings of the term, mafias are more than a formal criminal organization; they appear rather to be socially embedded criminal organizations, that are partially institutionalized, and that are parasitical on the values, norms, and habits of the context in which they operate. In effect, they represent the highest degree of criminal collaboration in the territory and community in which they have emerged.

Gangs

The term “gang” can be traced back to Old English, meaning “a going, journey, way, passage” and to Old Norse⁹ meaning “a group of men” (Harper 2015). During the 17th century the term became associated more with a certain kind of people, such as “a group of working class men,” or “a company of workmen,” and with time developed into a term describing a “socially displaced group of men” (Harper 2015). By the 1850s, the term gang had come to be used explicitly to describe a company of criminals, thieves, or mischievous boys in a city (Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Harper 2015). Brotherton and Barrios have suggested that the etymology of the word betrays its origins in the power structure of the culture in which it arose. For example, in North America the term was first used by auction houses as a description of “a group of slaves,” and was later used as a term for “professional collectives of working-class thieves” (Brotherton and Barrios 2004:28).

⁹ Old Norse (*fornnordiska*) was the North Germanic language that was spoken in the Nordic countries and by inhabitants of their overseas settlements during the Viking Age, 793–1066 A.D.

“Therefore, the etymology of the word ‘gang’ clearly illustrates the importance of understanding the materialist culture from which the word arises in any particular epoch. This is as true of the term’s usage in the eighteenth century as it is in the 1990s.” (Brotherton and Barrios 2004:28)

Despite its history, the term generally—and “street gang” in particular—suffers from the same conceptual ambiguity as organized crime, and for that matter mafia. Nonetheless, the investigation of gangs is almost as old as sociology and criminology itself. Lewis Yablonsky has argued that the model of anomie formulated by Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton is still the “most useful theory for explaining the social-psychological *raison d’être* for the existence of gangs in American society” (Yablonsky 2005:47). Pioneers in the field, such as J. Adams Puffer (1912), Frederic Thrasher (1927), Louise Wirth, (1928), Edwin H. Sutherland (1939), Clifford Shaw and Henry D. McKay (1942), William Foote Whyte (1943), and Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) have all contributed to making research on gangs a fertile subfield of sociology and criminology. Research on gangs and their members is an area of research in criminology and criminal justice that has gained considerable attention, with over 5,000 publications (Pyrooz and Mitchell 2015).

The pioneering work of Frederic Thrasher, considered the “father” of gang research, represented the first serious conceptualization of gangs (Moyer 2001:92). From 1923 through 1926, Thrasher studied 1,313 gangs in Chicago for his doctoral dissertation (Thrasher 1927).

“A definition of the gang, then, based upon this study of 1,313 cases, may be formulated as follows: an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, *esprit de corps*, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory.” (Thrasher 1927:46)

Malcolm Klein (1971) developed his youth-oriented definition of a gang based on a study of five major clusters of gangs in Los Angeles. Klein argued that any identifiable group that meets the following criteria should be considered as a delinquent or youth gang.

“For our purposes, we shall use the term gang to refer to any identifiable group of youngsters who, (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies.” (Klein 1971:13)

Klein's definition, however, has attracted criticism for being too narrow, meaning that it does not capture the whole spectrum of group delinquency while at the same time capturing certain phenomena which have nothing to do with the concept of gangs, such as a certain deviant category of college fraternities (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Curry 2015). Because of the controversy over this definition, Klein (1995) abandoned his youth-oriented concept, and argued that gang research needs to go beyond the characteristic of age instead adopting a street-orientation that says something about gang members' ordinary activities. At the same time, Klein argued that the term gang, as an overarching term that includes street gangs, does not encapsulate a homogenous phenomenon; rather, it consists of several types of gangs, such as prison gangs, motorcycle gangs, and terrorist gangs. Prison gangs, according to Klein, are "generally founded along ethnic lines as protection against other ethnic groups," while street-gangs are aimless, motorcycle gangs are focused on their "machines, cruising, or dealing drugs in an organized manner," [and] focused, always planning, [...] terrorist gangs are instead concentrate on narrow shared interest (cultural or political)" (Klein 1995:22). Klein also discussed organized crime groups, supremacist groups, stoners, skinheads, and political terrorist and militant activists as separate categories from street gangs.

While there has been no other definition of gangs as durable as Thrasher's (Curry 2015), there have been controversies over Thrasher's and subsequent definitions.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between the various definitions, Walther B. Miller (1975) tried to reach a consensus definition by asking a national survey of practitioners such as police officers, city council members, state legislators, ex-convicts, public defenders, past and present members of gangs, and many others for their definition of the term. This resulted in a list of 1,400 different characteristics, and 85% agreed on six items, defining a gang as:

"A youth gang is a self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise." (Miller 1975:121)

However, like many both before him and after, Miller's definition was strongly criticized. Klein and Maxson regard Miller's attempt as a "popularity poll" (Klein and Maxson 1989:205), and others have argued that his definition is mainly focused on gangs as formal organizations and have suggested that overwhelming empirical evidence indicates that gangs are not well-organized entities and formal organizations, but rather fluid, spontaneous

and reactive entities with no hierarchical structure (Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Hagedorn and Macon 1988).

Miller's definition reflects two of the great controversies about what constitutes gangs, namely the degree of organization and whether the element of crime is a necessary component of a definition of gangs. The degree of organization is a dividing boundary between the fields of gang research and organized crime. In gang research, gangs are mainly viewed as loosely connected groups of young adults with a low degree of organization, and in this sense they differ intrinsically from organized crime (e.g., Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Hagedorn and Macon 1988; Klein 1995; Klein and Maxson 2006). The element of crime is more salient in research on organized crime, and there has been a growing tendency to include gangs under that rubric (e.g., von Lampe 2016).

However, James F. Short (1996) argued that in order to understand the emergence of gangs as a group phenomenon, we need to understand groups as units of analysis and also the pre-delinquent phases of gangs. Including the crime component, which is the behavior we wish to explain, in the definition of gangs is both "logically and theoretically indefensible." Logically, "the argument is circular, confusing the correlates of gangs with their properties," and theoretically, argued Short, we need to understand the "processes and conditions under which groups form, become delinquent, and develop different patterns of behavior, nondelinquent as well as delinquent" (Short 1998:14). It should be noted that this notion is not contained in Thrasher's description of the Chicago gangs in late 1920s. Thrasher, for example, argued that gangs promote crime, but that committing crimes is not necessarily their main driving force.

Since previous definitions have failed to capture the social, cultural, spiritual, and political street-oriented subculture of gangs, David C. Brotherton and Luis Barrios (2004) have suggested an alternative way of approaching and defining gangs. They argue that the core problem with earlier definitions of gangs has been their middle-class outlook on societal problems, which has led to gangs being seen as an underclass and minority phenomenon, but has failed to capture other important aspects of gangs and contemporary street subcultures. For example, the primary question is not whether a group commits crimes, but rather why they do so. The primary purpose of understanding gangs is to identify what their action is about. They argue that gangs should be seen as street organizations and should be analyzed by means of a dimensional analytic model based on the following dimensions: subcultural traditions; level of organization; membership; identity; goals versus acts; and perceived adversaries (Brotherton and Barrios 2004:51–52). Based on this model they provide the following definition of a street organization:

"A group formed largely by youth and adults of a marginalized social class which aims to provide its members with a resistant identity, an opportunity to

be individually and collectively empowered, a voice to speak back to and challenge the dominant culture, a refuge from the stresses and strains of the barrio or ghetto life, and a spiritual enclave within which its own sacred rituals can be generated and practiced.” (Brotherton and Barrios 2004:23)

However, the above review of definitions in research on gangs only represents one side of the coin. Virtually all states in the United States have their own legal definitions of and laws on gangs, in addition to the federal laws and definitions of organized crime. Other countries have their own laws on gangs, which vastly increases the diversity of definitions and complicates notions of what constitutes gangs in general and street gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs in particular. It should be noted that in studies of gangs in general and street gangs in particular, some suggest that gangs are not organized crime (see Prowse 2013) while others include gangs under this rubric (see von Lampe 2016).

Networks

Although ideas about social networks had been formulated in the work of Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) and George Simmel (1890), research on social networks in its modern form can be traced back to the 1930s (Freeman 2004; Giuffrè 2013). This research focused on relatively small groups since one of the fundamental challenges faced by network analysis is that it is difficult to gather large social network data. Advances in technology and information and the emergence of digital footprints, which are stored in different types of databases, have, however, opened up new opportunities for mapping major social networks. Since the publication of a few pioneering studies in the late 1990s (Barabási and Albert 1999; Watts and Strogatz 1998), research on different types of networks, such as social, technological and biological networks, has given rise to a path-breaking shift away from single-source projects towards more ambitious comparative and interdisciplinary analyses.

At the same time, we need to be attentive when discussing the network concept since it is used in a broad sense, and there are several dimensions that need to be addressed before it becomes clear which intrinsic value of networks we are referring to. The first dimension is whether we are referring to networks in a theoretical framework, such as actor-network theory, or in a methodological framework, such as social network analysis. While social network analysis (SNA) comprises a set of methods and tools to gather, process, visualize, and model social network data, and deals with networks of social groups (Wasserman and Faust 1994), network theory involves investigating and explaining the relations between actors, or between actors and objects (Latour 2005).

The second dimension is whether or not a network is understood as an organizing form with organizational aspects such as collective resources,

meaning if a network is an decided order or not, (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011), or as an informal structure of relationships linking social actors such as individuals and organizations, and which obtains order from relations embedded in the network itself (Granovetter 1985). These are central questions that need to be asked in order to understand in which sense the term and concept of networks are being used. Since virtually any interaction between individuals or organizations can be described as a network, this has led to what some have described as “linguistic chaos” surrounding the networks concept (see Ahrne and Brunsson 2011; Borgatti 2003; Thompson 2003).

In research on crime and organized crime, the type of clear distinctions presented above is completely absent. The same goes for criminal policy. The use of networks as a method has become central in organized crime research, and network analysis has been a key tool of criminal intelligence analysis since the 1970s (Masys 2014), since it provides a natural setting for interdisciplinary research, as different data sources can be translated into a common language, analyzed, and the conclusions then applied to different areas (Rostami and Mondani 2015).

Concepts with overlapping and indistinct interfaces can be found in the literature, such as delinquent network (Sarnecki 2001), criminal network (Morselli 2009b), covert network (Lindelauf, Borm, and Hamers 2011), specialized network, including drug networks (Abadinsky 2016), dark network (Everton 2012), bright network (Raab and Milward 2003), and many other types of network.

Perhaps the simplest distinction is between bright and dark networks. The term *bright network* refers to a “legal and overt governance form that is supposed to create benefits for the participating actors and to advance the common good” (Raab and Milward 2003:419). In the crime policy narrative, bright networks refer to multi-agency and community-oriented approaches, in which crime-fighting agencies, both public and private, are involved in crime prevention (Wood 2006). *Dark networks* are defined as “covert and illegal networks [...] namely, any group that seeks to conceal itself and its activities from authorities. While the term is typically used to refer to groups such as terrorists, gangs, drug cartels, arms traffickers, and so on, it can refer to benign groups as well” (Everton 2012:xxv). Another distinction is made between *dark* and *deep* online networks. Deep online networks are parts of the Internet that cannot be indexed by traditional search engines, whereas the dark online networks refers to online spaces that require specific software, configurations, or authorization to access.

The term *delinquent network* typically refers to sociocentric networks—in the sense that the focus is on the analysis of relationships between people in a group, which are quantified in order to study patterns of interactions and how these patterns affect the group as a whole. The primary relationships (edges) between actors (nodes) are co-offending in crime. *Criminal networks* are often egocentric, where the focus of analysis is on the actors and the

effects of the network on that actor. *Specialized networks*, such as drug networks, are often a combination or variant of delinquent and criminal networks, in which the relationship between actors consists of certain types of crime.

Moreover, as is explored in Study IV, network analysis in general and crime network analysis in particular, involves certain biases, which need to be considered seriously because these biases can have a fundamental impact on the results of the analysis (Rostami and Mondani 2015). One general limitation is that the interaction between law enforcement and the observed population affects the network's structure and dynamics. Since the major input variable in crime network analysis is co-offending data, arrests, incapacitation, or intelligence leaks can have an effect on patterns of relationships in a crime network. Law enforcement interventions can change the structure of an observed network, resulting in the arrest of an actor, or members of the criminal network may restructure interactions with their subordinates in order to obscure their own involvement. Since the police spend more time observing and inspecting certain groups, such as youth and gang members, these groups get caught more often and consequently appear in the crime statistics; they are therefore overrepresented in a crime network dataset (Browne 2005). Another major limitation is that network data suffer from various selection biases (see Study IV), which can have a substantial effect on the network structure, and what we think we are observing is in reality a skewed snap-shot of the relationships between the actors in focus. For example, reliance on official co-offending data often misses data, since many crimes are never discovered or reported. These crimes are therefore not covered by the data, and consequently are not part of the analysis. One overall criticism discussed in Study V is that these biases have not been adequately taken into consideration in crime network research and crime intelligence analysis, and that the results of network analysis are often presented as an absolute pattern of relations. As an underlying dimension of organized crime, it is unclear which category networks belong to, and it is also unclear which of these categories comes first. Is the object under study a crime network or a gang or mafia? And if so, what type? These questions seem to be linked to how the researcher chooses to rename the object under study.

However—when its limitations are given proper consideration—network analysis has major potential as a complementary method in the study of organized crime, particularly when concepts of criminal collaboration are surrounded by ambiguity. The criminal network framework can incorporate a wide variety of relations e.g., family ties, co-offending, and partnerships, and can assemble and analyze these social interactions through a variety of measures (Morselli 2009b).

To take an example, figure 3 presents an analysis of two Swedish street gangs (see Study I) based on co-offending data. Even though these two street gangs—A and B—are both categorized by the Swedish police as street

gangs—and consequently should be similar—the network analysis illustrates quite different gang structures and levels of organization. While gang A is a sparsely connected gang, with 6 connected components and 4.65 triangles per node, gang B exhibits a tightly knit giant component characterized by a relatively high density of ties, 10.2 triangles per node. In other words, gang B may be interpreted as showing stronger cohesiveness than gang A, which may translate into a higher degree of organization. This can have further implications for crime prevention in terms of choosing the most appropriate crime-fighting method for each gang (see Leinfelt and Rostami 2012b) since the illustrated gang structures are so different.

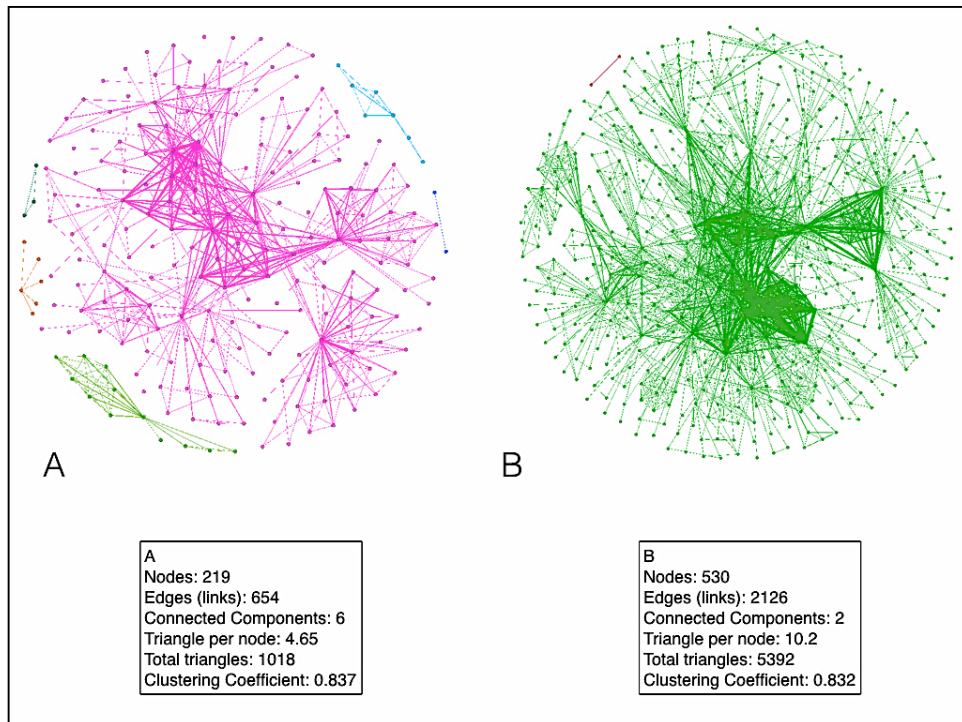


Figure 1 Comparative network analysis of two gangs, based on co-offending data discussed under complementary data in chapter 2.

Organized crime in Sweden

While organized crime in Sweden has increasingly come to be seen as a significant social problem (e.g., Polismyndigheten 2014, 2015), there is strong disagreement regarding its scope, structure and definition (Kriminologiska institutionen 2014), some almost deny its existence, while others use colorful depictions of an emerging threat to Swedish democracy in the form of organized criminal entities and describe this as a growing problem (Rostami 2013).

Organized crime — whatever its definition — has been described as “small and flexible networks [...] and very few, if any, mafia-like groups” (Korsell and Larsson 2011:519) and it has been described — as in Study I-V — as being diverse with the appearance of different category-defining types.

In the 2000s, approximately 8000 journalistic publications on organized crime were published in Sweden, which represents an eight-fold increase since the 1990s (Heber, Flyghed, and Ester 2014). However, the research on organized crime is still limited in scope and mainly focused on delinquent networks (Sarnecki 2001), perceptions of organized crime (Flyghed 2000), street gangs (Rostami 2013), and criminal activities (Korsell, Skinnari, and Vesterhav 2009).

Therefore the main available material on organized crime in Sweden consists of public reports published by Swedish governmental agencies, for example the Swedish Security Service (Säpo), the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), or the National Operations Department (previously the National Bureau of Investigation). This is problematic since it opens the door to political interpretations, which may not actually be based on facts about the development of organized crime.

However, reports analyzing organized crime in Sweden have been published since as early as the 1940s, with the principal focus being directed at its capacity, criminal activities, and its attempts to exert influence on representatives of the state.

The question of how organized a crime can be is found in journalistic accounts¹⁰ from as early as the 1890s, and the term organized crime can be found in the daily press at the end of 1930.¹¹

One of the first accounts of the examination of organized crime in Sweden is from 1941 when so-called *Ligabrottslighet* (gang criminality) in Stockholm was explored by the Swedish national association of social work (Centralförbundet för Socialt arbete 1941). In this account, while a “liga” (gang) is defined as “an association for the purpose of criminality [composed] of three or more persons who together have committed at least three

¹⁰ The search has been conducted with the help of the Swedish National Library, which has the responsibility of collecting items printed and circulated in the Swedish language, including all Swedish newspapers and journals.

¹¹ Svenska Dagbladet 1930.11.09 and Dagens Nyheter 1930.12.10.

offenses”¹² (Centralförbundet för Socialt arbete 1941:42), a clear distinction is made between a *liga* and “other associations with stronger fellowship surrounding one or several leaders” – which are not clearly defined, but which implicitly refer to “organized crime” USA.

In this account, the general crime trend is discussed in terms of a combination of the crime structure and the nature of the “*ligorna*” (gangs). The document states that there are 322 gangs containing 1595 members in the major cities of Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö). It is suggested that the crime trend in Sweden is as yet not as alarming as that in the USA, but that it is necessary to “catch and dissolve them [the gangs] as soon as possible,” instead of arresting isolated criminals (Centralförbundet för Socialt arbete 1941:41).

There are also accounts from the 1930s of an extensive illegal traffic in liquor in violation of the alcohol rationing system that was in place in the Nordic countries after the First World War (e.g., Niska 1931).

However, it seems that organized crime, as a term, is mostly associated with American or Italian crime phenomena during the 1920s-40s, as the following quotations from the major Swedish newspapers illustrate:

“Organized crime [...] the stain on American society which goes under the term racketeering.”¹³ (Dagens Nyheter 1930/12/10)

“The Italians have given the U.S.A. spaghetti, broccoli, spumoni, hundreds of sauces, street music, [...] and organized crime. [...] Organized crime is the flip side of the beautiful Italian medal.”¹⁴ (Svenska Dagbladet 1938/09/18)

During the 1950s, while organized crime was still understood as a foreign phenomenon, there seems to have been some kind of discussion of a similar form of crime emerging in Sweden.

“Night patrols do not believe in organized crime. [...] Gangs of the American model have not been seen.”¹⁵ (Expressen 1953/1/27)

During the 1960s, organized crime seems to have been a general accepted expression describing the seriousness of some forms of crime, but not as a

¹² Original quote in Swedish: “en sammanslutning i brottsligt syfte av tre eller flera personer, vilka tillhopa begått minst tre brott.”

¹³ Original quote in Swedish: “Organiserad brottslighet [...] den skamfläck på det amerikanska samhällsliv som går under beteckningen ‘racketeering.’”

¹⁴ Original quote in Swedish: “Italienarna har givit U.S.A. spaghetti, broccoli, spumoni, hundratals såser, gatamusik, belcanto, ‘rödbläck’ (billigt rödvin) samt organiserad brottslighet.”

¹⁵ Original quote in Swedish: “‘Nattpatruller tror inte på organiserad brottslighet. [...] Några ligor av amerikansk modell har inte skymtats.’”

distinctive phenomenon similar to the imagery of Italian and American organized crime.

“Cop killer Leif Peters [...] part of organized crime.”¹⁶ (Expressen 1967/5/23)

It is not until the 1970s, however, that organized crime becomes an established term that appears in several publications, commissions of inquiry and legislative reforms (e.g., Brå 1978; Bråkenhielm 1979; Persson 1980; SOU 1979:6). The primary focus is directed at criminal activities such as financial crime, prostitution, and gambling. Surprisingly, illegal drugs do not appear to be directly associated with organized crime in this era (Brå 2002). Although organized crime is widely discussed and portrayed as a growing societal problem, there are voices suggesting that this is only a means for the police to obtain more resources (Dagens Nyheter, October 3, 1973).

“Organized crime. Olof Palme expresses concern about ‘gangsterism’. And probably means the internationally branched criminality, whose tentacles have been reaching out into Swedish society for the past few years.”¹⁷ (Aftonbladet 1973/1/4)

It seems that in Sweden, since the 1970s, there has been a clear distinction between organized crime and “financial crime or cooperate crime.” This is probably linked to the crime policy of the time, which chose to react to white-color crime as a means of demonstrating the ability to take action against crimes committed by all social classes in society (Brå 2002).

While the main focus of Swedish crime policy in the 1980s was directed at illegal drugs and financial crime, the embryo of more organized criminal organizations emerged during this period with the rise of domestic outlaw motorcycle clubs and recurrent conflicts such as The Copenhagen Biker War (1983–85). And at the same time, organized crime was portrayed as a threat to Swedish society.

“[...] a growing organized crime in our country. It forms itself like a cancer in the body of our society.”¹⁸ (Expressen 1981/9/25)

¹⁶ Original quote in Swedish: “Polismördaren Leif Peters [...] ingått som ett led i en organiserad brottslighet.”

¹⁷ Original quote in Swedish: “Organiserad brottslighet – Olof Palme uttrycker oro för ‘gangsterism’. Och menar sannolikt den internationellt förgrenade brottsligheten vars tentakler sedan några år har sträckt ut i det svenska samhället.”

¹⁸ Original quote in Swedish: “[...] en växande organiserad brottslighet i vårt land. Den utbildar sig som en cancer i samhällskroppen, den bygger på mångas medverkan och mångas vetskap och förutsätter också att rätten skall kunna sättas ur spel, till och med vid domstolsförhandlingar.”

With the entry of *international* outlaw motorcycle club gangs (OMGC) at the beginning of 1990s, organized crime became one of the pillars of Swedish crime policy, particularly as a result of the Great Nordic Biker War, which began in 1994 and continued until 1997. During the years that followed, the OMGCs, particularly the Hells Angels MC and Bandidos MC, rapidly increased their activities in Sweden by accepting new chapters in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Sweden witnessed newly emergent street gangs, which initially reflected the OMGCs and later became competitors, which resulted in several conflicts, and the entry of new international OMGCs such as the Outlaws, Mongols and Satudah. During the 1990s Sweden also witnessed the emergence of crime groups consisting of individuals from the former Yugoslavia which focused on cargo thefts, and drug and cigarette trafficking (Brå 2012).

Today, Swedish organized crime, including football hooligans and left and right wing extremist groups, has over 3000 core members (n = 3426) across roughly 150 units (e.g., gangs, chapters, sub-groups) with identifiable symbols and signs, and between 1990 and 2011 has been suspected of 170.957 criminal offenses (Brå-dataset, see chapter 2).

Attempts to frame organized crime in Sweden

“Characteristic of organized crime is that it takes the form of more or less continuous criminal activities that are conducted at such volume that it would hardly be possible to carry them out alone.”¹⁹ (SOU 2014a:43)

The most recent and comprehensive attempt to frame organized crime in Sweden is found in the official report of the Inquiry into penal judicial measures against organized crime appointed by the Swedish government (SOU 2014b). This framing represents a combination of the definitions provided by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)²⁰ and intelligence assessments from the Swedish police.

The governmental inquiry represents a thorough revision of organized crime policy in Sweden, but unfortunately, it has not been able to provide a unified understanding of criminal collaboration in a Swedish context, since it uses the organized crime concept as its analytic framework and different

¹⁹ Original quote in Swedish: “Utmärkande för organiserad brottslighet är att det är en mer eller mindre löpande kriminell verksamhet som bedrivs i sådan omfattning att det knappast går att utföra den ensam.”

²⁰ Brå defines organized crime as follows: *A network-based, profit-making criminal operation in project form that has the desire and the ability to protect and facilitate crime through unlawful influence (harassment, threats, violence and corruption). - Within the "projects", which succeed each other, there is work sharing and such flexibility that individuals come and go from the projects. - The operation is generally carried out discreetly, but may sometimes be expressed in visible gangs, with provocative behaviour, symbols and claims to power.* (Brå, 2015).

varieties of criminal phenomena that manifest in Sweden are labeled as organized crime without any further elaboration, and on the basis of limited empirical data (see Kriminologiska institutionen 2014). Two overall criticisms can be directed against the framing of organized crime in this inquiry.

First, instead of focusing on organizing aspects of organized crime, we find a mismatch of generic descriptions of some elements of criminal organization blended with motives for membership based on a limited use of primary empirical sources and previous international research on gangs and organized crime. For example, outlaw motorcycle gangs are labeled as “brotherhoods” and street gangs are labeled “territorial networks”. It is argued that although these territorial networks essentially operate and exert influence locally, they often have international branches (SOU 2014a:55). As an example, in Study I and II, we find that the notion of brotherhood is universal for Swedish gang members irrespective of the type of gang, and that although street gangs are territorially bounded, they are not “traditional gangs” in the sense of claiming turf and defending it against foes. There is also only limited support for the view that these so called “territorial networks” aspire to international expansion (see Rostami, Leinfelt and Holgersson 2012; Rostami, Leinfelt and Brotherton 2014).

The second criticism of this framework focuses on its assertion that the main drivers of organized crime (including gangs) are the pursuit of “financial gain” (SOU 2014b:48). On the contrary, there are strong indications from gang research, both in Sweden (Rostami, Leinfelt and Brotherton 2014), and internationally (Howell 1998), that the risk factors for and drivers of membership and involvement in organized crime groups in general, and gangs in particular, are more complex than this (see concluding discussion in chapter 6). As regards the main driver in the sense of motives and driving forces, Rostami, Leinfelt, and Brotherton (2012) (see Study II) studied the driving forces behind street gang leadership and gang membership and identified four ideal-types, each with specific goals, aspirations and motives. Individual material gains had a secondary and peripheral role for these gang members. Overall this framing, like many other governmental attempts and definitions, has unfortunately not succeeded in reducing the confusion surrounding the notion and concept of organized crime in a Swedish context.

Organized crime as abstraction of underlying concepts

The brief review of definitions, concepts, and literature in the previous sections illustrates the many attempts to define what organized crime is.

However, despite many attempts at a definition, it seems that the notion of what comprises organized crime, and the boundaries of the meaning of the different concepts, are in the end ambiguous and arbitrary. I argue that this is an unintended consequence of the fact that the abstractions of underlying concepts such as mafias, gangs and crime networks are themselves abstrac-

tions of underlying concepts. Each underlying concept of organized crime has been analyzed and presented as a general model of organized crime, despite the existence of powerful controversies regarding the origin, composition and characteristics of these underlying abstractions (see figure 2).

Because organized crime is a collection of underlying levels of criminal collaborations that suffer from the same conceptual problems, a clash of chaotic concepts is unavoidable. Since a “criminal ordering” constitutes a degree of organization rather than the endpoint of a continuum of social relations, it is problematic when a single-dimensional understanding of criminal collaboration is enforced and presented as a general model of organized crime. This results in the concept losing its potential to function as an overarching research field for the study of criminal collaborations.

This would perhaps not be so much of a problem if organized crime had not been understood and presented as an objective reality, and treated as an analytical framework. Nor would it be a major problem if it were not for all the efforts to frame organized crime as a threat to society and the need to curtail civil rights to prevent the proliferation of organized crime.

It is suggested that one of the main obstacles to conceptualizing organized crime has been the notion of “organized” rather than “crime” (Finckenauer 2005; Gottschalk 2009). At the same time, organized crime has been understood as being intrinsically different from non-criminal organizations, which justifies its separate treatment, but without anyone having introduced satisfactory arguments or empirical support for this view (see von Lampe 2001, 2016).

This may be because the empirical phenomena associated with organized crime are examined at a high ontological level. Instead of trying to find the underlying generative mechanism that gives rise to criminal collaboration, the focus has been on which phenomena should be included and excluded from the study of organized crime.

One path out of the current chaotic concept of organized crime may be to pay more attention to the various mechanisms of social organization that are common to all types of organizations (Bhaskar 1989; Sayer 1992).

In this way, the dilemmas of overlapping cases can be lessened because the focus will be on the dimension and degree of organizing rather than on finding the “ideal type” of a complete formal criminal organization.

In the next chapter, on the basis of the empirical findings from the studies included in this dissertation, I will present an alternative framework as an example of how we might move on from the current conceptual chaos and advance the research into criminal organizing.

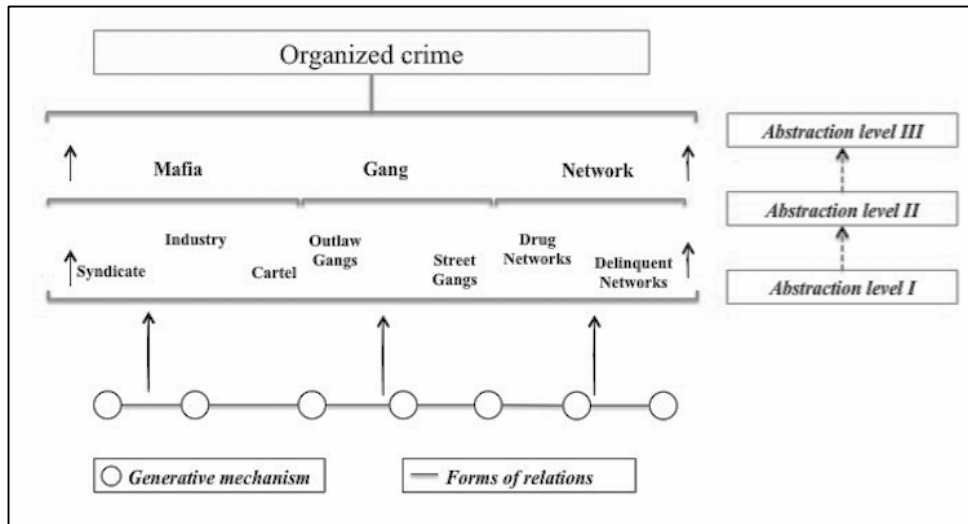


Figure 2 Illustration of the rise of the chaotic concepts underlying the conceptual confusion of organized crime. The figure is inspired by and draws on Sayer (1992:139).

Chapter 4. Criminal organizing

“First there must be food; secondly, arts, for life requires many instruments; thirdly, there must be arms, for the members of a community have need of them, and in their own hands, too, in order to maintain authority both against disobedient subjects and against external assailants.” Aristotle, *The Politics book VII* (Aristotle 1996:177)

It has been suggested that one way to advance the organized crime research is through the “transplantation of theories from other disciplines with similar research questions” (Kleemans 2015:48), such as organization theory. Another way to advance the field is to combine models of organized crime in order to arrive at a more complete picture (Albanese 1994; von Lampe 2003).

In this chapter, based primarily on Study V, I will discuss key elements that are variously connected with concepts of organized crime and discuss how they are interrelated with studies of the sociology of organization. Based on organization theory, and in particular the framework developed by Göran Ahrne (Ahrne 1990, 1994; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011), which holds that organization (order) is a universal social phenomenon, and that organizing is a fundamental principle throughout society, forms of criminal collaboration are examined as a means of exemplifying an alternative framework for studying criminal collaboration, which may provide a route away from the analytical concept of organized crime.

Elements in concepts of organized crime

Departing from the framework of organization theory (Ahrne 1990, 1994; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011), organized crime is either conceptualized as a socially embedded institution that facilitates *illegal governance* (Block 1983; Gambetta 1993), or as a social criminal organization, *the bureaucracy-hierarchical structure model*, (Albanese 1994; Cressey 1969) and the *enterprise model* (Smith 1980), or as partial organizations and networks conducting *illegal activities* within the *so called patron-client model* (Albini 1971) as represented in table 3.

The fourth perspective evolved from the previous perspectives and understands organized crime as a state-type institution that facilitates extra-legal governance (von Lampe 2016) much like an industry that produces, pro-

motes, and sells private protection instead of illegal goods and services (e.g., Gambetta 1993). This fourth perspective models organized crime as a set of network relations and as an overlapping model combines aspects of different approaches via the social network perspective (e.g., Morselli 2009b).

Table 3 Overview of perspectives in the study of organized crime categorized into elements of social order.

Dimensions	Institution	Organization	Network
Perspectives	Extra-legal governance. Industry of protection.	Illegal activities. Criminal enterprise	Set of relations
Underlying concepts	Mafias, syndicates	Outlaw motorcycle gangs, Cartels	Street-gangs, drug-networks
Key Elements²¹	Affiliation, embeddedness, power, exchange, practices	Membership, hierarchy, rule, solidarity, specialization, collectiveness, control	Ties, communications, relations
Literature	(Dickie 2004; Gambetta 1993; Hill 2003; Schelling 1984; Varese 2001)	(Albini 1971; Cressey 1969; Reuter 1983) Smith Haller	(Morselli 2009b)

By exploring these perspectives, a number of key elements can be identified in the operationalization of organized crime. Key elements such as communication, relations, trust, affiliation, hierarchy, specialization, solidarity, rules, embeddedness, and exchange, are argued, alone or in combination, to give rise to and maintain criminal orders, which in the literature are defined as criminal organizations, illegal activities, criminal enterprises, extra-legal governance or crime networks.

However, the extracted key elements are not unique to forms of criminal order or criminal collaboration. These are fundamental elements in the dimensions that produce the rise and maintenance of social order in general. While there are different perspectives on what unites and divides societies, the term social order is generally used to describe the ordering principles by which chaos is curbed or prevented, and society and its underlying communities are organized and order is created. While interest in studying orga-

²¹ Many of these elements are cross-dimensional and should be considered as degrees of organizing.

nized crime has a century-long history, curiosity about why and how order is created, and how disorder is countered through organizing principles, can be traced all the way back to ancient Greece, so this is no new quest (Harle 1998). In fact, social order, in such forms as sets of social systems, social solidarity, forms of coordination, or social organization, and the quest to understand why and how social order and disorder arise, are maintained, and how they change, have been central concerns across the millennia, although different models have been used to develop explanations (Slattery 2003:72; Strasser 2014:32).

“The uniform matter of the World, was a God, by the name of Chaos.”
(Hobbes 1651:173 [Par 1 Chap.12])

For Hobbes, a critic of Aristotle’s view of “man” as a naturally social being that does not need laws to act responsibly (Johnson 1985), the state of nature, meaning the natural condition of the lives of people before the existence of civil societies, is chaos; the lives of human beings are solitary, short, poor and brutal. People are equal, totally free, but live in a condition of a war of all against all. For Hobbes, individuals are self-interested and when they “desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies” (Hobbes 1651:184–185).

However, individuals, are also *reasoning* agents who calculate the benefits and consequences of their actions. This means that people can come together and trade their freedom in exchange for security in the form of a social contract, because it is in their interest to do so. Through this process, the order of the state is established to regulate social interactions. When the state emerges, its regulation of social interactions must rest on military power, because without a common coercive power, or “terror of some power” (Hobbes 1651:223), to “keep them all in awe,” the state of nature of “man” is a “state of warre,” because “men” will always be enemies (Hobbes 1651:185).

For Marx and Engels it was the mode of productive forces, meaning the economic structure, that determines the social order. In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx stated:

“No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed, and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself.” (Marx 1859:preface)

For Marx and Engels, in their natural state, people lived together in primitive communistic households, with no social classes, but human beings were no different from any other type of animal. The first stage of human history is characterized by savagery and barbarism (Engels 1884). However, society is

made up of unequal groups, not equal individuals as argued by Hobbes, and there is conflict between these groups, with the ruling groups constraining the weaker ones, and with cohesion being sustained by means of economic, political and legal coercion and by bureaucratic routine.

“Because the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflicts of these classes.” (Engels 1884:159)

For Weber and Durkheim, in contrast to Hobbes and Marx, the primary focus was on disorder, not order. They understood social order through the lens of consensus, rather than coercive power, as the force that unifies societies. To take an example, they defined the state as ruling by physical force, but argued that the members of society must view this use of force as legitimate. Gangs, criminals, and other coercive organizations may also use force in pursuit of their goals, but this is viewed as illegitimate as long as state power is intact (Buechler 2008:74). Weber held that a defining feature of any “legitimate” social order is that rules are obeyed in the absence of coercion, i.e., that people are willing to obey laws and rules voluntarily (Hechter and Horne 2009:85). Because power based on coercive force will in the end create animosity and therefore resistance, those who hold power need to seek to convert power into authority (Buechler 2008). Weber introduced three types of legitimate authority through which the governing order may manifest its legitimacy and in return receive the loyalty of the members of society: patrimonial, bureaucratic, and charismatic (Weber 1958).

“Constraint begins only when regulation, no longer corresponding to the true state of affairs and consequently without any moral foundation, is only maintained by force.” (Durkheim 1893:312)

While Durkheim did not deny the existence of conflict and the use of force, he explained social cohesion in terms of morality. Durkheim’s point of departure was “social solidarity,” a common consensus, which he defined as a “collective conscience,” arguing that it consists of shared norms and values that promote uniform behaviors. From this, two ideal types of social order arise, a mechanical solidarity based on shared beliefs and values, which characterized old and rural societies, and an organic solidarity based on interdependence and differentiation, which characterizes modern and urban societies. Durkheim’s concept of “society” is broad and covers everything from a single individual to social groups, such as families, nations, and mankind as a whole (Jacobsson 2006). From Durkheim’s point of view, moral regulation occurs through consensus, common interest, and the development of a code of conduct, and social order is upheld and maintained by this collective and moral authority (Durkheim 1893). He held that individuals, as

“social beings,” are dependent on group life and need to be integrated into a moral community to be able to live.

“A group is not only a moral authority regulating the life of its members, but also a source of life *sui generis*. From it there arises a warmth that quickens or gives fresh life to each individual, which makes him disposed to empathise, causing selfishness to melt away.” (Durkheim 1893:lii, Preface to the Second Edition)

While Hobbes’s solution to chaos was coercive, based on societal contracts, Durkheim’s, and later Talcott Parsons’ solutions rested on collective moral consensus. For Parsons, a prior moral consensus was a necessary precondition for social order (Burger 1977:322). Social order, which he defined as a social system, is made possible by the internalization of norms and the acceptance of values. And forces are mobilized through “institutional patterns” to maintain a stable state (Procter 1980). It is a system within which the actors interact through a commonly understood system of cultural symbols shared between the total-society and sub-collectivities (Hamilton 1992:4; Parsons 1951). Parsons held that “without a system of common values there can be no such thing as a society” (Burger 1977:322).

“Institutional patterns are the backbone of the social system [and] do in fact mobilise a combination of forces in supporting of their maintenance which is of primary significance in the total equilibrium of a social system” cited in (Procter 1980:336).

As can be seen from table 4, irrespective of whether we choose to describe it as a social order, a set of social systems, social solidarity, forms of coordination, or social organization, the quest to understand why and how societies are organized, and why and how order or disorder arise, are maintained, and change have long been central concerns of social thought (Slattery 2003:72; Strasser 2014:32), and the elements of social order have been widely discussed. These have included the notions of affiliation, described by Simmel (Simmel 1922), rules and hierarchies, described by Weber (1958, 1978), specialization, described by Smith (2003), solidarity, described by Durkheim (1893), power, described by Marx (1954), embeddedness in the form of institutional patterns, described by Parsons (1964), socially structured means, described by Merton (1938, 1957), trust, described by Luhmann (1979), and network relations, described by Granovetter (1985).

Table 4 Schematic summaries of theoretical perspectives on social order.

Perspective	Key references	Key assumptions
Social contract theory	(Hobbes 1651; Locke 1667; Rousseau 1762)	To secure and preserve security, liberty and order, individuals put their power in a common authority by entering into a contract.
Conflict theory	(Engels 1884; Marx 1859)	Conflict born out of inequality based on social class, gender, and other factors, which restates order.
Functionalism	(Durkheim 1887, 1893; Merton 1957; Parsons 1964; Simmel 1922)	Institutions, e.g., norms, values, traditions, are necessary for social stability, which is born out of socialization and social integration.
Social exchange theory	(Beccaria 2011; Coleman 1994; Smith 2003; Weber 1978)	Relationships are formed by subjective cost-benefit analysis. Social order is born when collaboration is considered to be in people's best interests.
Routinization theory	(Bourdieu 1984; Giddens 1976, 1984)	The reproduction of social structure is born from habitual routinized social activity.

Dimensions of social order and forms of social organization

Despite the long history of exploring the underlying principles of social order, the organizing elements involved take on different meanings, depending on the perspective employed. Social order may be understood as a set of individuals who collaborate to stage routines (Goffman 1959). But it may also be understood as group solidarity that has reciprocal activities as its objective (Hechter 1987). It may also be viewed as a way of creating security in an unsafe environment (March & Simon 1993; Thompson 1971).

Social order may be understood as a form of collaboration. For example, some kind of affiliation is needed for collaboration to exist and be maintained, a sense of belonging and a way to communicate. Members must be

able to exchange information, experiences, and content (e.g., Berger and Luckmann 2011). From a Hobbesian point of view, collaboration becomes a way of creating some sort of security in an uncertain environment, and belonging gives access to collective resources that could not be obtained individually (e.g., Barnard 1938).

In a social order, both affiliated individuals and the collective have expectations, and power relations exist. Finally, there are control mechanisms and consequences for deviations from the existing order. But these elements manifest themselves through different degrees of social order, such as in the case of institutions—in the form of values, norms, roles, and status—in organizations—in the form of formal membership, rules, positions and sanctions—and finally, in latent relational patterns such as networks—in the form of contacts and habits (see table 4). In this taxonomy, drawn from the work of Göran Ahrne (Ahrne 1990, 1994, 1998; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011), social order may be divided into three main dimensions with partial interfaces, *institutions*, *organizations*, and *networks*.

Institutions are a fundamental component of social life. They can be seen as a set of formal and informal constraints that structure human interaction (North 1990). Institutions are the embodiment of conceptions and norms that are taken for granted and that structure social action into stable and routinely reproducible behavioral patterns (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011:89). Institutions are not social actors themselves; rather, they consist of conceptions and norms on how social action should be carried out (Ahrne 2014).

Organizations, unlike institutions, are a decided order with well-defined boundaries. A number of elements constitute this order: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring, and sanctions (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011). Affiliation with an organization is manifested through formal membership. With membership follows a clear identity, which contains a combination of individual motives and collective objectives. While institutional boundaries are fluid, organizational expectations are crystallized in the form of formal rules. Organizations have a formal hierarchy with positions, in contrast to institutions, where the fundamental power elements instead take the form of status and roles. Organizations need to monitor and control that their formal rules are followed in order to be able to sanction their members, unlike institutions, where control takes place implicitly by means of prejudices and is sanctioned through respect or contempt. Sanctions in organizations are not restricted to punishment for breaking rules, but are also a tool for measuring performance and rewarding positive actions. Interaction within an organization is therefore essential to the maintenance of all its elements (Ahrne 1994). The basic common element that distinguishes all forms of organizing from other social activities is that the individuals involved in the process make a commitment to meet routinely in order to achieve common goals through collaboration (Ahrne 1990, 1994). Recurrent collaboration, in turn, gives rise to a need for a division of labor. Through collective decision-

theory (Ahrne 1990, 1994, 1998, 2014; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011; Ahrne and Hedström 1999): state, family, enterprise, and association. Order is a universal social phenomenon, and organizing is a fundamental principle in society, which means that it would be remarkable if these processes were not found in a criminal context. And a strong analogy can be made between forms of criminal collaboration and the four basic forms of social organization outlined by Göran Ahrne, which is briefly elaborated upon below (see tables 6 and 7 for comparisons and analogies).

The state as a form of social organization

The state as a form of organization is characterized by a strong degree of constraint, in terms of both having a bounded territory and compulsory membership, granted in the form of citizenship (Parsons 1951; Weber 1978). There are clear membership boundaries; citizens of a state are neither chosen nor selected (Ahrne 1994). Membership in a state is a compulsory relation between individuals, which entails obligations such as paying taxes. The members of a state must follow rules embodied in laws. Unlike other forms of social organization, authority and governance is built on the monopoly of violence. Continuous monitoring through policing and the judicial system is necessary in order to control the collective resources and sanctions (Ahrne 1998). In a state, breaking the law has punitive consequences, and at the same time citizens can be rewarded with medals and other forms of symbolic capital. The collective resources produced and maintained by a state are territorially bounded, and their goal is to provide members with a safe and secure infrastructure to enable the exchange of goods. These collective resources are characterized by stability and continuity. Public infrastructure is financed by the collection of collective resources, which again relies upon the monopoly of violence for its efficient operation. Another difference in relation to other forms of social organization is that the state exercises legislative power over other organizations (Ahrne 1998).

The state is a low-flexibility form of organization, because of the difficulties associated with modifying its territory and moving around its collective resources. The state, however, has the capacity to coordinate actions within an array of different fields, with this ability manifesting itself, for example, in the provision of a variety of public services to its citizens. A mafia as a form of criminal organization, such as the Syriac mafia described in Study V, shows similarities with a state as a form of social organization. For example, both forms rest on strong institutional elements with embedded positions, which enable the organization to act in multiple territorially-bounded fields. A mafia may be described as a partially institutionalized criminal phenomenon, shifting between a formal form of social organization and a higher degree of institutionalization.

Family as a form of social organization

The family as a form of social organization is an order based on kinship. Membership is two-fold: on the one hand it is coercive, in the sense that membership in one's primary family cannot usually be chosen, and on the other hand it is voluntary, in the sense that—in most cases—membership in one's secondary family can be chosen through marriage and divorce. This compulsory aspect is what differentiates the state and the family from the other forms of social organization.

In the family, members are connected through kinship, and the adults are responsible for the young (Giddens 2009). Even when rules exist in a family, a great deal of the interaction builds on institutionalized expectations, norms, and routines, and these affect control within the family. In organization theory, this form of organization is called a “greedy organization” since it demands a lot of its members (Coser 1967).

Members in a family must be constantly visible in order to allow for careful monitoring (Ahrne 2014). Family members must be present on a regular basis, or remind the rest of their presence. Within a larger kinship scope, such as a clan, visibility through ceremonies constitutes an important monitoring function. This form of control is discrete, and it is different from direct control in the form of inspection (Edwards 1979; Perrow 1986). Ceremonies and rites are not just important indicators for monitoring and loyalty; they also have a similar function in other forms of social organization. Participation in a ceremony or rite creates an ideological context that has a bearing on both affiliation and access to collective resources (Ahrne 1994, 2014)

The family is an economic unit in which economic resources are distributed and held among the members, and where members have an obligation to contribute to the collective. The family is not territorially bounded, but rather mobile and flexible because its collective resources can be moved with relative ease. The larger the family is, the less mobility it has.

Since part of kinship interaction rests upon institutionalized expectations, norms, and routines, with trust taking priority, a family can act in more than one field. Kinship relations are meaningful when it comes to exchanging services, money and gifts. The family, like the state, endures by virtue of embedded rules, strong membership, and the self-controlled inflow of new members.

As a form of criminal organization, street gangs, such as the Werewolf Legion described more extensively in Study V, are like “artificial families,” as expressed by the gang members themselves. Membership in a gang depends on existing close friendship ties. Instead of formal monitoring, members need to be constantly visible on the “street” in order to allow for careful monitoring. Absence from the “street” is considered as a kind of disassociation. The collective resources depend entirely on the sum of the individual resources, and the group is very dependent on each individual member and

collective awareness; at the same time this limits the gang's ability to gain access to multiple fields.

Enterprise as a form of social organization

Enterprise as a form of organization is a concept that includes different variants of business operations, driven by industries, cooperatives, or foundations. These different enterprises have in common that there is ownership and some form of profit interest as the driving force behind their activities (Ahrne 1994).

Primary membership is voluntary, as in associations, but it tends to be more conditioned on some type of employment contract. The economic motive has priority when the individual considers belonging to an enterprise. However, an enterprise can attempt to create a secondary membership through the establishment of clubs or affiliates that are run almost like voluntary associations. These clubs have the goal of broadening the level of identification with the enterprise and connecting it with consumers, generating higher profits and loyalty (Ahrne 1994).

The owners of a company have the ultimate power, not the employees. They can choose whom to recruit and which product segments the enterprise should concentrate on. At the same time, employment is voluntary, because the employee can choose whether to work there or not.

A trademark is an important identity marker for enterprises, both in the eyes of consumers and competitors. Affinity with a trademark produces a higher dependency relationship and in the long run generates more loyal customers and higher profits. Another goal of a trademark is the creation of a clear message and its recognition by the enterprise's target group. The trademark is an immaterial asset that is often highly protected by the organization.

In enterprises, the monitoring of employees is formalized through working hours, regular recorded meetings, follow-up plans, and the like. This formal monitoring is detailed and directly coupled to sanctions. Sanctions and hierarchy are structured in order to achieve specific goals (Ahrne et al. 2008).

The enterprise as a form of organization is considerably more flexible than other forms in its coordination of actions, because capital (i.e., money, means of production, trademark, and products) is the central collective resource. An enterprise is more mobile than, for example, an association, since its resources can be moved, bought, or sold. Employees may be recruited or laid off. At the same time, enterprises operate within a bounded field, unlike states and families.

Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs, such as Hells Angels MC, are forms of criminal organization featuring clear analogies to enterprises as a form of social organization. Strict bureaucratization, formal rules of membership, interaction, monitoring, and the emphasis on the trademark as a business element

and identity marker are some of the analogous elements observed in Study V.

Associations as a form of social organization

Associations as a form of social organization comprise examples such as unions, NGOs and political parties. Membership is voluntary, often non-profit, but not without specific conditions. One must often apply for membership and comply with certain conditions such as specific age limits. Even if affiliation is exclusive, membership is fluid.

The basis for association is that members have common values and want to collaborate to achieve some form of social change, such as reforms and opinion formation (Ahrne et al. 2008), and in return they get satisfaction and recognition for their contributions. Interaction is driven mainly by codes of conduct, although formal rules may exist as well, and monitoring is exercised through participation.

In these organizations, members are the central resource. The collective resource consists of the sum of the members' inclusive wealth (a measure that includes the sum of natural, human, and physical assets). This is one reason why associations are so strongly member-oriented; the organization would have a hard time operating if its members did not share capital.

Associations can be engaged in different activities but limited to the same field. It can be difficult for them to make strategic decisions, since decision-making is based on some form of unanimous agreement (Ahrne 1994). Their operation is uneven and periodic. Associations are not particularly flexible, because they are often geographically organized and based on their members' direct contributions in the form of membership fees and the like. Even if weak ties exist within an association, like in a network, they are likely to become stronger from time to time. In contrast to the other forms of social organization, a strong analogy with associations is not found in the criminal context. The Hallunda robbery crime project is a form of criminal organization where membership arose from strong network relations and was voluntary but exclusive. The purpose of the collaboration was specific, and collective resources consisted of the sum of the individual members' competences. The form of organizing involved was thus objective-driven, as in associations, also reflecting the temporal pattern and the limiting of activity to one field that is characteristic of the associational form of social organizing. This form shows stronger analogies to temporal organizations (Bakker 2010) and partial organization (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011).

As a consequence of the strong analogies between various forms of criminal and social organizations, I argue that one way to resolve the conceptual confusion around "organized crime" is to base our approaches on the vast literature of social organization. At the same time, a greater understanding of criminal organization as a dark ecology can contribute to developing a greater understanding of the emergence and dimensions of social order, and more

attention should therefore be paid to the interplay between these two research areas.

Table 6 Four forms of social organization developed from Ahrne (Ahrne 1990, 1994, 1998, 2014, 2014; Ahrne and Brunsson 2011; Ahrne and Hedström 1999; Ahrne et al. 2008).

Elements of		Forms of social organizations			
Social order	Organization	State	Family	Enterprise	Association
<i>Affiliation</i>	Membership	Citizenship	Kinship	Employment	Membership
		Compulsory	Voluntary/ Compulsory	Voluntary	Voluntary
<i>Expectations</i>	Rules	Laws, codes	Routine, norms, habits	Contract	Code of conduct
<i>Power</i>	Hierarchy	Governance, ideology	Institutional expectations (Patriarchy)	Ownership	Unanimity
<i>Control</i>	Monitoring	Judicial, Policing	Visibility	Recorded meetings	Participation
<i>Consequences</i>	Sanctions	Prestige, Benefits, Punitive	Means, Repudiation, Divorce	Promotion, Compensation, Discharge	Satisfaction, Recognition, Social pres- sure, Expul- sion
<i>Aspiration</i>	Collective resources	Public goods, infrastructure	Wealth	Means of production	Inclusive wealth ²²
<i>Operation</i>	Field	Multiple, continuity, stable	Single, limited, susceptible, versatility	Single, re- strained, target- ed	Single, limited, restrained, targeted
	Space	Bounded, flexible	Mobile, flexible	Mobile, flexible	Bounded,
	Time	Enduring, stable	Enduring, stable	Limited	Periodic, fluctuating

²² Measure, which includes the sum of natural, human and physical assets.

Table 7 Forms of criminal collaboration arranged by elements of social organization.

Elements		Dimensions of social order				
		Institution	Organisation			Network
		Partial institution			Partial organisation	
			Mafia	Street-gang	OMCG	Crime project
Affiliation (membership)	Kinship, ethno-religious		Formal, friendship based	Formal	Circle of acquaintances	
Expectations (rules)	Institutional values, code of the street		Formal rules, code of the street	Formal rules	Code of the street and honour	
Power (hierarchy)	Position, status		Roles, Positions	Position	Reputation	
	Imbedded		Horizontal	Vertical	Horizontal	
Control (monitoring)	Institutional interaction		Territorial interaction/visibility	Formal interaction	Informal interaction/visibility	
Consequences (sanctions)	Oppression, defamation, shame		Expulsion	Discharge	Invitation, ignore	
Aspiration (collective resources)	Material		Financial, political, cultural and violence capital (criminal know-how)	Street and violence capital (criminal know-how)	Clubhouse, ideological and violence capital (criminal know-how)	Inclusive wealth (criminal know-how)
	Immaterial	Institutional infrastructure	Symbols	Trademark, symbols	Reputation, Trust	

Concluding discussion

Instead of studying *why* and *how* criminal collaborations emerge, operate, and develop, the main focus of the study of organized crime has been directed at *what* organized crime and the phenomena associated with it are. This is probably inevitable because crime involves a reluctant hidden population engaging in violent activities, and this has an effect on the scholars who investigate the hostile world of organized crime.

However, these difficulties should not limit our ability to constructively propose ways to strengthen the study of organized crime. Conceptual confusion arises because organized crime has been and continues to be understood as being intrinsically different from non-criminal organization, and as a result it has been treated conceptually separately.

This dissertation is based on five studies on the interplay between the questions *What*, *Who*, *Why* and *How*, in a series of empirical manifestations of criminal collaborations that occurred in Sweden between 1990 and 2015.

What, is a question that has been asked for decades. The results of my Study I, II, IV, and V show that criminal collaborations, whether in the form of mafias, gangs or networks, are not monolithic entities for which a single explanation can be found that covers all their aspects. To take one example, Study I found a high degree of similarity between the pattern of Swedish gangs and gang development and that of American and European street gangs; however the diversity and variation between them—depending on evolutionary phases—was at least as important as their similarities.

These phenomena and the forces that increase the likelihood of joining these criminal collaborations, camaraderies, and communities are multidimensional. As illustrated in Study V, they can be based on institutionalized behavioral patterns, formal bureaucracies such as enterprise-type organizations, or a set of segmentary societies linked through network relations that in special cases evolve into a temporary complete criminal organization. It is rather the degree of social order that can help us understand the organizational cycle in which our study object exists.

Who and *Why*, are questions that have been explored since the beginning of social science. There is a large body of research on each of the risk factors used to explain delinquency and the rise of criminal collaboration. These risk factors can range from (see Howell 1998) *family and social disorganization* (Bjerregaard and Smith 1993; Curry and Spergel 1988; Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher 1993), *desire for protection* (Curry and Spergel 1992; Fagan 1990; Horowitz and Schwartz 1974; Moore 1978; Short and Strodtbeck 1965), and *victimization* (Fagan 1990), to *social bonds and street socialization* e.g., via *peer groups* (Bjerregaard and Smith 1993; Curry and Spergel 1992; Vigil 1988). The results from Study II suggested four ideal-types for gang leadership, each with specific goals, aspirations, and motives. Individu-

al material gains and crime had a secondary and peripheral role for the majority of gang members. There are other forces and factors that motivate these individuals to be part of and to lead a gang. The members instead understand crime as a mean to achieve their own individual goals, whatever they might be. Gang leaders' individual goals, aspirations and motivations distinguish them as leaders, and in turn, create gangs with unique features. As regards *Who*, the results from Study I and II show that while members can be found with all kinds of socioeconomic background—from highly trained to virtually illiterate, from individuals from a well-functioning family structure to those who have been raised in dysfunctional environments—criminal collaborations are predominantly comprised of men from marginalized groups. However, the results from Study I show that ethnicity is not a risk factor in itself, but that it is rather the burden and stigma that may come with certain types of social position that increase the risk of joining criminal gangs.

How questions have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature on organized crime, but due to the use of a single-dimensional approach, our understanding of the nature of criminal collaboration is limited. By returning to the basic principles of social organization, we can see that organized crime and its underlying dimensions are conceptualizations of degrees of criminal collaboration, which have for the most part emerged in an unsafe environment as a means of creating an alternative order (see Study II and V). How an uncertain environment is perceived is naturally a highly individualized experience. The total institution of prison provides a good example. Here, individuals seek protection in a hostile environment through collaboration with other inmates. However, they cannot freely advertise their goods and services. They face the problem of whom to trust and how to conceal information from prison guards. Members of different collaborations express their loyalty and affiliation through tattoos, nicknames, and informal rules, and members establish a position of power by means of violence (Gambetta 2009). We need to explore and deconstruct the organizing elements of such phenomena and measure their degree (Hagan 1983). This would give us the answers to the questions what, who, why and how.

This led me to address the consequences of the conceptual confusion associated with the chaotic concept of organized crime, which was discussed in chapter 3 and elaborated in Study I-V, in particular Study III and IV. For example, Study III examined the emergence and maintenance of a specialized gang unit in Stockholm on the basis of a content analysis of intelligence products, court proceedings, interviews with key project staff, and publicly available sources and internal police documents. The findings of this study suggest that while police officials created the perception in the news media that the specialized gang unit was a success, our analysis of prosecution statistics and internal police documents demonstrates a less than ideal effect. This “de-coupling” process is partly linked to generic definitions of orga-

nized crime and a lack of definitional boundaries, and partly to the fact that the police often utilize the media to disseminate information to the public in the hope of accomplishing particular goals and to heighten the legitimacy of the police in the community.

Study IV (Rostami and Mondani 2015) looked at the consequences of the conceptual confusion in a network study, analyzing one specific street gang based on three datasets: intelligence, co-offending and surveillance data. The results of the study show biases affecting the sources employed in the analysis. Gang members have different importance rankings depending on the dataset and network measure employed. This has direct implications for crime control, where the question of whom to target in a planned operation becomes difficult to assess, and the reliability of intelligence assessments and network analyses can be questioned. This also has legal implications since this type of analysis is used more frequently in criminal proceedings to form the basis of the prosecutors' evidence.

The overall results of Study III and IV show that instead of relying on single-level analysis based on a chaotic concept of organized crime, researchers and officials need to thoroughly analyze the effects that biases have on assessment before determining appropriate social responses and crime control measures, and definitely before presenting analyses as evidence in criminal proceedings.

Regarding the legal and policy consequences, both penal and judicial agencies and branches of government should focus on criminal actions (offenses) instead of normative definitions. Instead of relying on ambiguous legal and policy definitions that reflect the emotions, prejudices, and ideologies of those involved in the evolving process (von Lampe 2003), crime and social policy should pay attention to reducing, as far as possible, the seedbed of social and economic disorder from which criminal collaboration springs.

We do not need a definition of what organized crime is and is not. If we return to the organizing principles of criminal collaboration, we will not need conceptualized abstractions. Instead of using definitions and single-dimensional abstractions, we will be able to deconstruct various empirical manifestations and analyze the interlock of dimensions of criminal ordering and the degree of criminal collaboration, e.g., by using the proposed framework of criminal organizing.

While the study of organized crime has examined empirical phenomena associated with the term organized crime at a high ontological level, and while the main focus has been directed at describing various forms of a criminal phenomenon, we instead need to focus on explaining and identifying the underlying mechanisms that give rise to the phenomena we seek to explain. In addition to identifying different types of generic criminal organization, we should pay attention to the various mechanisms of social organization that all types of organizations have in common (Bhaskar 1989; Hedstrom 2005; Sayer 1992) (see figure 2). In this way, the dilemmas of overlapping cases

will be lessened, since the focus will be directed at the dimension and degree of organizing rather than at finding the “ideal-type” of complete formal criminal organization.

The main conclusion of this dissertation is that criminal organizing is not intrinsically different from social organizing; depending on time and context, some forms and aspects of organizing are defined as criminal; this represents a view that is intrinsically different from the approach of abstracting social organizing under the overarching concept of organized crime.

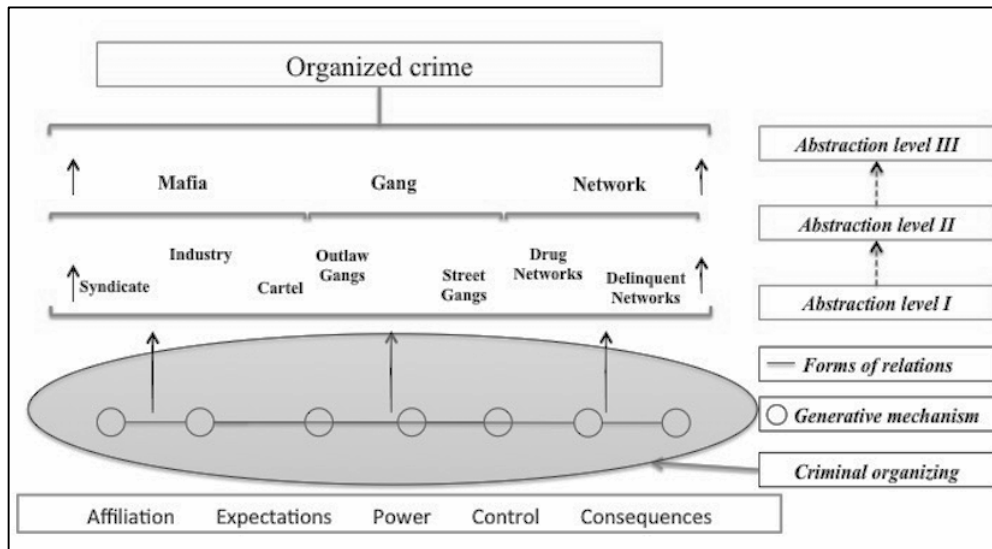


Figure 3 Illustration of criminal organizing in relation to organized crime as an analytic framework.

Chapter 5. Abstracts of the studies

Abstract for Study I

In this study we investigate the application of the Maxson and Klein gang typology on a dataset of seven Swedish street gangs. Individual-level data on 239 gang members were analyzed. While some Swedish criminologists maintain that no street gangs exist in Sweden, this research project provides evidence to the contrary. Findings support the utility of the Maxson and Klein typology. Results show that the “compressed gang” was the most common type of street gang in the dataset. This finding is also in concert with other European gang studies, adding further evidence for the applicability of the gang typology. Findings also suggest a similar pattern of gang development and structure to that of American and European street gangs.

Table 8 The Klein and Maxson (2006) Typology compared to the Swedish Gang Dataset. Source: (Rostami, F. Leinfelt, and Holgersson 2012).

	Subgroups	Size	Age range	Duration	Territorial	Crime versatility
Klein and Maxson gang typology						
Traditional gang	Yes	Large >100	20-30 years	Long >20 years	Yes	Yes
Neotraditional gang ⁽¹⁾	Yes	Medium–large >50	No pattern	Short ≤10 years	Yes	Yes
Compressed gang ⁽²⁾	No	Small ≤ 50	≤10 years	Short ≤10 years	No Pattern	Yes
Collective gang	No	Medium–large >50	≤10 years	Medium 10-15 years	No Pattern	Yes
Speciality gang ⁽³⁾	No	Small ≤50	≤10 years	Short ≤10 years	Yes	No
The Swedish street gang dataset						
Alfa ⁽²⁾	No	28	9	Short	No	Yes
Bravo ⁽¹⁾	Yes	73	32	Short	No Pattern	Yes
Charlie ⁽²⁾	No	12	22	Short	No Pattern	Yes
Echo ⁽²⁾	No	10	19	Short	No pattern	Yes
Foxtrot ⁽³⁾	No	42	27	Medium	No	Yes
Kilo ⁽²⁾	No	30	27	Short	No pattern	Yes
Romeo ⁽¹⁾	Yes	44	25	Medium	No pattern	Yes

Note: (n) = Type of gang

Abstract for Study II

In this criminological study we have combined ethnographic fieldwork observations with twelve in-depth interviews with Swedish street gang leaders and twelve associate gang members to understand the driving forces behind street gang leadership and gang membership by delineating the multiple themes of the subjects' narratives. A descriptive and interpretive analysis of the data suggested four ideal-types, each with specific goals, aspirations, and motives. These were in accord with a limited, though diverse literature on gang leadership that has primarily emerged in the United States. The analysis, however, does not necessarily support the claim that U.S.-style intergenerational, institutionalized gangs exist in Sweden, simply that there are similar gang leadership styles and motivations in these different contexts. In terms of policy, the analysis contains important lessons for agencies involved in social control efforts against street gangs and similar subcultures by focusing on the heterogeneous roles and influences of gang hierarchies. Further, the analysis reiterates the need for a more nuanced understanding of street gangs and the structured agency of members within their own narrative accounts. In terms of research, these findings suggest a need for further in-depth, holistic studies to create a more empirically grounded gang leader typology.

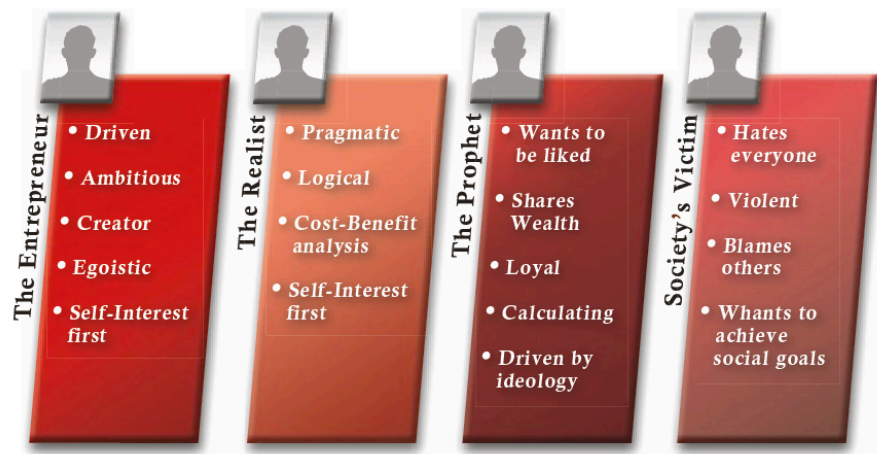


Figure 4 Four distinct gang leader types. Source: (Rostami, Fredrik Leinfelt, and Brotherton 2012).

Abstract for Study III

Street gangs and organized crime groups pose a unique challenge to police departments across the globe. Given their penchant for public displays of affiliation through well-recognized signs and symbols, their presence is often associated with media attention and public scrutiny, which threatens the legitimacy of the police and creates added pressure to generate a specific and public response to the threat these groups pose. The current study documents how the police in Stockholm County, Sweden, developed and maintained an anti-gang operation in response to an emerging gang problem. While police officials labeled the anti-gang initiative a success in the news media, analyses of prosecution statistics and internal police documents demonstrate a less than ideal effect of this operation. Potential reasons for the discrepancy in public pronouncements of programmatic success relative to the evaluation of official data are discussed.

	October 2001 to September 2003 (before NOVA)		October 2003 to September 2005 (under NOVA I)	
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)
Percentage of listed individuals successfully prosecuted	109	75	116	80
Percentage of listed individuals sentenced to jail terms ^b	62	43	46	32

Notes: *n* = 145; Four of the 149 listed individuals died during the intervention period.
^aAll percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
^bThis includes youth custody.

Figure 5 Before and after comparison of prosecution statistics for those on the NO-VA list. Source: Rostami, Melde and Holgersson (2015).

Abstract for Study IV

The field of social network analysis has received increasing attention during recent decades and has been used to tackle a variety of research questions, from prevention of sexually transmitted diseases to humanitarian relief operations. In particular, social network analyses are becoming an important component in studies of criminal networks and in criminal intelligence analysis. At the same time, intelligence analyses and assessments have become a vital component of modern approaches in policing, with policy implications for crime prevention, especially in the fight against organized crime. In this study, we have a unique opportunity to examine one specific Swedish street gang with three different datasets. These datasets represent the most common information sources used in studies of criminal networks: intelligence, surveillance and co-offending data. We use these data sources to build networks, and compare them by computing distance, centrality, and clustering measures. This study shows the complexity factor by which different data sources on the same study object have a fundamental impact on the results. The same individuals have different importance rankings depending on the dataset and measure employed. Consequently, the data source plays a vital role in grasping the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Researchers, policy makers, and practitioners should therefore pay greater attention to the biases affecting the sources employed in the analysis, and should be cautious when drawing conclusions based on intelligence assessments and limited network data. This study contributes to improving the reliability of social network analysis as a tool for understanding and analyzing criminality and criminal networks.

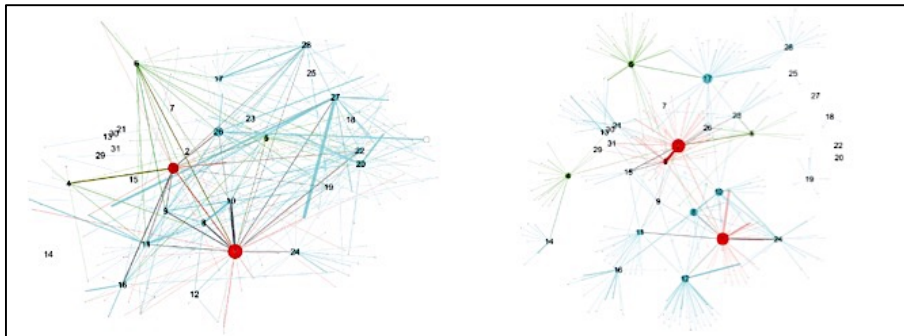


Figure 6 Networks with nodes sized by betweenness centrality. Left network: SN: surveillance network, right network: CN: co-offending network. Data from 1995–2010. Source: (Rostami and Mondani 2015).

Abstract for Study V

What constitutes organized crime and how it can be prevented are two of the key questions in both organized crime research and in criminal policy. However, despite many attempts, organized crime research, the criminal justice system and criminal policy have failed to provide a shared and recognized conceptual definition of organized crime, which has opened the door to political interpretations. Organized crime is presented as an objective reality – mostly on the basis of anecdotal empirical evidence and generic descriptions – and has been understood as being intrinsically different from social organisation. This has in turn been a justification for treating organized crime as something conceptually separate. In this study we investigate criminal phenomena associated with the concept of organized crime in the form of four category-defining cases that occurred within the time-geographic space of Sweden between 1990 and 2015: mafia-like organisations, street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and criminal projects. Our results show the existence of strong analogies between the patterns of criminal organising and elements in social organisations. Based on the results of this study we argue that criminal organizing is not intrinsically different from social organizing and we propose a new general analytical framework, “criminal organising”, that brings the different forms of criminal collaboration together under a single analytical tool, and provides an opportunity to address the conceptual confusion surrounding organized crime. The new framework of criminal organising also contributes to theory development and may be used in comparative research on other forms of collaboration in different contexts in time and space. This study illustrates the interaction of institutions, organisations, and networks in a hard-to-access criminal context. It provides us with a greater understanding of the emergence and dimensions of organisation and of the need for and importance of studying organisations that exist outside of complete formal organisations.

Svensk sammanfattning

En signifikant andel av brottsligheten utgörs av brott som utförs inom ramen för någon form av samarbete mellan olika individer. I ett vidare samhällsperspektiv uppfattas sådant kriminellt samarbete som ett större problem än brottslighet med en ensam gärningsman. Dessa kriminella samarbeten beskrivs oftast slentrianmässigt som organiserad brottslighet. Det finns dock en mängd definitioner av organiserad brottslighet. I en översikt identifieras över etthundra definitioner ($n = 131$) som försöker klargöra vad organiserad brottslighet är. Tyngdpunkten i definitionerna har förändrats från att definiera organiserad brottslighet i termer av *struktur* och *aktivitet*, som *illegalt företagande*, till definitioner som förstår organiserad brottslighet som *nätverk* och *institution*. Men trots att organiserad brottslighet alltmer har kommit att framstå som ett påtagligt samhällsproblem så saknas idag en samstämmig uppfattning om hur olika former av kriminellt samarbete skall definieras. Det finns idag inga träffsäkra analytiska verktyg för att dra gränsen för vad som är organiserad brottslighet och vad som bör exkluderas i en sådan begreppsram. Det har öppnat för politiska tolkningar av ett socialt fenomen som lett till en rad olika konsekvenser och resulterat i en begreppsförvirring som hämmar brottsbekämpning, förebyggande åtgärder och forskning.

För det brottsförebyggande arbetet i allmänhet och dess polisiära dimension i synnerhet leder mångfalden av definitioner och deras begränsade förmåga att rama in vad som utgör organiserad brottslighet till ett oordnat arbetssätt i bland annat framtagandet av underrättelseprodukter. Detta resulterar i att beslut och åtgärder som fattas på olika nivåer inte får avsedd verkan. Det är i synnerhet allvarligt eftersom dessa produkter i större utsträckning ingår som beslutsunderlag för straffprocessuella tvångsmedel och förundersökningar. Det är också problematiskt då tidigare forskning har visat att olika typer av problem, brottsfenomen och grader av kriminella samarbeten kräver tydlig problemidentifiering för framtagandet av skräddarsydda strategier och åtgärder för att förebygga dess uppkomst och verkan. Den rådande begreppsförvirringen innebär därför att samhällets insatser riskerar att bli missriktade och verkningslösa, och i värsta fall rent kontraproduktiva.

En annan konsekvens av begreppsförvirringen är den legala aspekten. Idag reses allt högre röster för att Sverige, likt många andra länder, ska införa en särskild lagstiftning för organiserad brottslighet. Det innebär att medlemskap i kriminella organisationer i så fall kriminaliseras, eller att medlem-

skap i en sådan organisation ska ge en straffskärpning vid påföljd för brott. Att kriminalisera medlemskap i kriminella organisationer inte har någon positiv förebyggande verkan är väl underbyggt i tidigare forskning, men erfarenhet från länder med liknande lagstiftning visar dessutom på en rad legala konsekvenser. En av dem är att rättsvårdande myndigheter – på grund av svårigheterna med att definiera vad organiserad brottslighet är – tenderar att utvidga tolkningsramen så att alltför ”grupper” stämplas som del av den organiserade brottsligheten enbart i syfte att uppnå en straffskärpning eller för att tillämpa straffprocessuella tvångsmedel, som lagstiftare tidigare vikt åt den allra grävsta formen av kriminalitet, mot allt lindrigare brottslighet.

Således kan konsekvenserna av begreppsförvirringen i förlängningen resultera i en försvagning av medborgliga fri- och rättigheter.

Inom forskning om organiserad brottslighet har otaliga konceptualiseringar och definitioner lett till en diskussion om vad organiserad brottslighet är, istället för att fokusera på varför och hur kriminellt samarbete uppstår, verkar och utvecklas. Organiserad brottslighet har presenterats som en objektiv verklighet – huvudsakligen baserad på anekdotisk evidens och generiska beskrivningar – under antagandet att organiserat kriminellt samarbete till sin natur är vitt skilt från annan form av socialt samarbete.

Denna avhandling behandlar begreppet organiserad brottslighet utifrån fem studier och en kapp där olika metoder och empiriska material kombineras, i syfte att studera olika former av kriminellt samarbete som uppstått i Sverige mellan 1990-2015. Utifrån det empiriska materialet argumenterar jag för att *organiserad brottslighet* är en abstraktion av en uppsättning diffusa begrepp, såsom maffia, gäng och kriminella nätverk. Dessa är i sin tur överlappande abstraktioner av vissa former av brott som huvudsakligen begås i grupp. Istället för att försöka identifiera de olika mekanismer för social organisering som alla typer av organisationer är uppbyggda av, har studier av organiserad brottslighet fokuserat på att identifiera olika typer av generiska organisationer och behandlat organiserad brottslighet som en särart av sociala relationer.

Kombinationen av ett så generiskt begrepp, som i sin tur bygger på underliggande diffusa termer och lider av liknande svårigheter, har gett upphov till otydlighet när det kommer till begreppet organiserad brottslighet. Detta hämmar både brottsbekämpning och forskning om kriminellt samarbete.

Avhandlingens slutsats är att *organiserad brottslighet* är en samling av olika grader av kriminella samarbeten, och att organisering av dessa samarbeten inte i sig skiljer sig nämnvärt från annan form av social organisering. Syftet bakom en kriminell organisering kan likt övrig social organisering vara mångfacetterat. Det kan handla om tillhörighet, överlevnad, status, beskydd, makt eller ekonomisk vinning. I själva verket föreligger stora likheter mellan olika former av kriminell organisering och idealtyper av social organisering. Skillnaden ligger snarare i att vissa samarbeten är kriminaliserade, beroende av den kontext de uppstår i. Utifrån detta antagande förespråkar

avhandlingen att forskning om organiserad brottslighet måste återvända till grundläggande principer för social organisering för att förstå de grundläggande organiseringsmekanismer som ger upphov till de samarbeten som vi försöker förklara.

Jag argumenterar för att *kriminell organisering* är ett bättre sociologiskt begrepp för att beskriva kriminellt samarbete oavsett om det är maffia, gäng eller kriminella nätverk som behandlas. Ett kriminellt samarbete, likt annan form av socialt samarbete, kräver någon form av organisering. Genom att studera graden av organisering av kriminella samarbeten kan vi fånga den process varigenom ett kriminellt samarbete uppstår och verkar. Detta leder till bättre förutsättningar för att förstå sociologin av social organisering i allmänhet och kriminell organisering i synnerhet, och slutligen också till att utveckla forskningen om den så kallade organiserade brottsligheten.

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Chapter 6. Original studies