



# Networked territorialism: the routes and roots of organised crime

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## Abstract

In the digital age, space has become increasingly structured by the circuitry of global capital, communications and commodities. This ‘network society’ splinters and fragments territorial space according to the hidden logic of networked global capital; with successful criminal entrepreneurs connecting bases in low-risk, controllable territories with high-profit markets. Drawing on a recent, large-scale study of organised crime in Scotland, in this paper we elaborate the relationship between place, territory and criminal markets in two contrasting communities. The first is an urban neighbourhood with a longstanding organised crime footprint, where recognised local criminal groups have established deep roots. The second is a rural community with a negligible organised crime footprint, where the drug economy is serviced by a mobile criminal network based in England. Through comparison of the historical roots and contemporary routes of these criminal markets, we note both similarity and difference. While both communities demonstrated evidence of ‘networked territorialism’, key differences related to historical and social antecedents, in particular the impact of deindustrialisation.

**Keywords** Castells · Network society · Organised crime · Space · Deindustrialisation

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## Introduction

In the UK drama series *McMafia*, organised crime presents a different face to the traditional image of blue-collar localism. Criminal actors are white-collar, connected and cosmopolitan, with action shifting from the humble street to the zipline of global financial markets. Transactions ping around the planet at the click of a mouse, creating instantaneous yet invisible connections between distant global sites. Actors within this network are untethered from territorial roots, part of the ‘footloose economy’ of new world citizens moving flexibly between cities (Aas 2007: 58). As Hobbs has observed, however, the global is ‘local at all points’ (Latour 1993, cited in Hobbs 1998: 419). A mouse-click in London bounces to a offshore company in the Cayman Islands, a cash-exchange in Mumbai, and a corrupt official in Lahore. In this way, the global criminal economy creates circuits of connection between otherwise disconnected sites in a way that closely mirrors the licit economy, as economic value-extraction is overlaid on localised ‘cultures of urgency’ (Davis 2008: xi) that ‘closely follows the organisational logic’ of the network society (Castells 2000: 169).

While the space of flows, like the transactions in *McMafia*, link ‘separate locations in an interactive network that connects activities and people in distinct geographical composites’ (Castells 2003: 212), they occur in local contexts each with their own geography and history. In this paper we explore these emergent relationships by analysing the spatial and organisational patterning of criminal markets in Scotland in two contrasting communities. While both bear deep scars of deindustrialisation, they exhibit markedly different characteristics. The first, Tunbrooke, is an urban neighbourhood with a longstanding organised crime presence, in which recognised local criminal groups have established deep roots. The second, Clarkfield, is a rural community with a negligible organised crime footprint, where the absence of local groups the drug economy is serviced by a mobile criminal network routed through England. Drawing on these examples, we present a case for the uneven and localised impacts of globalisation on criminal markets. While both communities demonstrated evidence of ‘networked territorialism’, key differences related to historical and social antecedents, and the patterning of urban and rural criminal markets.

## Rust and ruin: place, territory and organised crime

The issue of place, and territory, has for many years occupied a central space in the imaginary of organised crime. From studies of the so-called ‘criminal area’ (Morris 1957: 9; Rock 1973: 30) to spatial analyses of ‘community crime careers’ (Reiss 1986), criminologists have sought to interrogate the relationship between territory and organised crime. Classic studies portray criminal structures emerging in often impoverished and marginalised communities, with criminal groups using violence to control criminal markets and to provide illegal protection whilst also employing intimidation, infiltration and corruption against legitimate institutions and actors to supplant weak formal governance, thereby assuming some level of territorial control (e.g. Sabetti 1984; Paoli 2003). Local communities provide a known set of resources for criminal groups, as well as a ready market for goods and services, and it is often placed-based reputation, social ties, and access to resources that

define the successful ‘project criminal’ (Klerks 1999; Von Lampe and Johansen 2004). Other criminal networks in a community, in particular youth gangs, can provide a training ground for offenders to develop criminal capital (Hagan 1997; Van Koppen et al. 2010; Francis et al. 2013).

The relationship between criminal groups and territory is one that has generated a great deal of debate (von Lampe 2015). Sack defines territoriality as ‘the attempt by an individual or group to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic space’ (Sack 1983: 56). This definition, notably, can apply to both state and non-state actors (Tilly 1982), and may be motivated by either economic and cultural factors. Spergel (1990), for example, suggests two primary rationalisations for the relationship between criminal gangs and territory. Identification refers to associations of kinship and identity, while control refers to monopolistic rights over areas, in terms of robbery, drug distribution, or racketeering (Spergel 1990: 210). Scholarship on organised crime has demonstrated both forms of territoriality in relation to criminal markets (Sergi 2017: 38). For some, organised crime is characterised by highly territorial, economic, and structured control over space; for others, criminal markets are more diffuse, organised around activities and the provision of illegal goods and services (Sergi 2016; Varese 2010). Recent contributions have conceived of the relationship between organised crime and territory as operating on a spectrum from highly local to deterritorialised criminal actors (Sergi 2017). Campana and Varese (2018) similarly describe a continuum ranging from strong territoriality and governance to much lighter footprints, with illicit markets being underpinned by limited and flexible criminal associations.

In the context of globalisation, however, the relationship between people and place has become increasingly complex, and criminal groups have proven more mobile and than historical accounts might lead us to expect (Allum 2014; Dagnes et al., 2018). For Castells (2000), the current era is defined as the ‘network society’, in which transnational networks of technology, culture, and finance resituate place-based identities between the ‘space of place’ and the ‘space of flow’. Castells notes that successful criminal actors connect bases in low-risk, controllable territories – often zones of urban exclusion – with high-profit markets, with street gangs operating as the shop-floor of the international drugs trade (Castells 2000). Castells refers to the connective tissue of transnational operation of groups such as the Cali Cartel in Mexico, the Medellin in Colombia, or the Russian Mafia, but the same interconnectedness is evident in less branded groups (Ruggiero and South 1997). These contributions suggest a contingent and uneven global criminal economy, existing between pockets of territorial control and flexible markets (Hales and Hobbs 2010), with notable distinctions between criminal markets in urban and rural contexts (Smith 2010; Tucker 2015). As Hobbs notes, while ‘some criminal enterprises are restricted by their embeddedness with ... territorial concerns ... the market is populated by flexible alliances ... who have no need to be located in fixed terrain’ (Hobbs 2013: 218).

With notable exceptions (Lashmar and Hobbs 2018), it is often communities enduring long-term, embedded forms of poverty, disadvantage and marginality in which criminal markets find most fertile soil. Area reputation, stigma, socio-economic exclusion, and under-investment often strengthens and sustains criminal traditions within communities (Bottoms 1994; Kleemans and de Poot 2008). Such factors also increase the likelihood that residents will perceive their neighbourhood as

having a problem with organised crime (Tilley et al. 2008; Ipsos MORI Scotland 2018). In this context, criminal groups can occupy an ambiguous space as a ‘major form of association, work and identity’, with local residents ‘partly feeling able to relate to the gang society better than to mainstream institutions’ (Castells 1997: 65). Notably, however forces of economic and cultural globalisation have reoriented local neighbourhood settings, and criminal markets. As Sassen (2007:201) demonstrates, ‘many formerly important manufacturing centers and port cities have lost functions and are in decline, not only in the less-developed countries but also in the most advanced economies’. While the most visibly ‘toxic’ impacts of job loss, abandonment and socio-economic reconfiguration were experienced in the later twentieth century, the effects of deindustrialisation have ‘not yet dissipated and its continuing effects are problematic’ (Linkon, 2018:4). The impacts of the half-life on deindustrialising communities include multiple deprivation, higher-than-average levels of poverty, unemployment, and neglected physical environment.

In Scotland historical research suggests that territorial criminal groups date back at least to the 1920s (Davies 2013). In urban neighbourhoods characterised by severe poverty, illegal forms of money-making formed an aspect of everyday life that enabled communities to survive during times of economic hardship (Damer 1990). Markets for high value goods, such as cigarettes and whisky, were established during the rationing of the Second World War, and from the 1960s these localised activities developed into more organised, cohesive criminal associations (Wilson and Findlay 2012; Findlay 2012). Today, organised crime is estimated to cost the Scottish economy up to £2 billion annually (Scottish Police Authority 2013), and remains primarily rooted in disinvested and de-industrialised urban and semi-urban neighbourhoods (Scottish Government 2016, 2017; Clark and Gibbs, 2020).<sup>1</sup> In this context recent years have seen the evolution of a dynamic relationship between emergent and established crime groups (Fraser 2015; McLean et al. 2019), and the development of established rural drugs markets. Criminal groups have responded to changing geographic circumstances, and diversified beyond drugs distribution and supply, into activities such as environmental crime, immigration crime, cybercrime and human trafficking (Scottish Government 2016).

## Methods, data and Fieldsites

Within the UK organised crime has long been officially characterised on the basis of activities and markets (e.g. Scottish Government 2016; Home Office 2018), with the term ‘mafia’ largely considered inapplicable to UK criminal networks (Sergi 2017: 40). Whilst both Scottish and UK-wide policy do not entirely ignore the significance of structure in organised crime, organisational characteristics tend to be considered as flexible capacities of shifting rather than consistent features (Hamilton-Smith and Mackenzie 2010). In 2015, the Scottish Government reoriented the policy focus toward serious organised crime which: (a) involves more than one person; (b) is organised (i.e. involves planning or the use of specialist resources); (c) causes (or has the potential to

<sup>1</sup> A mapping exercise found 213 groups operating in the country, with 65% of identified groups being based in the deindustrialising West of Scotland (Scottish Government 2017).

cause), significant harm; and (d) involves some benefit, financial or otherwise, to the individuals involved (Scottish Government 2015).

The study sought to provide, for the first time, focused qualitative research on the community experiences of organised crime in Scotland, from a cross-section of local residents in areas with an enduring organised crime presence.<sup>2</sup> We were interested both in how communities experienced and perceived organised crime in their community (if at all), but also to chart the differential impact of these groups in terms of criminal harm. To identify suitable case-study locations, interviews were conducted with expert stakeholders, supplemented by open-source documentation and sanitised intelligence from Police Scotland. Based on this scoping research, the study used a three-point typology to explore the community impact of organised crime: (1) Urban, embedded: defined by a longstanding and enduring presence of organised crime groups, involving well-known individuals, groups and families; (2) Semi-urban, embedded: clusters of villages and/or towns within the commuter belt from larger cities, often former industrial communities, with markets functioning through drug-sales and associated activities; and (3) National, diffuse: flexible networks, often with territorial bases elsewhere, involving brokerage of mobile forms of exploitation such as human trafficking and sex work, as well as ‘county lines’ drug supply.<sup>3</sup>

Four case-study sites were selected from across this typology. A total of 84 community participants engaged with the study across these locations, including 66 individual interviews and 18 focus group participants. Access arrangements involved collaboration with a third sector partner engaged in community development, supplemented by existing contacts, snowball sampling, and local contacts. In three of the case-study sites, local fieldworkers were employed to assist in recruitment and interviewing. In addition, a total of 52 interviews were conducted with representatives of statutory agencies, including police (20), social work (10), housing (10), local authorities/third sector (8), and other agencies (4). Access strategies relied on arrangements agreed between the Scottish Government and relevant statutory agencies. Informal interviews and observations were conducted in twelve local business premises across the case-study locations. Definitions of organised crime were left open-ended and subject to individual interpretation. Consistent with prior Scottish research that examined public perceptions of organised crime, community drug dealing was identified as the primary manifestation of organised crime in communities (Ipsos MORI 2018). More tellingly, however, were the affective experiences of fear and ‘ambient violence’ that existed as a background to daily life (Barbarin et al. 2001).

All respondents were given general information about the project before the interviews were arranged. The interviews were conducted using a thematic interview template, and took place in the premises of local charities, cafes, and offices, with three interviews taking place as ‘walking’ interviews around the local area (Kusenbach 2003). Key demographics of the community sample are listed in Table 1, below. Interview and observational data was transcribed, anonymised, and analysed by the project team. To strengthen reliability, the study used a community ‘co-inquiry’ process, in which a sub-sample of 33 community residents were re-engaged to discuss

<sup>2</sup> Funding for the study was received from the Scottish Government. For further information on methods, see Fraser et al 2018.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that these are ideal-types. The communities refused to conform to any simple pattern of association between the characteristics of place and a sustained presence of crime and offending.

**Table 1** Demographic profile of community participants

Fieldsite	M	F	< 18	18–30	31–50	51–75	TOTAL
Tunbrooke	10	14	2	4	13	5	24
Colinwood	10	11	9	4	4	4	21
Smithside	10	14	5	3	10	6	24
Clarkfield*	3	12	0	4	10	1	15
TOTALS	32	51	16	15	26	16	84

\*Clarkfield is a composite of more than one location

preliminary themes and findings, with the aim of generating strategies for community action and response. The co-inquiry method offers an opportunity for participating communities to feed back on the emerging findings (Fraser et al 2018).

The data presented in this paper is drawn from two case-study locations, Tunbrooke and Clarkfield. These case studies were chosen because they exemplified the two poles on our typology between highly embedded, and highly diffuse organised crime activity, allowing us to explore notions of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ in depth. Whilst sharing similar population sizes, population density and geographical spread differ substantially between the two sites. Tunbrooke is an urban neighbourhood in Scotland’s high-density central-belt and is easily reachable from main urban centres by public transport. In contrast, Clarkfield is a rural community in the north of Scotland, with a lower population density and degree of connectivity with major metropolitan areas. In what follows we present interview data from these two sites, drawing out the divergent consequences of deindustrialisation and embeddedness of organised crime.

## Tunbrooke

### The rise and fall of heavy industry: historical development of Tunbrooke

Tunbrooke is located in Scotland’s central belt and has a total population of slightly over 14,000. Housing is a mixture of nineteenth century tenements, built around a large foundry, and post-war council housing, most of which is now privately owned. With the fallout of deindustrialisation following the closure of the foundry in the late 1960s, the growth of organised crime in Tunbrooke was ‘an indigenous growth in the soil of an urban industrial economy moving into affluence but retaining extensive pockets of poverty’ (Mack 1964: 39). Accounts of organised crime in the 1970s depict a picture of well-known groups becoming embedded, normalised, and mundane aspect of daily life in urban communities experiencing severe, long-term and multiple disadvantage (Boyle 1977). In these accounts, local crime firms represent a longstanding and visible presence in the community, operating as an alternative form of local governance, fulfilling functions such as money-lending, debt-collection, dispute-resolution, and protection. Similarly, local residents’ accounts of Tunbrooke in the 1970s stress the relative normality of crime in the context of extreme poverty. Families were large and concessions were required to live with neighbours: shillings were given out for taking

out the bins, and pennies for other local tasks such as bringing in the shopping or coal. Since this time Tunbrooke has become symptomatic of multiple deprivation in urban Scotland; according to national criteria, the area is generally ‘very deprived’.

### **Roots: the afterlife of deindustrialisation**

Criminality in Tunbrooke manifests itself visibly through street-level drug dealing, high levels of addiction and the frequent eruption of gangland violence, as well as a developed industry in private security. These visible impacts of criminality are common in deindustrialising communities, with Perchard (2014) highlighting the perception of the post-closure generation as ‘broken men’ and ‘zombies’ due to drug abuse. Areas such as Tunbrooke represent a relatively stable and constant geographic marketplace for the supply of drugs. The profits to be made in this new industry attracted fierce territorial competition between criminal groups, leading to a series of high-profile and public murders in the 1990s revolving around disputed drug territories in areas reeling from the fallout of manufacturing closure.

Across the interviews, a recurring theme was the relationship between job loss and criminal markets. One resident suggested that ‘the community’s been forgot about’. They pointed out that there is ‘very little opportunity for employment’, emphasising the fact that physical regeneration of an area, whilst important, has limited impact on residents’ life chances if employment opportunities are largely absent. Against this backdrop, as Marsh indicates, ‘the fast money of the drug trade, offers a way to overcome all the hardship of the social suffering associated with disadvantage in the advanced industrial nations’ (Marsh 2019: 35). Income through illegal activities was perceived to be more appealing than legitimate employment.

Another thing, to be fair to people that get involved in low-level crime, if you’ve got a choice of sitting without any power and food, or doing something about it, I don’t blame them for doing something about it. It’s logic... I’d hate to think what I would do if faced with that. You either die, or you do something about it... We’re creating this culture, because people don’t have money, they have to improvise (Male resident, 51-75).

It’s tough bein from an area where there’s no opportunity. You don’t really realise it until you’re older that there isn’t the opportunity tae move up in society, there’s nae upward social mobility ... you could drive tae the [supermarket nearby] and you drive past fancy hooses, flash cars and you think, well, why should I no have that? And when you’ve no really been taught how tae dae it in a legitimate way, you dae think drug dealin’ is an easy option (Female resident, 18-30).

In the aftermath of industrial closure, unemployment and recession, the market in opiates found fertile soil. Organised criminal markets operated according to the same ‘predatory principle underpinning class society’ (Hobbs 2013: 86), and addiction and debt, coupled with the influence of large local families with extensive familial relations, created networks of profit and exploitation that created a solid base for illicit operations. This ‘culture of urgency’ (Davis 2008) is one that creates a steady stream of participants in the illicit economy. As one participant noted, ‘[OCG’S] have got a big impact in Tunbrooke... they’re a big impact on things goin on, the shopliftin, the drugs. Ye have a fight wi one of

them ye fight wi all of them' (Female resident, 51–75). Coupled with these community perspectives, practitioners discussed how involvement in organised criminal markets, particularly drugs, could exacerbate poverty through 'vicious cycles' of debt:

Local money lenders, who might be connected to the people you bought the drugs off in the first place, so you get grandparents, parents going to illegal money lenders to give to kids, to pay off drug debts. It absorbs every single penny it can in a community. So that's a big impact on poverty and inclusion. (Male, Third Sector)

Residents described a situation in which it was very difficult to stay clear of the illicit market. Participants were able to point to the homes of prominent local drug-dealers and detail notable instances of violence. The cumulative effect is the development of a level of fear, anxiety and apprehension that form part of the background to daily life, and at times a degree of resignation to such conditions. As one community respondent described:

Cos you know, at the top of the street, there's a group – on a bad day – maybe about 15 boys, standing around... Just people standing about, and then a boy turns up on a bike, then goes away, then there's a big man on the phone. And you realise that's what's happening, peddling. But yeah, the community's well aware of it. (Male resident, 18-30)

Participants spoke of a culture of fear, the possibility of violence and intimidation from a 'small frightening groups of violent capable and money hungry street capitalists' (Marsh 2019: 119). One resident suggested that people risk being 'disappeared' unless they 'do what they're told'.

### **Routes: networked territorialism and bourgeois utopias**

These territorial manifestations of the illicit marketplace, however, rely on a geographical network that extends well beyond the confines of Tunbrooke. As Hobbs argues, the fragmentation of deindustrialisation has resulted in a 'networked system partly displaced from the resonance of nostalgic criminal locales' (Hobbs 2013: 97). Whilst the 'organisation' of such activities largely hidden from public view, residents were all too aware of their existence. As one resident commented:

[Illicit drug supply] It's well organised. But those at the top of the tree, ye' never see them on the street. But ye know who's doing what, and who they're doing it for... And you wonder why it's never addressed, it's never dealt with (Female resident, aged 51-75).

Notably residents stressed the role of geographical – and social – mobility for the criminal actors involved, and the double-standards of class this exposed. One resident discussed an instance when a 'posh lassie' from his school had been horrified to learn that her new neighbour was an organised criminal. Another noted that whilst those in affluent neighbourhoods would 'look down' on his local area, he knew of several



prominent organised criminals living there due to their accumulated wealth. One local resident, for example, discussed the ways in which this double standard operates:

I know for a fact, where my brother and sister-in-law live [an affluent area] two doors up is – or was – head of one of the biggest drug families in the city. The only thing is, he’s not dealing in the street. But, in this street, you’ll see people dealing every day (Male resident, 31-50).

There was a perception that, as the more successful criminal actors had relocated away from their communities, the lingering and ongoing stigmatisation was unjust. As Mack identified in a study of organised crime in the 1960s, the ‘majority of persistent criminals live in neutral areas, or keep on the move’ (Mack 1964: 43). One resident expressed the view that the presence of organised crime in the area was unfair, as the principal actors had left and moved elsewhere to ‘bourgeois utopias’ without the taint of criminal association (Hobbs 2013). The reputation of the fieldsites as being ‘home’ to organised crime groups was strongly contested, as high-profile criminals had ‘moved away years ago’. While ‘elite’ organised crime actors may be transnational in activity and scope, however, they form part of domestic networks that extend down to more localised groups.

## Clarkfield

### From on-off to mostly off: the historical development of Clarkfield

Clarkfield is a small town a rural area of Scotland, with a population under 15,000 at the most recent census. Though once dependent on fishing, decline of the industry has had similar socio-economic impacts as the closure of heavy industry elsewhere in Scotland. Due to the ‘on-off’ nature of the at-sea fishing industry, a culture of heavy drinking developed, as seamen with substantial incomes came ashore for weeks at a time before heading back to sea. In the 1980s, heroin found ready markets across society, but particularly particularly concentrated markets were found in urban pockets of high unemployment and marginalisation (Holligan et al. 2020). At the same time, the decline in employment in the fishing industry contributed to the creation of an active opiate market, and in Clarkfield heroin became an alternative to alcohol. By the mid-1990s, Clarkfield was synonymous with heroin addiction. The issues caused by addiction, unemployment and deprivation continue to have multiple impacts on the residents and support workers.

### Roots: absentee landlords and the space of flow

Where once the organisation of crime in rural areas was characterised as ‘picaresque’ (McIntosh 1975) – fairly permanent, under individual leadership, operating in areas where state power is low – in Clarkfield this had been supplanted by a model of absentee landlordism, in which criminal groups with territorial bases elsewhere sustained a market by proxy. These mobile markets were occasionally supported by local criminal groups that facilitated cooperation through loose local ‘networks of

recognition'. A police officer reflected upon the established ways in which such networks are formed and sustained:

They [OCGs in the local area] are linked to a group in the north [of England] ... the group have not come up to supplant the indigenous group as there are no turf wars. Rather they co-operate with drug supply, but also collaborate on some other criminal activities... [they] had a guy living in the area. What the group added was increased capacity in terms of supply and sourcing drugs and increased flexibility in terms of moving drugs north (Police Officer)

Whilst these criminal entrepreneurs may not impact on their doorstep in terms of local criminal activity, their ability to professionally network, to 'pass' as legitimate business actors, and to launder and invest money in areas where they are not necessarily known, were seen as a real threat:

They're not kicking doors in and making threats because that doesn't work. Organisations like this will call the police [...] So... They want to engage, they want to insinuate their way in [...] you know, point to the council grant, point to the council attendance, point to a meeting with the council... And just drop that in to others, even to others who are legitimate, to try and convey that legitimacy (Local Authority Officer).

Police and transport officials talked particularly of the difficulty of disrupting drug supply due to the ease of travel connections and the profitability of the market. Instead of an established community base, a flexible drugs market not requiring a strong community infrastructure, was evident. The overall perception was that this form of mobile markets was common in smaller conurbations without an embedded presence of organised crime. This suggests the need to recognise SOC actors not solely through their community *roots*, but also the changing *routes* through which mobile markets operate.

### **Routes: county lines and criminal exploitation**

Clarkfield, although more lightly scarred than Tunbrooke, was not immune to exploitative practices associated with drug markets. However, its extreme remoteness and limited market-size appeared to have insulated the area from the more violent symptoms of county lines activity found in England and Wales (Coomber and Moyle 2018). In Clarkfield, organised crime was characterised by the lightest possible presence required to coordinate supply lines, with local user-dealers – broadly independent of suppliers and importers, propping up the local retail market. Consistent with recent county lines studies (Coomber and Moyle 2018; Moyle 2019), residents reported a predominance of groups from Liverpool and the West Midlands. In a practice akin to what has been termed 'parasitic nest invading' (Spicer et al. 2019), one social worker working with vulnerable people spoke about the experience of one of her clients who had 'gone off the radar':

What had happened, he was probably trying to score some drugs and he had come into contact with this person who was into more organised drug dealing,

and my client was making very poor decisions but not on the best basis in terms of mental health, he was vulnerable. So, he allowed the man to move in, essentially, and he processed and packaged the drugs in his house... we became aware of it when my client had been threatened with a gun... he then advised us he was in over his head (Social Worker).

Other forms of ‘cuckooing’, including ‘coupling’ (Spicer et al. 2019) were also reported. The common pattern was occupying the premises of a local, often with vulnerabilities related to age, addiction or mental health. Court officials described cases in which seven individuals gave the same address when charged; upon checking, the house was allocated to a vulnerable individual. Consistent with other recent studies (Moyle 2019), there was a gendered dimension to these predations. Another housing officer detailed how their staff would ‘go to a tenancy that has a single female and... it’s all male clothing that’s there.’ As well as using these residences for drug dealing, the housing itself might be rendered uninhabitable. As one local worker noted, ‘they even stole the doors, they stole the kitchen. They were stealing everything. And the mess and the holes in the walls and everything, the filth was just horrendous.’ As one housing worker and resident stated:

There’s an awful lot of folk coming up from [city in north England] and they’ll target a house, they’ll basically just come into the house and, and they’ll take over the house while they’re dealing their drugs and giving that tenant what they need so they can use their house and that... The best explanation that I’ve heard is [in] our area, there’s not a firm, like, family that’s in control of the drugs. So they’re just coming up and taking advantage of that (Police Officer).

Whilst these trends are consistent with work across the wider UK on the links between the drugs economy and urban street gangs and the extension of criminal operations and supply lines into rural areas (in England termed ‘county lines,’ e.g. Jaensch and South 2018; Coomber and Moyle 2018; O’Hagan and Long 2019), there are also some distinct differences in emphasis. Most prominently, whilst the UK Government has a propensity to link organised crime to ethnicity, foreign nationals and immigration (Hamilton-Smith and Patel 2010; Sergi 2017) this link has been notably absent from Scottish discourses and strategies (e.g. see Scottish Government 2016), with data held within Scottish law enforcement agencies giving significantly less prominence to ethnicity and nationality as a significant feature of the Scottish organised crime landscape (Cavanagh et al., 2016).

## Discussion

The network society, for Castells, (2000) is one in which territorial space is fragmented and splintered according to the hidden logic of global capital, resulting in the enmeshment of technological circuits with communal life. This distinction, between the ‘space of flow’ and the ‘space of place’, had important consequences for the residents of Tunbrooke and Clarkfield. In Tunbrooke, the ‘half-life’ of deindustrialisation (Linkon 2018) saw a legacy of indebtedness, addiction and

poverty that proved fertile soil for the growth of organised criminal markets. Local crime groups operated in a way that was territorial and monopolistic but with criminal actors offering little more than a pretence of illegal ‘governance’ or control. These were lightly-held territories, with criminal groups relying on longstanding fear and reputation to insulate their activities, alongside a detailed knowledge of the local landscape of vulnerability and opportunity. Despite public instances of extreme violence, most residents attempted to remain under the radar, and shared a strongly ingrained distrust of the police (Scottish Government 2017). Like a fort on a trade route, these ‘communal havens’ (Castells 1998) were not simply defensive for criminal groups, but allowed connection with flows of illicit commerce (Gambetta 2009).

Clarkfield too was a deindustrialised and isolated community, but unlike Tunbrooke, whilst the retreat of industry had left poverty, vulnerability and addictions, there was no existing criminal subculture to exploit this decline. In Clarkfield, marketeers were based elsewhere and stayed for short periods to service markets in drugs. The remoteness, and lack of other profitable activity in this area offered little to attract a more substantial organised crime presence. A stable market was discretely latched on to vulnerable local sub-populations, in a community that otherwise had strong sense of place and robust civic structures. This mobile market is an instance of networked territorialism, where successful criminal entrepreneurs connect local territories with profitable markets elsewhere. Unlike the examples of cartels offered by Castells, however, this was more a case of ‘low-end globalisation’ (Matthews 2011) in which small returns are made by hard graft and aggressive exploitation. Like Tunbrooke, Clarkfield also had strong bonds and a strong sense of place, but the isolation of the community was profound. Nested within it, the most vulnerable residents sustained a modest drugs market that was fed via the slow drip of long-distance supply routes, serviced by a steady stream of small-time dealers lodged in shabby caravans and ‘borrowed’ flats. For areas like Clarkfield, their role was more limited to a ‘shop floor’ for the sale of illicit commodities (Castells 2008).

Notably, the connections between ‘spaces of place’ and the technological circuitry of the ‘space of flow’ enabled groups to launder or invest money, or to attempt to grow their business through pre-existing ‘respectable’ social networks. On occasion money laundering activity in Scotland has been highly removed from the source of any criminal activity (Forgione 2009), though in other instances money laundered from Scottish drug dealing funded facilities for marginalised communities, such as childcare, car washes and care homes. These investments had the clear benefit of maintaining and communicating the status and reputation of criminal entrepreneurs in their home territories, with residents fully aware of where money for certain local facilities originated. Here, the moral niceties of legitimate and illegitimate, of legal and illegal enterprises begin to blur. The roll-call of organised crime business investment in Scotland is a close match for those area of the legitimate economy that are marginal, cash-in-hand, low cost and flexible: transport, security services, waste disposal, catering, cleaning services and social care (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2016). Many of these investments have extended well beyond the boundaries of Scotland’s most deprived neighbourhoods, helping to fuel the consumption habits of the middle classes in the ‘bourgeois utopias’ (Hobbs 2013) where the most successful criminal entrepreneurs resided.

The observed patterns of illicit commerce and activity also spoke to the importance constructing explanations of organised crime and place/space that not only focus on the actions and designs of offenders and illicit markets, but that equally give cognisance to the parallel roles of the State, of ordinary citizens, and of licit markets in ‘organising’ and sustaining crime. The importance of paying attention to this duality is well captured in much organised crime literature (Sergi 2017) and also permeates most classic works of environmental criminology (e.g Baldwin and Bottoms 1976). Rather than a sole focus on the the organisational capacities of criminal groups to sustain over time, the case-studies demonstrate the need to pay close attention to the social, historical and cultural environment in which such markets sustain. In Tunbrooke and Clarkfield addiction, stigma and exclusion were intimately tied to the roots of criminal exploitation.

Scotland’s communities may no longer live-up to the violent mythology of gangster pulp-fiction, but these roots, mythologised or not, were still vital to the business of Scottish organised crime. The value in charting these complex geographies is, in part, to check and challenge enduringly popular – and influential – narratives that continue to dominate media and political discourse. One narrative presents organised crime in the traditional frame of being embedded in urban neighbourhoods, characterised by industrial decline and working class masculinity, overseen by powerful crime families and urban youth gangs. Conversely another pervasive narrative, building on the social policy language of Putnam (2000), views communities as essentially atomised and isolated in the face of intensifying technology and globalisation. Here organised crime resides not in places but in hollowed-out spaces that warehouse the vulnerable and the left behind, a dystopic return to a primal state of feudal brutality. None of our case studies locations however, including the two reported on here, easily conformed to either end of this spectrum.

## Conclusion

This paper charts the changing geographies and landscape of organised crime in an increasingly globalised, networked Scotland. In conceptualising the patterning of criminal markets, space and territory, the paper has drawn on and elaborated Castells discussion of the ‘space of place’ and the ‘space of flow’ (2000). This distinction, which tethers the analysis of territory to the circuitry of global capital, has important implications for the geographies of organised crime. While there has been a rich tradition in place-based studies of organised crime (Baldwin and Bottoms 1976, Foster 1990, Hobbs 2013), and latterly a growing literature on illicit transactions within the ‘space of flow’ (Levi 2008, Murray 2018), Castells’ distinction creates a conceptual bridge that recognises the dynamic relationship between the two. Like the former steel town in north-east England that became a hub for online shell companies,<sup>4</sup> emplaced history blends with the network society in unpredictable and contingent ways. The concept of ‘networked territorialism’ moves the study of criminal markets beyond the

<sup>4</sup> Perraudin, F. (2016) Hundreds of people in Co Durham paid to be shell company directors. *The Guardian*. 25 Nov 20,176. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/25/hundreds-of-people-in-inco-durham-paid-to-be-shell-company-directors>

hyper-local or disconnected, toward a hybridised conceptual model that seeks out connections and interactions between technological circuits and historical antecedents and community contexts. This conceptual language is intended to complement and extend Hobbs' (1998) influential discussion of 'glocalisation' and organised crime.

Both communities studied had experienced the sharp end of deindustrialisation. Globally, these processes contributed to the 'destruction of working-class towns and neighbourhoods' as capital relocated from those communities historically dependent on manufacturing work for economic security (High, 2013: 998). The vacuum of unemployment and the need for escapism has been readily filled by criminal groups, embedding their products, markets and exercising subtle control. The embedded nature of organised criminal enterprise, and a steady flow of young men embittered by the post-industrial economy (Hall et al. 2008), resulted in a fixed and enduring criminal market in this very local 'space of place'. Our case study areas, whilst certainly not enjoying the fruits of globalisation and cosmopolitan culture, were not simply cut off from the broader, transforming landscape either. Both Tunbrooke and Clarkfield defied any 'simplistic notion of a systematic co-variation between space and culture' (Castells 1997: 60). Rather, consistent with Castells' vision of the network society, case study localities had individual and unique relationships as places, to the 'space of flows'. The variation in the constitution of these local markets suggests the need to pay close attention to historical antecedents and cultural contexts when analysing illicit markets.

This analysis suggests the need to move beyond outdated distinctions between 'urban' and 'rural' criminal markets. Not only are such markets closely connected (Coomber and Moyle 2018), but more fundamentally both accord to the shifting forces of global capital (Lefèvbre 1991). As recent geographical scholarship has demonstrated, market forces have 'splintered' urban space such that urban/rural distinctions are increasingly invalid (Marvin and Graham 2001). Indeed, as has been argued, the local impacts of globalised economic shifts – such as deindustrialisation – have resulted in comparable impacts across different geographical contexts. Many of the communities in the study were former industrial areas 'suffering severe poverty and structural neglect' (Marsh 2019: 129), rendering them vulnerable to 'predatory criminal colonisation' (Hobbs et al., 2003: 219, cited in Marsh 2019), and deindustrialisation featured prominently in community accounts. Nonetheless, new supply routes and the increasing involvement of organised groups from outside of Scotland indicate the ways in which the market for illicit goods and services is adapting and transforming (Densley et al. 2018). This finding emphasises the significance of place, locale, and history, in the patterning of contemporary criminal markets and the need for recognition of national, cultural and political specificity (Sergi 2017).

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** There are no potential conflicts of interest

**Human and Animal Rights** This research involved human participants

**Informed consent** Informed consent was ensured through adherence to the British Society of Criminology guidelines on Ethical Practice. The study gained ethical approval from the participating institutions.

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