

Summary

The question if and how organised crime and terrorist jihadi groups are interwoven regarding the procurement of (automatic) firearms is of great interest for investigative and intelligence services.

This research sheds light on the issue through three elements:

- a literature review,
- an exploration of the added value of social network analysis (SNA),
- an illustration of this added value based on a concrete Dutch case.

The literature review expounds the (criminological) theory behind the interwovenness of organised crime and terrorist jihadi groups, and elaborates the most recent developments in our thinking about the issue: criminal and terrorist organisations recruit their members from the same pool; perpetrators of (foiled) attacks in Europe often had a criminal background; in the Paris attacks firearms were found from a batch that is connected to a known firearms supply line.

With the knowledge about the international and European context as a background, an exploration has been conducted of the added value of SNA on this issue for investigative services. Based on a round of discussions with various departments of the National Police tasked with monitoring developments of this issue, it is concluded that for a variety of reasons currently SNA is applied to a limited extent.

After a short explanation of what SNA entails, it is subsequently discussed how an SNA can be applied to studying this nexus. Next, the added value is illustrated through the analysis of a large case involving the smuggling of and trade in firearms:

- Based on primary police data (registrations and antecedents) and discussions with involved experts the case is framed and a starting group of suspects is identified. The direct network of these persons has been mapped (in connection with which other persons were they known by the police?), after which the direct network of these newly added persons-of-interest was mapped, thereby resulting in a network comprising the network of our starting group to the second degree. In addition, various personal traits of the members of the network were mapped: were they encountered with firearms? Are they of interest in the context of counter-terrorism, extremism and radicalisation (CTER) monitoring? Are they known to be firearms dealers?
- In this way, interrelations between over 700 persons were mapped, as well as their profile ('firearms possessor', 'firearms dealer', 'terrorism suspect'). This resulted in 24 larger and smaller networks, which operated independently of one another (no interrelations were found between these networks, based on second degree connections). In addition, new connections that had not previously been visible came to light.
- Based on the data gathered, SNA-specific network indicators were calculated, which help with identifying the function of a person within a network: who is important acting as a bridge between sub-networks, who are central actors in a network, who have the most connections with 'important' persons? Proceeding from the values on these indicators, a number of persons have been identified as potentially interesting for follow-up by the investigative services.

A further deepening of this theme is recommended as a result of this exploration. In the context of this research, a number of concrete possibilities have been described for how to apply SNA within the police agencies to this theme and related issues. SNA can support the process of gathering further information regarding the nexus of organised crime and terrorist jihadi groups, and can assist in the decision-making concerning how to prioritise follow-up investigatory work.