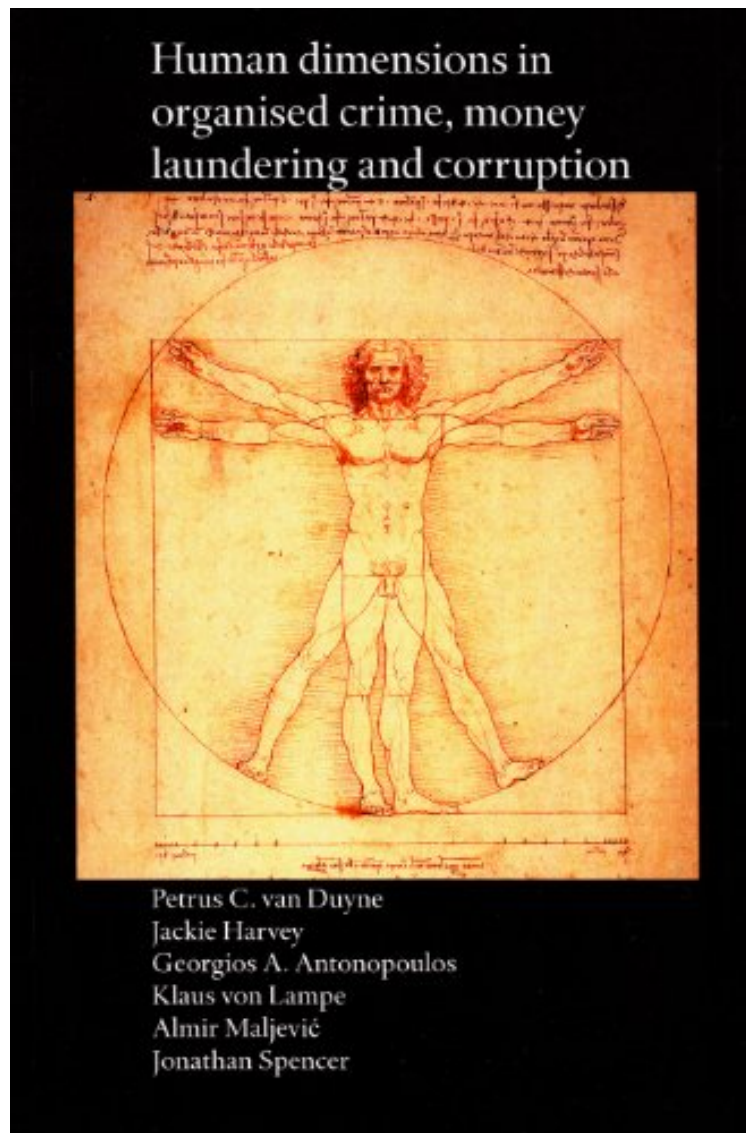


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Organized crime, whether or not in its transnational manifestation, is usually depicted in huge threatening dimensions. However, despite this sometimes superhuman representation, one should not forget that we are dealing with a human phenomenon and, therefore, should not lose sight of the corresponding human dimensions. This human dimension also concerns related phenomena, such as money laundering and corruption. This representation forces itself upon us when we look back at the threat images that have been put forward by the authorities, as well as the media, in the past decades. What threats have come true since, say, 1970 or 1980? We still observe the same (criminal) 'business as usual,' together with the alleged accumulation of huge amounts of criminally-influence money. However, these threat images are mainly presented from an 'underworld gaze,' directed at the criminal exploits of hoodlums and thugs 'under' the 'civilized' society and often viewed as coming from abroad. Meanwhile, the criminal (underworld) markets have not faltered. Despite this continued 'threat,' the industrialized world grew steadily richer and safer up until 2008. Then the effects of enduring massive criminal manipulations in the financial 'upperworld' brought this growing affluence to an inglorious end. Corruption is another threat to the fabric of society. Do the anti-corruption policies in countries at the rim of the EU achieve results? There are reasons to believe that most of the policy making effects consist of the facades in a 'Potemkin village': a paper world of ratified conventions, enacted laws, and ineffective institutions - most human and most deceptive. In this volume of the Cross-border Crime Colloquium series, 26 European experts present their latest and on-going studies and research findings. The contributions cover a range of subjects which are of lasting interest for researchers, as well as policy-makers: organized crime, criminal finances, money laundering, and corruption. They make us aware of the human dimension in misdeeds, as well as the related policy making. (Series: Cross-border Crime Colloquium - Vol. 11)