



ORGANIZED CRIME

MICHAEL D. LYMAN
GARY W. POTTER

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Michael D. Lyman
Columbia College

Gary W. Potter
Eastern Kentucky University



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PREFACE

Crime and criminality have been the cornerstone for countless movie and book plots and radio/TV talk shows over the decades. Of all the varied types of criminal activity, however, organized crime has proven to be the most intriguing through the years. Images of pin-striped gangsters, police shootouts, and flamboyant lifestyles emerge whenever the topic of organized crime is brought up. To a great extent, these images form the basis for stereotyping what the public generally perceives as organized crime. However, these images fail to portray organized crime realistically.

Organized Crime is designed to be an introductory text serving several purposes in the field of criminal justice. First, it will provide the reader with an understanding of the concept of organized crime: what it is, and what it is not. It will also give the reader the necessary historical foundation for understanding today's organized crime problem: its evolution, its development, and its current status. Most important, the book is designed to dispel the myth that organized crime is comprised exclusively of Italian-American criminal groups. In fact, when considering the overall problem of crime in our communities, other groups, such as Afro-American, Mexican, Colombian, and Jamaican criminal groups, play an increasingly important role, apart from their Italian criminal counterparts.

Another important component to the book is our belief that drug trafficking plays an important role in the continuing proliferation of organized

crime groups. The existence of the illegal drug trade says a lot about those groups that traffic illicit drugs, but also about those members of society who use them and who consequently lend support for organized criminals. In addition to a separate chapter dealing with the issue, the topic is discussed periodically throughout the book.

We have made great efforts to make the presentation of this material in a logically organized, readable fashion. The problem of organized crime is examined from a social perspective while specially designed pedagogical features are added. These include chapter objectives, critical thinking exercises, chapter summaries, key terms, and suggested readings. All of these features are designed to promote scholarly thought and insight into the problem of organized crime while presenting important thematic questions in each chapter. These include questions such as: What is organized crime? Is there really a Mafia? Is terrorism organized crime? Is the political machine dead? Although there are no hard-and-fast answers to these questions, readers can draw conclusions on their own and perhaps develop probing questions of their own. In many respects the most important pursuit for students studying organized crime is to develop sufficient mastery of the topic to ask the right questions.

The preparation of this book was a demanding task because it required sifting through an enormous amount of historical data and archives to present the most salient aspects of the organized crime problem. The efforts of the authors were augmented by numerous individuals and organizations. In addition to the research offered by well-known researchers in the field, information was also culled from governmental reports generated by such organizations as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Pennsylvania Crime Commission, the National Institute of Justice, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. A special thank you is extended to Carolyn Goodman of East Mississippi Community College for editing and preparation of the instructor's manual and test bank.

In addition to those special people and organizations mentioned above we would also like to recognize the efforts of those criminal justice academicians who took time to review this text in its developmental stages. Included are: Maria Haberfeld, Jersey City State College; Hugh J. B. Cassidy, Adelphi University; Harvey Burstein, Northeastern University; David L. Carter, Michigan State University; Brad Farnsworth, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; Richter H. Moore, Jr., Appalachian State University; Rudolph C. De La Torre, Los Angeles Valley College; and Patricia L. Zajac, California State University-Hayward. The feedback, suggestions, and recommendations provided by each of these contributors was greatly appreciated.

The study of organized crime is one of the most fascinating educational endeavors, posing thematic, scholarly, and ideological questions. As we attempt to understand this area of interest, let us bear in mind that over the past century organized crime has become the most insidious form of criminality involving criminals, politicians, bankers, lawyers, and the all-impor-

tant users of illegal goods and services. The authors would like to thank you for the adoption of this book for classroom study, and we encourage comments and suggestions regarding this publication for the improvement of future editions. Please feel free to contact either of the authors at the following addresses:

MICHAEL D. LYMAN, PH.D.
Department of Criminal Justice
Columbia College
1001 Rogers Street
Columbia, MO 65216

GARY W. POTTER, PH.D.
Police Studies
Eastern Kentucky University
410 Stratton Building
Richmond, KY 40475



CONTENTS

Preface ix

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZED CRIME 1

Introduction 2

The Book's Focus 3

Defining Organized Crime 4

Problems Caused by Organized Crime 6

Attributes of Organized Crime 6

Understanding the Mafia 8

Categories of Organized Criminal Behavior 9

Provision of Illicit Services 10

Provision of Illicit Goods 10

Conspiracy 10

Penetration of Legitimate Business 11

Extortion	11
Corruption	11

Definitions by Crime Commissions 13

The Sicilian Seed 16

The Village Becomes Organized	16
The Camorra	18

Investigations into Organized Crime 18

Mussolini's Mafia Purge	18
The Hennessey Assassination	20
The Castellammarese War	23
Thomas Dewey and the Mob	24
The Kefauver Committee	27
The Apalachin Incident	28
The Valachi Hearings	30
Bobby Kennedy's Justice Department Task Force	33
Palermo's Maxitrial	34
The Pizza Connection	35
Giuliani's Mafia Trials	37
Louis Freeh and the New Mafia War	39

Models of Organized Crime 39

The President's Commission on Organized Crime	39
Cressey's Cosa Nostra Model	43
Albini's Patron-Client Model	47
Smith's Enterprise Model	48
Ianni's Kinship Group Model	49
Chambliss's Crime Network Model	49
Haller's Partnership Model	50
Block's Description of Enterprise and Power Syndicates	50

Nontraditional Organized Crime 52

Organizational Constraints 54

Reuter on Economic Constraints	54
Mastrofski and Potter	55

What Have We Learned? 56

Do You Recognize These Terms? 57

Discussion Questions 58

Suggested Reading 58

Chapter 2: THEORIES OF ORGANIZED CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR 59

Introduction 60

Alien Conspiracy Theory 61

Rational Choice Theory 62

Deterrence Theory 65

Psychological Traits and Criminality 66

The Antisocial Personality 66

The Dependent Personality 69

Learning Theories 70

Miller on Gangs 70

Sutherland and Differential Association 71

Suttles on Community History 72

Conflict Theory 72

Social Disorganization Theories 73

Relative Deprivation 73

Bell's "Queer Ladder of Mobility" Theory 74

Merton and Anomie 74

Cloward and Ohlin on Differential Opportunity 75

Taylor, Walton, and Young on Blocked Opportunity 75

Cultural Deviance Theories 76

Culture Conflict 76

Smith's Enterprise Theory 76

Organizational Theory and Organized Crime 77

Two Empirical Conclusions 79

Social Implications 81

Organized Crime as a Community Social Institution 81

Aligning with Legitimate Business 82

Benefits for Legitimate Business 83

Illicit Income for Community Members 84

“Legitimate” Employment Opportunities	85
Community Acceptance of Organized Crime	85
The Corruption Link	86
Interfacing with the Community	88

What Have We Learned?	90
Do You Recognize These Terms?	91
Discussion Questions	91
Suggested Reading	91

Chapter 3: THE EVOLUTION OF ORGANIZED CRIME 93

Introduction	94
---------------------	-----------

The Irish Immigration	95
------------------------------	-----------

The Political Machine (1830–1919)	96
--	-----------

The Tammany Hall Machine	96
The Pendergast Political Machine	98

The Early Drug Syndicates (1915–1930)	102
--	------------

The Prohibition Era (1920–1933)	103
--	------------

The Chicago Mob	105
------------------------	------------

The Capone Legacy	105
Sam Giancana (1908–1975)	109
Ethnicity and Organized Crime in Chicago	111

The New York Mob	111
-------------------------	------------

The Masseria and Maranzano Assassinations	111
Lucky Luciano and New York’s New Order	113
The Siegel, Lansky, and Las Vegas Connection	115
The Black Hand	118
The Unione Siciliana	119
Arnold Rothstein	120
Dutch Schultz	121
Frank Costello	124
Frank Erikson	125
Vito Genovese	125
Joseph Bonanno	128

Joseph Colombo 129
Carlo Gambino 130
Paul Castellano 130
John Gotti 131

The Philadelphia Mob 135

Philadelphia and the National Syndicate 136

The New Breed 139

Pablo Escobar 139

What Have We Learned? 142

Do You Recognize These Terms? 143

Discussion Questions 143

Suggested Reading 143

Chapter 4: THE BUSINESSES OF ORGANIZED CRIME 145

Introduction 146

Delivery of Illicit Goods and Services 147

Corruption 148

Pornography 150

Forms of Pornography 151

Organized Crime and Pornography 151

Prostitution 154

Types of Prostitutes 155

Organization 159

Drug Trafficking 160

The Distribution Chain 160

Gambling 162

The Process 163

Bookmaking 165

Sports Betting 166

The Effects of Gambling 166

Loansharking	167
Business Racketeering	168
Reasons to Diversify	169
Labor Racketeering	171
Money Laundering	174
The Underground Economy	175
The Money-Laundering Process	177
What Have We Learned?	180
Do You Recognize These Terms?	181
Discussion Questions	181
Suggested Reading	182

Chapter 5: THE ILLICIT DRUG TRADE 183

Introduction	184
Drug Control: A Brief History	184
Early Drug Regulation	185
The Impact of Drugs on Society	186
The Pervasiveness of Drug Abuse	188
Measuring Drug Abuse	188
Drugs and Crime	189
Drugs and Violent Crime	191
Drugs and Income-Generated Crime	192
Drugs and Organized Crime	193
Players in the Drug Business	194
The Business of Drugs	195
Trends of Organized Drug Trafficking	195
Recent Trafficking Patterns	196
Heroin's Return	197

The Drug Trade Today	198
Southwest and Southeast Asia	199
The Golden Triangle	199
The Golden Crescent	200
Mexico	200
South American Countries	202
Bolivia	202
Peru	203
Colombia	203
Common Drugs of Abuse	204
Categories of Dangerous Drugs	204
Narcotics	204
Stimulants	205
Hallucinogens	207
Depressants	208
Cannabis	208
Inhalants	209
Drug Control Strategies	211
Police–Community Drug Control Efforts	214
Other Control Strategies	214
What Have We Learned?	215
Do You Recognize These Terms?	216
Discussion Questions	216
Suggested Reading	217

Chapter 6: DOMESTIC ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS 218

Introduction	219
Black Organized Crime	219
New York	220
Chicago	221
Pittsburgh	222

Philadelphia 222
Newport 222

Contemporary Black Organized Crime 223

Leroy "Nicky" Barnes 224
Frank Mathews 224
Jeff Fort 224
Charles Lucas 225

Youth Gangs 225

Defining Youth Gangs 226
Gang Structure 226
Characteristics of Gang Members 227
Black Youth Gangs 227
Hispanic Youth Gangs 230

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs 230

The OMG-Organized Crime Link 231
Organizational Structure 232
Criminal Activity 236
The Hell's Angels 238
The Outlaws 240
The Pagans 241
The Bandidos 243

Prison Gangs 243

Prison Gangs Today 245

Gang Member Recruitment 245
Gang Structure 247
Gang Operating Procedure 247
The Mexican Mafia 249
The Nuestra Familia 251
The Texas Syndicate 253
The Aryan Brotherhood 253
The Black Guerilla Family 257

Rural Organized Crime 258

The Wholesale Market 259
The Retail Market 260
Characteristics of Rural Organized Crime Groups 262

What Have We Learned? 262

Do You Recognize These Terms? 263

Discussion Questions	263
Suggested Reading	263

Chapter 7: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE 265

Introduction	266
Colombian Organized Crime	266
The Colombian Cartels	267
The Medellin Cartel	268
The Cali Cartel	270
Trouble in Cali	270
Management and Organizational Structure	271
Cuban Organized Crime	273
The Marielitos	274
An Overview	275
Asian Organized Crime	275
The Triads	276
Triad Organizational Structure	277
Triads and the Drug Trade	278
The Tongs	279
The Sicilian-COC Alliance	280
The Shan United Army	280
Vietnamese Gangs	281
The Yakuza	281
Gang Structure	282
The Shining Path	283

The Jamaican Posses	284
Organizational Structure	285
Jamaica's Political History	286
Jamaicans and the Cocaine Trade	288
European Organized Crime	289
Eastern and Central Europe	289
Europe's Shadow Economy	290
Italy's Mafia Wars	293
Italy's Mafia Structure	295
Russian Organized Crime	296
Organization and Structure	299
Operating Style	300
African Organized Crime	302
What Have We Learned?	303
Do You Recognize These Terms?	304
Discussion Questions	304
Suggested Reading	305

Chapter 8: TERRORISM AS ORGANIZED CRIME 306

Introduction	307
Defining Terrorism	308
Who Are the Terrorists?	309
Forms of Terrorism	310
Categories of Terrorism	312
International Terrorism	312
Middle Eastern Terrorists	313
West European Terrorists	315
Latin American Terrorists	316
State-Organized Crime	318
State-Sponsored Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy	319

U.S. Intelligence Agency Collaboration with Organized Crime 322

- The OSS in Italy and Marseilles 322
- The CIA in Southeast Asia 323
- The CIA in Southwest Asia 324
- The CIA and Money Laundering in Florida and the Caribbean Basin 324
- The Nugan-Hand Bank 324
- The Bank of Credit and Commerce International 325

Cuban Organized Crime Groups 325

The Iran-Contra Affair 326

- Medellin Cartel Support of the Contras 327
- Drug Smuggling by the Contras 328
- What Did They Know and When Did They Know It? 330

Domestic Terrorism 332

- The Bombing in Oklahoma City 334
- Other Recent Incidents 336

The Ideological Left 336

The Ideological Right 338

- Domestic Terrorism: White Supremacist and Hate Groups 339

The Birth of Militias 340

- Triggering Events 341

Other Domestic Terrorist Groups 342

- Christian Identity Groups 343
- White Nationalists 343
- Third-Position White Supremacists 343
- Neo-Nazi Skinheads 344
- Racial Survivalists 344
- Fifth-Era Ku Klux Klan Groups 344
- Posse Comitatus 344
- Populists 345

Single-Issue Terrorist Activity 346

- Anti-Abortion Activists 347

The Media's Role in Terrorism 349

Controlling Terrorism 349

- The 1996 Antiterrorism Bill 350