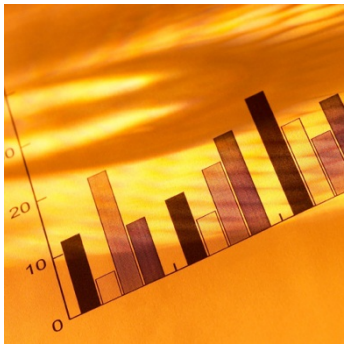
RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Organized Crime



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Differences in Evaluation of Organized Crime Groups

Differences in how law enforcement perceives organized crime groups as dangerous linked to factors regarding agency mandate

The threat level an organized crime group poses can be the basis for government policy and police strategies. Therefore, it is important that organized crime groups are evaluated based on the danger they pose using standardized methods of evaluation. One of the standardized methods used to assess the threat level of the group is a threat measurement technique named Sleipnir, developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to compare organized crime groups based on certain rank-ordered characteristics or attributes.

Using the survey results of 157 attendants of a seminar held during a training conference organized by the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA) and the Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Units (LEIU), 12 characteristics used in Sleipnir were presented to law enforcement officials. Based on a Q-sort methodology, respondents were asked to rank the characteristics of the model from the most important to the group's success to the least. Each characteristic was scored based on how the respondent had ranked it, with the characteristics considered the most important receiving up to three points and those seen as the least important losing up to three points.

The results showed significant differences in how different regions as well as levels of government differ on traits that lead to organized crime group success. Ranked first by American and second by Canadian respondents was cohesion, having a strong sense of solidarity or bond with other group members. However, the Sleipnir ranks cohesion as the least important characteristic. Canadian respondents and Sleipnir both overall listed corruption as the most important factor, while Americans ranked it ninth. Additionally, state/provincial level agencies viewed money laundering as important, ranking it second, in comparison to local or federal agencies that ranked it tenth and seventh respectively.

This information raises several questions as to why differences in country or level of government would influence the characteristics that are seen as most important to success. The authors suggest that there are distinct differences between what makes a gang successful specifically in Canada compared to the USA. Factors including culture and legislation could influence how an organized crime group needs to act in order to be successful. This could explain the

In This Issue

difference in view by the American respondents, given that Sleipnir is a Canadian framework. It is also suggested that federal agencies such as the RCMP or FBI view different characteristics as more significant because their mandate puts them in contact with groups displaying certain qualities more than local agencies would experience. For example, local agencies tend to focus more on violent, high-profile groups while the RCMP tend to look more at lesser-known criminal groups with deep roots.

One area that warrants discussion is the fact that the study is based entirely on the perception of an individual officer. It is not an objective test of how likely groups are to endanger the public in reality, but a representation of how likely the group is to succeed in organized crime as determined by the respondent. Additionally, the respondents came from across the world yet the only options for location were Canada, USA, and other. Regional differences between different states/provinces could range massively depending on several factors such as differences in how federal officers are trained, and the groups that were measured may not be very homogenous. If the study were to be repeated over time, it is unlikely that very similar results would be found.

These differences in how characteristics were ranked by law enforcement challenge the idea that universal, objective tests can determine the threat posed by criminal organizations. Different actors may perceive the potential risk of the same group very differently depending on their own position. Further, this calls into question the idea of universal organized crime suppression strategies. If different characteristics are of different importance to an organized crime group depending on the setting, then strategies based on certain characteristics may be considerably less effective than originally envisioned.

Ratcliffe, J., Strang, S., Taylor R. (2014). "Assessing the success factors of organized crime groups." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 37(1): 206-227.

Police Impact on Human Trafficking in Norway

Police initiated cases of human trafficking more likely to result in indictment than non-police initiated

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a major concern for law enforcement in nearly all countries. From 2004–2013, the number of cases involving human trafficking in Norway grew from 15 reported cases per year to 56. Given the nature of police work in fighting THB, the relationship between police activity and THB is one that bears greater scrutiny.

A study of THB conducted by the Norwegian police looked at cases of human trafficking and the police response. The research was done with the goal of identifying patterns between how many cases of THB were brought to the attention of the police, how the police became aware of these cases, and the rate of indictment. Data was collected through accessing the National Database of Criminal Cases (STRASAK), to find all reported cases of THB in Norway from November 2003 to December 2013.

Cases where an investigation was started by police officers recognizing an individual as a potential victim of THB were considered to be *police-initiated*. Cases where victims or third parties such as shelters, protective services, NGOs, or other citizens who contacted the police about the case were considered *non-police-initiated*. Two-thirds of all cases were *non-police-initiated*. Over the 10 year period, the chances of human trafficking cases being *police-initiated* fell by 13% annually, while at the same time the number of cases of THB increased. These trends show that Norwegian police depended increasingly on *non-police-initiated* cases, possibly a result of citizens becoming more aware of human trafficking or police officers being too overwhelmed to initiate so many cases themselves. This distinction in how the case is initiated is important as the data also reveals that *police-initiated* cases were 13 times more likely to result in an indictment than *non-police initiated* cases. Certain regions, such as the city of Bergen, were as much as three times more likely to have a *police-initiated* case than other areas.

The study identifies police officers as *street-level bureaucrats* who have to carefully manage their time and resources. They often have to make decisions based on their own judgement, resulting in immense discretionary power to pursue cases they deem most

important. Police officers with limited resources have to prioritize certain cases over others. This may lead to some cases of human trafficking being overlooked as officers devote more attention to other cases, human trafficking or otherwise, that are more likely to result in an indictment.

Some limits were identified in the study. Although data indicates that THB incidents are increasingly less likely to be *police-initiated* in comparison to *non-police initiated*, it is unclear whether this trend is caused by lack of resources, inability to recognize human trafficking, or other factors that may impact police ability to initiate a case. Further, it is unclear whether these trends are simply a product of increased rates of non-police actors reporting cases of THB as citizens become more vigilant to human trafficking.

Bjelland, Heidi J. (2016). "Identifying human trafficking in Norway: A register-based study of cases, outcomes and police practices," *European Journal of Criminology*, December 4th, 2016.

Funding of Terrorist and Paramilitary groups

Terrorist and paramilitary groups often act similarly to organized crime groups to secure funding

It can be difficult to definitively describe what constitutes terrorism. Even less clear are how terrorist groups operate and how they are funded, questions that are shrouded by myth. The current discussion defines terrorism as the result of the breakdown of the state to the extent that groups and individuals are using violent means to either create a new state in line with their own ideals, or force their way into the decision making process. These groups can also supplant the state by providing services that would usually fall to a country's government. Often paramilitary groups also pursue these goals through actions that constitute terrorism. These terrorist or paramilitary groups thus require large-scale and stable funding to operate. For instance, Al Qaeda's operations in Iraq are reported to cost as much as $200,000 a week to maintain, or $10.4 million a year. This funding can be secured through criminal activity.

However, it is important to differentiate between the terrorist or paramilitary group and the organized crime groups. Organized crime groups participate in criminal activity to make money. The money made through organized crime committed by terrorist or paramilitary groups serve only to further fund the group's activity, meaning rather than oriented on providing personal profit for those involved, it is organized crime for the purpose of terrorism. The author also believes that terrorism and organized crime are difficult to differentiate at times, with groups often acting in ways that could be described as either. Both can thrive as a result of the breakdown of the state and may seek to provide services such as protection rackets for citizens or enforcing contracts.

The author considers the Irish Republican Army (IRA) a paramilitary group based primarily in Northern Ireland that aims to end British influence over the region and remove the country from the United Kingdom. Needing cash to fund its efforts, the group has often turned to an array of criminal activities. Protection rackets, bank robberies, pirated CD sales, in addition to other sources of income have all been used to fund IRA activities in the past. However, these incidents of organized crime were committed more to raise funds for the group's ongoing campaign than to make money for themselves.

Looking at paramilitary groups and their actions as organized crime activity, and from an economic perspective, the author explores how certain groups have funded themselves. As these groups need weapons, they may develop smuggling lines to acquire them. These smuggling lines are then used to gather and sell excess weapons to raise money. From there, the groups naturally turn to selling other valuable smuggled goods, such as drugs or diamonds, to help pay for the weapons in the first place. The group can profit from instability by further acting as enforcers and providing money protection. If the state is unable to enforce contracts, due to corruption or instability, it can be difficult for suppliers of both legal and illegal goods to ensure agreements will be followed. The paramilitary group can step in to police these activities, for a price, and from there can take over parts of the business completely.

The author also argues that different types of groups have to find different ways to make money. Mainstream groups can be funded by governments, donations from wealthy individuals, or other legitimate sources, whereas minority groups have fewer resources and feel pressure to acquire funding through illegal means. Ideological, ethnic, or religious minority groups often have to fund their activities by using crime.

The author also highlights the lack of information about the effectiveness of counter-terror financing policy and the need for more specific information about terror financing as a whole. Several post 9/11 seizures of money were found to be illegal by courts who ordered that the money be returned. Although some effort has been made to track seizure of funds and ensure practices laid out by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), specific numbers are difficult to find. This makes further research into counter-terrorist financing policy essential in order to determine what steps to take next.

Tupman, W. (2009). "Ten myths about terrorist financing". Journal of Money Laundering Control. 12(2): 189-205.

Trends in Evolution of Gangs

Groups of criminal youth move through specific stages as they become involved in more serious criminal activities

The term "gang" is often used as a catch-all term for any group of delinquents, from a group of youthful petty criminals to a more hardened organized crime group. In some cases, groups of delinquent youth can evolve into more serious organized crime groups, but it can be difficult to determine what the stages of this process are. The author proposes that there are definitive stages in a gang's evolution that the groups may eventually reach and pass, from a more socially oriented group of friends into money-driven criminals.

Observational data was collected from 12 gangs from Greater London in the UK. During the two year observational period, members and associates of these gangs also participated in a series of interviews. Individuals were recognized as gang members by identifying themselves as such, and having other gang members confirm their status. Associates simply expressed a desire to join a gang that they associate and commit crimes with. These gangs had all grown out of a social group of peers and participated in illegal activity, yet some groups had progressed more in their lifecycle than others.

The author's main argument is that gang life evolves through four different stages: (1) *recreation;* (2) *criminal; (3)* e*nterprise;* and, *(4) governance*. Gangs start in the *recreation stage* as groups of peers that associate in social settings. Gangs in this stage are often formed out of groups that share a common identity and meet to provide social support. Crimes are committed occasionally, but mostly to alleviate boredom. As these gangs emerge, however, crime and violence can become central to the group's identity. At the criminal stage, gangs begin to develop reputations and start to experience conflict with other gangs. Police might begin to pay close attention to the gang, and the concept of a gang's territory and its sanctity become central to their image. The gang's actions move away from informal crimes committed spontaneously to premeditated acts in which the gang meets for the purpose of planning. At this point, the profit that is made through criminal means is minimal. Street crimes, such as stealing phones to sell, do not provide a sufficient supply of capital, and more lucrative activities may be pursued.

From here, groups may progress to the enterprise stage, seeking better compensation for their criminal activity. This stage marks a major transition in the group's actions as they become more violent and more serious offences are committed. Prompted by the allure of money, members of gangs turn to more profitable sources of income, for example drug trafficking. People from outside the group are hired to act as soldiers for the group, often tasked with duties such as enforcement, or murdering the competition and police informants. These outsiders work in a hierarchal fashion, dealing drugs and committing other crimes on behalf of a member of the group who provides instruction and supervision for the network of subordinates they manage. As the gang evolves, it becomes more focused on crime as a means of making profit, and the gang becomes run more like an illegal

business than anything else as the social aspect of the gang begins to disappear.

Finally, groups may progress to the governance stage, where they become more organized and competitive. At this stage, they may strive to be the sole major gang, and the only provider of any services they provide through eliminating competition. They may also begin working on expanding their area of influence, trying to take advantage of new business opportunities and moving into new locations. Violence becomes an integral part of the group's activity and risks to the business, such as competing gangs or police informants, are routinely targeted. At the same time, groups at this stage may move into more legitimate operations and provide the community with benefits. One gang in London, PDC (Poverty Driven Children, previously called Peel Dem Crew), has allegedly moved away from violence and begun focusing more on legal businesses such as barbershops and music. Some groups are able to secure the loyalty of the community by providing residents with protection from crime, financial assistance, and by putting on social events for the neighbourhood to enjoy. Finally, in this stage groups may begin trying to acquire information on police operations. For example, some groups used police scanners to monitor activity, while others arranged for lookouts to constantly keep watch on the streets. Some gangs are even able to successfully bribe public officials, either for information or to turn a blind eye. Whatever methods are used, at this stage the group begins to emerge as a dominant force in the community that is constantly looking to increase its influence.

Increasing our understanding of the evolution of groups from youth gangs to criminal organizations enables the development of better strategies in combatting organized crime. Police could identify which groups display an increased likelihood to progress to the next stage and target them for either investigation or increased efforts of crime prevention to draw them towards conventional lifestyles. However, there are some limits to the study, the biggest being that no longitudinal study was conducted. Organized groups were simply studied in the context of the stage they currently occupied, and further research in how a group might progress from one stage to the next is required to better understand how these stages are navigated.

Densley, J. (2014). "It's gang life, but not as we know it: The evolution of gang business." *Crime & Delinquency*, 60(4): 517-546.

Identifying Trends in Organized Crime

Underuse of UCR2 organized crime flag hinders understanding of efforts to fight organized crime

Although organized crime has been a major priority of law enforcement agencies for years, Canada has little usable data, making law enforcement's task of combatting organized crime groups considerably more difficult. Police capacity to fight organized crime is hindered without reliable and accurate data on organized crime in Canada, and without the ability to share that data with other law enforcement organizations.

In an effort to provide police agencies and government bodies with more information on organized crime in Canada, changes were implemented to the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR2) in 2005. These changes aim to identify any incident that is connected to organized crime, such as gang activity. Using the organized crime flag to mark the incident would help law enforcement in measuring organized crime offences in Canada by providing reliable numbers on the prevalence of organized crime. This can assist in the fight against organized crime as trends would become clearer and police would be better able to develop strategies in response. Unfortunately, the use of the organized crime flag in the UCR2 by police organizations was inconsistent and limited when reporting incidents of crime. For example, offences that are known to have ties to organized crime, such as drug trafficking and murder were rarely marked as such, so no usable information was gained.

Police organizations later met in 2009 to discuss appropriate use of the UCR2 organized crime flag. They suggested several proposals to help in reporting, including providing training for police officers on how to properly use the UCR2 flag, and agreed to initiate a pilot project where police would focus on marking all cases of specific offences that were related to

organized crime. In 2013, several police services volunteered to take part in this pilot study by documenting cases of organized crime related offences in order to determine if the changes made regarding use of the UCR2 system were working. Thirteen police services took part in the study on homicide-related offences, four of which also took part in the study on drug related offences.

The data in the pilot study showed that 15% of the 588 recorded homicide-related incidents were connected to organized crime. Homicide-related incidences that were connected to organized crime were more likely to involve firearms, have a younger victim, and involve a victim that was a stranger to the offender when compared to all homicide-related incidences. Additionally, both the victim and offender were more likely to be male in homicide-related incidents that were connected to organized crime than compared to homicide-related incidents overall. Organized crime was also found to be involved in 57% of the 1,010 drug trafficking offences recorded in the pilot study. Compared to when the UCR2 first began tracking organized crime and only 45 instances of drug trafficking out of a total of 19,309 cases were flagged on being related to organized crime, it seems clear the efforts to increase use of the flag have been successful, and that useful data can now be collected, shared and studied.

The following practices were identified to ensure better organized crime data collection: (1) flagging incidents of organized crime had to be made a priority by police services; (2) the importance of collecting this information should be stressed; (3) someone should be assigned duty to ensure that all cases of organized crime are being flagged correctly to ensure accurate record keeping; and, (4) incidents should also be recorded on a daily basis and by individuals with access to all available information.

Munch, C., & Silver, W. (2017). Measuring Organized Crime in Canada: Results of a Pilot Project. *Juristat*. 37(1). 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14689-eng.htm

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