

AN EXAMINATION OF ORGANIZED CRIME AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL
SECURITY

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DEDICATION

At the end of my first year in graduate school I lost someone very near and dear to me, my grandmother, Juana Vaughn. I love her and miss her very much, without her I would not be the person I am today. This thesis and the completion of my degree are in honor of her.

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ABSTRACT

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The overall growth of organized crime, including the extension of criminal organizations to criminal enterprises and the expansion into more sophisticated criminal avenues (e.g., cyber crime) has become a cause for concern among federal law enforcement in America. Transnational organizations, such as Asian and Eurasian syndicates are affecting the economic state of the U.S. by embezzling millions of dollars through various fraudulent scams (healthcare fraud, phishing, credit card scams, id theft, insurance fraud, etc.) (Mukasey, 2008). This, in combination with the millions of drugs and weapons, and the hundreds of humans trafficked a year (for purpose of prosecution, slave trade, etc.) are all ways that organized crime could be considered a threat to

national security in the U.S. It remains debatable however, as to what exactly constitutes a threat to national security. The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of organized crime as a threat to national security. By conducting a series of in-depth interviews with Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Agents, this paper takes a closer look at organized crime as a threat to national security.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

For decades, organized crime has effectively beleaguered the United States; from the notorious “old school” Italian and Sicilian Mafia to the more modern day Japanese Yakuza, criminal organizations have been involved in a number of illegitimate and legitimate activities that have affected the economic and physical state of the U.S. Through participation in activities such as money laundering, gambling, fraudulent schemes and the trafficking of humans, weapons, and drugs, criminal organizations have been able to successfully operate within the U.S. since before the turn of the 19th Century (Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995).

Due to a never-ending demand of illicit goods and services, organized crime has flourished even when the conditions of the United States have not. While there have been numerous attempts to combat their efforts, the U.S. government has yet to succeed in effectively controlling criminal organizations and to an even greater extent, determine their overall threat to the nation’s security.

The concept “organized crime” is multifaceted and there is not a single agreed-upon definition. Furthermore, identifying whether a behavior constitutes a threat to the U.S. becomes even more complex (Finckenauer, 2005). The inability to reach this consensus and the need to work interdependently to combat criminal efforts across the

country has resulted in a barrier, to assessing the overall threat organized crime poses to our nation's security. Currently, no formal assessment exists that can be conducted across agencies to examine the possible threat that organized crime, as a whole, poses to the U.S. This thesis explores the range of possibilities of establishing such a formal assessment.

Background of the Problem

Organized crime, though a term not coined until 1920, has been in America as far back as the 1840s. With the influx of Irish immigrants in 1844 and the rule of the western frontier by the "robber barons" during the urbanization period, organized crime has flourished in the United States, even in the country's weakest conditions (Kelly, 2000). Due to the constant demands of illicit goods and services and the influx of immigrants who have entered the U.S., criminal organizations have been given the chance to prosper and exponentially grow in a number of criminal markets.

Recognized by law enforcement as "tools of the trade," drugs and firearms are both avenues that organized crime has managed for quite some time. Additional criminal activities that members of organized crime organizations include money laundering, prostitution rinks, human trafficking, and more recently fraudulent scams (fuel scams, healthcare fraud, id and credit card fraud) and cyber crime (Abadinsky, 2003; Kelly 2000; Siegel & Nelen, 2008). The opportunity to expand into a variety of illicit markets, has forced criminal organizations to become more sophisticated in nature, ultimately widening the scope of their involvement in illegal activities and the people affected by

them. With this in mind, one can't help but wonder how much of a threat organized crime, as a whole, is to security in the U.S.

As of today there is no formal assessment that confirms or denies organized crime as a threat to the nation's security. Until federal agencies are able to reach a common ground as to which criminal organizations can be classified as "organized crime" and which activities they're involved in can constitute a "national threat," confirmation or denial of such a peril will remain to be unseen.

Statement of the Problem

The overall growth of organized crime, including the extension of criminal organizations to criminal enterprises and the expansion into more sophisticated criminal avenues (e.g., cyber crime) has become a cause for concern among federal law enforcement in America. In April of 2008 U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey announced the need for a new governmental focus on organized crime by making the following statement:

Perhaps we are victims of our own success because it seems that there is a widespread belief around the country that organized crime is no longer a serious threat. I can assure you that organized crime is different in source and different in scope, but unfortunately this phenomenon, in a different institutional costume, is alive and well. (Mukasey, 2008, p. 3).

In addition to the traditional mobsters of the Italian Mafia, and their descendents such as the Irish Mob and the more modern Latin Organizations, whose forte lies in drugs, guns, and money laundering, organized crime has taken on a new face of sophistication where crime knows no boundaries and the world wide web has become a worldwide profit.

Transnational organizations, such as Asian and Eurasian syndicates, are affecting the nation's economic state by embezzling millions of dollars through various fraudulent scams (healthcare fraud, phishing, credit card scams, id theft, insurance fraud, etc.) (Mukasey, 2008). This, in combination with the millions of drugs and weapons, and the hundreds of humans trafficked a year (for purpose of prosecution, slave trade, etc.) are all ways that organized crime could be considered a threat to national security in the U.S. It remains debatable however, as to what exactly constitutes a threat to national security.

Purpose and Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of organized crime as a threat to national security. Unfortunately, there have been reoccurring issues that stand in the way of answering this question. One problem, as previously mentioned, is determining what exactly qualifies as a "threat" to national security, currently there are no agreed upon categories, among federal agencies, as to what exactly puts the U.S. at risk. Also, there has been a continuous problem among both researcher's and practitioners to reach a consensus on a definition of "organized crime," (Finckenauer, 2005). This has resulted in a mass confusion among what exactly is being measured. This study attempts to address these issues within this researcher's capabilities, to shed light on the issue of organized crime as a threat to national security within the U.S.

Through the creation of a formal assessment, this paper aims to measure organized crime as a threat to national security. Notably there are two major barriers to formulating this assessment, one being the definition of "organized crime" and the other being an agreed upon definition of a "national threat." The term "organized crime" has

been defined by combining two separate definitions, one which has been agreed upon by a number of researchers and the other which has been determined by the FBI (Albanese, 2008; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). Because the Federal Bureau of Investigations is the highest federal investigative arm in the U.S., the term “national threat” has been defined using their definition. Although the primary focus of this study is to determine whether or not a formal threat assessment of organized crime could be created, this study also aims to establish preliminary findings of a threat assessment by region, criminal activities pertinent to those regions, and a regional analysis of the combative tactics currently being used to battle criminal organizations.

Importance of the Study

The criminal activities linked to organized crime are expanding into both traditional and more modern avenues. The mere existence of technology has allowed criminals to gain access to even the most sensitive information (e.g., credit card information, social security numbers, health care plans, etc.); meaning that anyone who uses a computer is at risk of being a victim of organized crime.

In addition to the expansion of criminal activity, one informant with the Federal Bureau of Investigations has attributed the increase in organized crime to a “misallocation of funds,” which followed the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (9-11). After the catastrophic events of 9-11, U.S. government officials made combating terrorism a top priority; federal agencies were forced to shift any focus that was had on organized crime to possible terrorism within the United States. This shift forced agencies

to reallocate their funds where needed, allowing criminal organizations to grow and flourish in a community where they are virtually going undetected (Anonymous, 2008).

If given in significant numbers, this assessment proposed in this study, could aid federal agencies in tailoring their combative efforts to the criminal activities being perpetrated in their area, in addition to aiming those efforts at the syndicates committing those crimes.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

This chapter will review the existing literature on organized crime and the attempts to assess it on a national level. Due to the complex and serious nature of organized crime, a historical description of how it came to be within the U.S. must be given in order to understand the obstacles it creates for federal agencies in assessing its overall threat to national security. The complexities of establishing a sound definition of organized crime (e.g., criminal organizations v. criminal groups); paired with the inability to come to a consensus as to what qualifies as a national threat has hindered a formal assessment of this social phenomenon. By reviewing existing literature related to assessing organized crime within the United States a foundation for a method to assess organized crime will be laid.

History of Organized Crime in the United States

Before Prohibition, Before Al Capone

Although no one can be sure of America's first encounter with criminal organizations, there have been two historical markers in which literature suggests as the birth of organized crime. The first marker came in the form of an immigration wave in the mid 1800s, when an influx of Irish immigrants entered the U.S. fleeing a poverty

stricken economy brought on by English rule (Abadinsky, 2003). The second is attributed to a band of thieves, who the western frontier knew as the “robber barons” (Kelly, 2008). As descendents of ancestors of great fortunes, the robber barons utilized their money towards employing gangs of enforcers to commit criminal acts such as, bribery, violence, and corruption (Kelly, 2008). These activities would later be identified as elements of traditional criminal organizations. The Irish on the other hand, committed organized crime in a more sophisticated manner, pursuing and corrupting political officials in order to live within the community successfully “while disregarding the formal governmental and legal structure,” (Abadinsky, 2003). These activities have now been tied to organizations such as the Eurasian and Asian syndicates.

An alliance was formed between these two organizations, one that signified a symbiotic relationship, where those who ran the underworld by providing services such as gang enforcement and money laundering, relied on those that ran the political corruption of the community. The infiltration into governmental status allowed the Irish to control any political decisions that would overall affect the community, including “tax abatements, underdeveloped land sites, and government contracts” (Abadinsky, 2003, p. 61).

From the mid 1840s to the early 1920s, districts within the Northeast were being run by what history refers to as “machine leaders” and “saloon leaders.” During this time, saloons were places of social networking, where information could be exchanged on purchasing certain “goods and services.” The corrupt Irish political officials, being the well oiled “machines” that they were, controlled the offices of their district by going into

business with their local saloon owners. In exchange for helping sway the political vote among the public, “saloon leaders” were recognized as “lords” of their region. Being held personally responsible for directly or indirectly choosing police officials, allowed saloon leaders to “insure” any illicit activity (prostitution, gambling, etc.) occurring in their region (Abadinsky, 2003).

For two decades, crooked political officials of the Northeast operated in any form necessary to enhance the political power of the Democratic Party. Forms of extortion, corruption, fraud, and embezzlement were all seen as key elements in advancing the Catholic and Jewish community. During this time, there were a number of groups who opposed the structure and operation of the democratic “political machine.” Groups advocating for forms of reform and nativism often targeted major cities (e.g., New York & Chicago) linked to spurring organized crime (Abadinsky, 2003). In 1919 the animosity between rural and urban America reached an all time high with the ratification of the 18th amendment and the start of prohibition (2003).

Prohibition and Organized Crime

The era of prohibition has been recognized as the “single event for the emergence of strong organized crime groups,” (Albanese, 1996, p. 99). Gangsters, who were once limited to providing illicit and violent services within their region (burglary, murder, gambling, prostitution, etc.), had finally been given the chance to control the business of “supply and demand.” In this instance, the puppet became the puppeteer; political officials who once employed gangsters to enforce the vote, were now being bought to insure that any criminal activity within their district, would go undetected.

At this time, the market of supply and demand highly revolved around vices. In addition to operating “speakeasies” (bootlegging rinks) around the country, criminal organizations were highly involved with activities such as gambling and prostitution. Incidentally, these three activities often went hand in hand, and from a business perspective were seen as requiring even, violent measures, to ensure a smooth operation. Mobsters like “Lucky” Luciano, Frank Costello, Meyer Lansky, “Bugsy” Siegel, and of course, Al Capone, were all products of prohibition.

With the onset of the Great Depression and the end of prohibition, the U.S. witnessed a slight decrease in the violence and reign of criminal organizations (Abadinsky, 2003). The combination of law enforcement becoming professionalized in 1930 and the end of Prohibition in December of 1933 resulted in a depletion of their customer’s dispensable income, along with the market of manufacturing, selling, and transporting of illegal alcohol (Albanese, 1996). Despite these minor setbacks, many criminal organizations were still able to maintain their enterprises largely on the profits to be made by illegal gambling and racketeering (1996).

Combating Organized Crime (1950-1986)

The U.S. government has not always intervened in organized crime. Since the end of prohibition, combative efforts against organized crime can be summarized into four investigative committees: the *Kefauver Committee* (1950), the *McClellan Committee* (1963), and the *President’s Commission on Organized Crime* (1967 and 1986); that resulted in three congressional acts: the *Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act* of 1968, the *Organized Crime Control Act* and the *Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt*

Organizations Act of 1970. The facts which were established in these committees were used to create policy guidelines under which law enforcement officials investigate organized crime (Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995).

In 1950, Tennessee Senator, Estes Kefauver implemented the “first major congressional investigation” of organized crime (Abadinsky, 2003, p. 69). Over a one-year period, televised investigations of over 600 witnesses in 14 major cities were conducted. Both law enforcement officials and individuals with criminal records gave public testimonies regarding their involvement in illicit gambling and racketeering activities (Albanese, 1996). The committee discovered the existence of “two major crime syndicates in the country,” and claimed that the nationwide criminal conspiracy known as the “Mafia,” was the binder that held the two criminal organizations together (Abadinsky, 2003, p. 70).

The notion as to whether or not there was in fact a national crime organization, created quite a stir among the American public and became the subject of controversy in defining organized crime (Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995). The senator led the public to believe that organized crime and the “Mafia” (a nation-wide crime syndicate) was one in the same; when in reality neither Kefauver nor his committee had any factual proof that a criminal organization existed at the national level (Albanese, 1996; Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995). Like the Kefauver Committee, investigations in the McClellan Committee were also televised, once again shedding light on the topic of organized crime as nationwide criminal conspiracy.

McClellan's most prized witness among his investigations, Joseph Valachi, a onetime member of the Genovese crime family, revealed that Kefauver had been right. There was, in fact, a nationwide crime syndicate; but it did not go by the name of the "Mafia," instead it was referred to as "La Cosa Nostra," (Kelly 2008; Kenney & Finckenaue, 1995). Following the Kefauver and McClellan Committee, the issue of investigating organized crime became a top priority among political officials. The idea of a criminal organization that could possibly be operating at a national level did not set well with the U.S. government. In response, Lyndon B. Johnson established the *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice*. Nine different task forces were established, one, which was solely focused on investigating, organized crime (Abadinsky, 2003).

In 1967, the *Task Force on Organized Crime* (TFR) reported that there were 24 criminal groups that made up the nationwide syndicate, known as La Cosa Nostra. These groups consisted of over 5,000 members all of whom were of Italian origin (Albanese, 1996). The TFR also reported that the main form of revenue for organized crime in America was gambling, with loan sharking coming in a close second. Nothing in the report was mentioned about narcotics, prostitution, or labor racketeering, which was indicated two years earlier (in McClellan's Report), as being a significant problem linked to organized crime. Additionally, the TFR confirmed, based on Valachi's testimony two years earlier, the existence of a structure to each family, which was compiled of a boss, an underboss, and soldiers (1996).

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan created a second presidential commission to investigate the seriousness of organized crime within the U.S. Unlike LBJ's TFR, which only investigated Italian criminal organizations; Regan's President's Commission on Organized Crime (PCOC) focused on a variety of factors that were contributing to the success of organized crime, such as narcotics trafficking, the labor and management of racketeering, emerging crime groups, and money laundering (Kenney & Finckenaue, 1995).

In addition to what had already been concluded in the 1967 TFR report, Regan's Commission on Organized Crime discovered two major findings. The first was that organized crime throughout the United States was not limited to descendants of the Italian "Mafia." Additional crime groups that were considered as organized crime within the PCOC report were, motorcycle outlaw gangs, prison gangs, Colombian cocaine rings, Russian organized crime groups, and Asian organized crime groups. The second was that drug trafficking was the largest source of income for organized crime and the most serious problem posed by criminal organizations to the U.S. at that time (Kenney & Finckenaue, 1995).

The findings from the McClellan Committee and LBJ's TFR report, provided congress with the foundation to establish policy against criminal organizations; the activities identified in both reports (narcotics, prostitution, gambling, loan sharking, and labor racketeering) were the first illicit activities to officially be associated with organized crime as identified in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Kenney & Finckenaue, 1995). Two years later the Organized Crime Control Act was

created to solely manage illegal gambling organizations and to provide protection for witnesses and their families, who chose to come forward with any information pertaining to those operations (Kelly, 2008).

In order to encompass the various criminal activities that could be perpetrated in an organized manner but not necessarily by criminal organizations (e.g., counterfeiting, embezzlement, fraud, etc.), congress built off of the Organized Crime Control Act to establish RICO. By focusing on 35 different criminal activities over the time span of 10 years, law enforcement officials are able to charge any individual associated with a licit or illicit enterprise (Doyle, 2004). RICO is currently the most successful prosecutorial tool used against criminal organizations (Anonymous, 2009).

Organized Crime vs. “Organized Crime”

Although the PCOC suggested that other crime groups such as the Outlaws (motorcycle gangs) and the Aryan Brotherhood (prison gangs) be considered as criminal organizations, there have been reservations, at both the academic and practitioner level, to do so. Frank Hagan, a researcher who has addressed the complexities of defining organized crime, suggests that this reservation rests in the notion that not all organized crime is in fact “Organized Crime,” (2006). This concept suggests that certain crime is committed in an organized fashion because it requires more than one person to do so, rather than organized crime (O.C.), which refers to an Organized Crime group, such as La Cosa Nostra or the Russian Mafia (Hagan, 2006).

Given that the purpose of the assessment created in this thesis is to measure the threat that Organized Crime potentially poses to the nation, it is important to differentiate

between the two types of organized crime and establish which groups will be evaluated within the assessment. Due to the numerous groups who commit crimes that are organized, only a few will be described to illustrate the differences between the two.

Gangs

Certain federal agents would like to consider some of the criminals that they investigate as being intricate players within the realm of O.C. (Anonymous, 2008). More specifically, gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips, Hells Angels and the Outlaws, the Aryan Brotherhood and La Eme, are all criminal organizations that commit organized crimes, which by a vague definition fall under the description of O.C. Though as Hagan suggests, just because a group commits a crime that is organized, it does not automatically classify them as Organized Crime (2006).

Nationally known for their rivalry and violent territorial disputes, the Bloods and the Crips have existed within the United States since the 1970s. Since then, these two gangs have been involved in a number of criminal activities, such as drug running, motor vehicle theft, assault, burglary, and homicide. While predominately operating out of Los Angeles, research has suggested that anywhere from 30,000 to 35,000 members exist, per gang, nationwide (U.S. Department of Justice & NAIGA, 2009).

In a collaborative effort to measure the severities of gangs in the U.S., federal agencies have participated in a National Gang Threat Assessment to supply information on gangs within their region. In 2009, street gangs, such as the Bloods and the Crips, were found as posing a significant threat to the U.S. because their organizations are “the largest and control the greatest geographical area,” (U.S. Department of Justice &

NAIGA, p. 6). Additionally, this report has confirmed the Bloods and the Crips to having both loose knit and hierarchal structures. According to reports made by law enforcement, each gang is composed of an association of smaller street gangs called “sets,” although neither gang has an official leader, each “set” does. All other members within a set fall under that leader by rank, based on capabilities and seniority.

If there were one type of gang that could possibly be qualified as an organized crime group, it would be Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG). Their structure is highly organized and varies in size from one chapter to hundreds of chapters worldwide (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). OMG’s operate in a wide range of criminal activity, including violent crimes, drug and weapon trafficking, and the corruption of law enforcement officials, all activities that have been linked to O.C. The Federal Bureau of Investigations however, who is the leading investigating arm when dealing with O.C., has not yet officially declared OMGs as an organized crime group (2008). Making outlaw motorcycle gangs, a group who simply commit crimes that are organized. Hesitation to classify OMGs as organized crime groups is due to their lack of structure. While potential members must go through a probationary period, there is nothing higher once they have become a full member.

The Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC), one of the world’s largest OMGs, has been confirmed by several federal agencies as posing a considerable threat, to six different continents around the world (National Gang Threat Assessment, 2009). They contain between 2,000 to 2,500 members belonging to 250 chapters in the U.S. and 26 foreign countries (2009). Their criminal activities contribute heavily to the drug trade in

America, including the production, transportation, and distribution of marijuana, methamphetamines, cocaine, hashish, heroin, LSD, PCP, and diverted pharmaceuticals (2009).

Territorial disputes between HAMC and other OMGs have become quite violent, especially with long time rivals the Outlaw Motorcycle Club (OMC). Officially founded in 1935, the OMC, also known as the American Outlaws Association (AOA), are estimated to having over 94 chapters, consisting of over 700 members, and operating within 22 states of the U.S. (U.S. Department of Justice & NAIGA, 2009). Competing in markets such as drug running and money laundering has resulted in multiple counts of bloodshed, thanks to OMC's *Angels Die in Outlaw States* (ADIOS) policy (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). The OMC have also been involved in criminal activities such as prostitution operations, robbery, theft, and weapons violations (2009).

Ideally, one would like to believe that by putting criminals behind bars, law enforcement is able to control the extent of their illicit activity, if not ultimately bring it to a halt; unfortunately this concept, is a misleading one. Prison gangs, according to the National Drug Threat Assessment (2009) pose a serious domestic threat to the U.S. Their ability to operate not only within federal prisons, but outside prison walls, is an issue that is becoming to be of high priority among federal agencies across the nation (Anonymous, 2009). Prison gangs are well organized and regulated by a set of codes and rules enforced by gang leaders (2009). Their criminal activities mainly consist of drug distribution in and outside of their prison walls.

In the hierarchy of prison gangs, it is important to know that no gang can operate within the California Detention Center (CDC) or Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), without answering to either the Aryan Brotherhood (AB) or La Eme, otherwise known as the Mexican Mafia. Between these two organizations the market of distributing cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamines, is cornered. The tension between the two gangs has become increasingly violent, as evidence shows by the number of increased altercations between Caucasians and Hispanics inside the prison system (National Drug Threat Assessment, 2009). This raises a cause for concern about the members of these two gangs who remain on the outside.

Since the 1950's, La Eme has controlled the federal and state prisons of California. Mainly composed of Mexican-American males who began their criminal career in a California based gang, La Eme now, roughly consists of 200 members behind bars. Through their loose-knit structure, they are able to extort drug distributors outside of prison to distribute drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and heroin (National Drug Threat Assessment, 2009). Additional criminal activities, which they have been linked to, are the control and maintenance of gambling and homosexual prostitution within the CDC and BOP. As previously stated, rivalry has become high between La Eme and their sister gang of the CDC, the Aryan Brotherhood.

In 1964, about a decade after the creation of La Eme, the Aryan Brotherhood was formed in San Quentin Prison, California. Speculated as a creation of retaliation to the Black Panthers, the AB has been advocating and enforcing white supremacy in CDC and the BOP for close to 50 years now, with their affection for violence only growing

stronger (Kelly, 2008). In addition to controlling the distribution of drugs inside and outside of prison walls, the AB has been known to provide even the most violent of services, “murder for hire,” (National Drug Threat Assessment, 2009). Although their connection to the drug trade is heavily linked to the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs), their tolerance for Hispanics is dissipating, causing major cause for concern, both inside and outside of prison walls.

While criminal groups, such as the ones mentioned above may all contain characteristics of organized crime, their organization lacks at least one element used to describe organized crime. Street gangs for example, lack the capabilities to operate on a sophisticated level such as La Cosa Nostra, the Russian Mafia, or the Chinese Triads. Aside from their violent predispositions, which mainly occur over territorial disputes, street gangs have yet to surpass the elementary function of distributing drugs within their region. Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, which might seem as an exception to this rule, lack the main element of a hierarchal or linear structure. Once becoming a full-fledged member of an OMG, the climb up the totem pole comes to a halt, making their organization appear as more of a democratic society rather than a criminal organization. Finally, prison gangs are severely hindered by the limitations presented from working within a federal or state prison. The extents of their capabilities are minimal, similar to that of a street gang, prison gangs, and are unable to surpass the realm of drug distribution.

Having discussed the crime groups that do not qualify as O.C., it is important to now look at the groups in which the FBI classifies as “Organized Crime,” and the groups

that will be measured by the proposed assessment in this paper. These groups include the Italian O.C., Russian/Eurasian O.C., Asian O.C., African/Nigerian O.C., Middle Eastern O.C., and the three major Latin DTOs (Mexican, Colombian, and Dominican Drug Cartels).

Italian Organized Crime (La Cosa Nostra)

Since the late 1800s, Italian Organized Crime has infiltrated various criminal avenues of the United States. From capitalizing on the opportunities provided during the Prohibition Era to more modern day technological corruption, Italian Organized Crime in the U.S. otherwise known as La Cosa Nostra (LCN), has become known across the nation as...America's Mafia. It is compiled of mobsters descending from Italy's most notorious criminal organizations such as, the Sicilian Mafia; the Camorra or Neapolitan Mafia; the 'Ndrangheta or Calabrian Mafia; and the Sacra Corona or United Sacred Crown (Kelly, 2008).

The first appearance of Italian O.C. in the U.S. dates back to 1881, when David Hennessey, New Orleans Police chief, arrested and deported Giuseppe Esposito, known gangster of the Sicilian Mafia. Shortly after the arrest of Giuseppe Esposito, tension within the Italian community grew. The Provenzano family, who at the time controlled the docks in New Orleans, was beginning to lose business to the Matranga family; the feud resulted in a crusade for intimidation and murder. Through excessive force, Hennessey cracked down on criminal activity within the doc area, making numerous arrests and even more enemies (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

On October 15, 1890, shortly before midnight, Hennessey was shot multiple times at point blank, quickly resulting in his death. The Hennessey Murder came as a great shock to the citizens of New Orleans and ultimately resulted in the bloodshed of 11 of the 19 Italian immigrants being held for his murder. There have been multiple theories as to why Hennessey was murdered, from eliminating him as witness against the Matranga family, to being eliminated by his campaign rival for the up and coming elections. Regardless of the reason, one thing is for certain, the murder of David Hennessey, was the “first major Mafia incident,” in America (Albanese, 1996; FBI.gov).

Italian O.C. quickly began to evolve over the years, as various gangs assumed and lost control of dominance of the criminal markets within their communities. From the Black Hand gangs in 1900, to the Five Points Gang in the 1910’s and 20’s in New York, and Capone’s Outfit in Chicago, Italian Organized Crime had successfully infiltrated the illicit goods and services market in America. Towards the end of the 1920’s the criminal underworld in the northeast had become a competition between two major crime bosses, “Joe the Boss” Masseria and Salvatore Maranzano (Kelly, 2008). The tension between the two bosses to control organized crime in New York resulted in the death of Joseph Masseria, the end of the Castellammarese War, and the start of La Cosa Nostra.

Regulated by the LCN Commission and based on a code of conduct, La Cosa Nostra has been operating in the U.S. since 1931. Since then the Italian syndicate has seen a number of crime bosses, such as Lucky Luciano, Vito Genovese, Phillip “Benny Squint” Lombardo and his front men Frank “Funzi” Tieri and Anthony “Fat Tony”

Salerno, Vincent “The Chin” Gigante, and of course Jon Gotti. La Cosa Nostra, according to the FBI has been involved in a variety of criminal activities, including:

arson, assault, murder, extortion, drug trafficking, gambling, labor racketeering, infiltration of legitimate businesses, corruption of political officials, loan sharking, prostitution, pornography, tax fraud schemes, gasoline bootlegging and stock (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008, n.p.)

For a closer look at La Cosa Nostra’s major crime family, refer to Figure 1 (Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995).

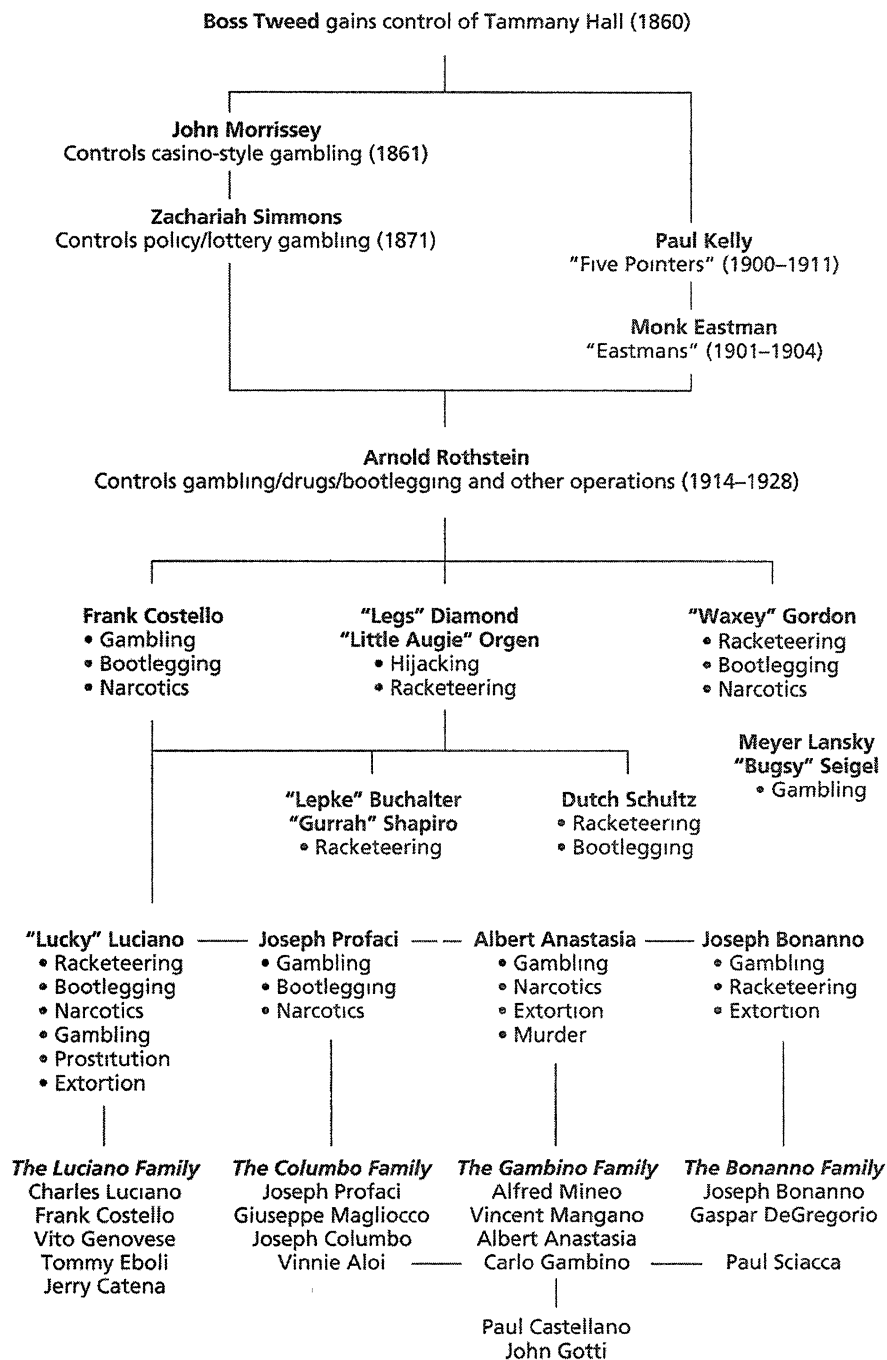


Figure 1: Structure of La Cosa Nostra in New York Kenney, D.J. & Finckenauer, J.O. (1995).
Organized crime in America. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Russian/Eurasian Organized Crime

The growth of Russian Organized Crime (ROC) in the U.S. can be heavily attributed to the fall of the Soviet Union. Although the presence of Russian émigré can be traced back to Nixon's attempt on strengthening East-West relations in the 1970s, it was the end of the Soviet era (1991) that brought a refined form of corruption to America. Descending from a band of criminals known as the Vory v Zakone, or "thieves in law," Russian criminal organizations have brought a level of sophistication to the world of organized crime, differing greatly from America's more traditional Mafia, La Cosa Nostra (Kelly, 2008).

In 1995 the U.S. made its first big break into the realm of ROC with the arrest of Vory mob boss, Vyacheslav Ivankov. Three years prior to his arrest, Ivankov was banished to America by the vor leadership's the "Circle of Brotherhood," (Abadinsky, 2003). After an early release from a 14-year prison sentence, Ivankov embarked on a campaign of extortion and murder, making him a liability to the vory.

Upon arriving in the U.S., Ivankov established a headquarters in Brighton Beach, NY where he contracted Russian combat veterans, whom he used to commit acts of extortion and to retaliate against his rivals. Unfortunately for him, his inability to maintain a low profile preceded him and resulted in his arrest for attempting to violently extort millions from two immigrant businessmen (Abadinsky, 2003); he was sentenced to nine years in prison. In 2004 Ivankov was deported back to Russia where he is currently serving time for the murder of two Turkish nationals (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008).

The complexities of surviving the poor political and economic state of Eastern Europe during the Soviet Union, provided criminals like Ivankov, with skills to negotiate and connive their way through an vast Communist bureaucracy. These skills, coupled with the ability to survive in the underworld by evading the infamous KGB (the state police), has given criminal organizations of Eastern European descent, the upper hand in America's underworld (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). The number and size of these groups that have found their way into the U.S. is unknown. They do not appear to follow any code of conduct, have no hierarchal crime family structures, nor are they regulated by any formal commission such as the LCN.

Criminals who operate within Russian organizations range from the more common street corner thugs to educated professionals, allowing the Vory, to utilize Russian émigré wherever they are necessary. By employing criminals who are best suited for the job, the Vory can operate as quickly and as efficiently as possible, which has ultimately resulted in investigative barriers for U.S. law enforcement (Abadinsky, 2003). The ability to perform a scheme and disband as quickly as possible has made these organizations virtually undetectable. According to the FBI, ROC is heavily involved in:

healthcare fraud, auto insurance fraud, securities and investment fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking, extortion, auto theft, the interstate transportation of stolen property, human smuggling, and prostitution (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008, n.p.).

The level of sophistication at which Eurasian criminal syndicates are operating within the U.S. is costing businesses, investors, and taxpayers millions of dollars (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008).

Asian Organized Crime

The emergence of Asian Organized Crime in the U.S. dates back to the early 1900s. Originating from a social organization that was formed by early Chinese-American immigrants (the Chinese tongs), Asian crime groups have successfully operated within the United States for over a century and have ethnic ties to China, Korea, Thailand, Japan, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, or Laos (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). Currently within the U.S. there are two categories of Asian O.C., traditional such as the Chinese Triads and the Japanese Yakuza (or Boryokudan) and non-traditional such as the criminally influenced Tongs, and the Vietnamese and Korean crime syndicates (Kelly, 2008).

The Japanese Yakuza alone consists of 150,000 members around the world, making it the largest criminal organization to currently exist (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). In America they have been involved in criminal activities such as the exportation of guns from the U.S. to Japan, the trafficking of sex workers, and the operation of illegal night clubs, brothels, and gambling facilities. More recently the Japanese Boryokudan (Yakuza) has been under the investigation, by the FBI for their involvement with La Cosa Nostra (Kelly, 2008). By sharing similarities in operation, such as the hierarchal family structures, their reliance on corrupt public officials, their infiltration into legitimate businesses, and their use of violence to prey upon victims of their own ethnic background; these two forms of traditional O.C. have been able to form an alliance (Asian-Italian O.C.) in the underworld.

The majority of Asian criminal organizations in the U.S., such as the Chinese Triads, their affiliates, and the criminally influenced Tongs, base their operations out of Chinatowns across America (Kelly, 2008). Like the LCN, the Triads (a higher level organization) will support a lower-level street gang (the Tongs), to enforce their reign among the Asian community. Constant territorial disputes and the fascination of violence among gangs in the Asian community have made Asian O.C. one of the most violent syndicates in America (2008).

These criminal enterprises are known to be fluid and extremely mobile, their ability to adapt and their multilingual backgrounds makes their criminal operations sophisticated by nature and virtually undetectable. By operating on an extensive international network and their ability to live on every continent in the world, Asian crime syndicates have become global threats (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). According to the FBI, Asian O.C. has been identified in over 50 major cities in the U.S. and, as a whole, have been involved in human trafficking, auto theft, money laundering, counterfeit computer parts and clothing products, extortion, murder, the trafficking of heroin and methamphetamines, financial fraudulent schemes, and illegal, prostitution, loan sharking, and gambling (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008).

African/Nigerian Organized Crime

Due to the great advancements in communications technology, the globalization of the world's economy, and easier international travel, African Organized Crime has developed in the U.S. Since the 1980's America has witnessed the growth of African criminal enterprises, through capitalizing on the expanded world trade and financial

transactions that have crossed national borders, African O.C. successfully operates within every continent of the world (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008). Their immigration into various regions has allowed them to operate in loose knit structures that are either socially or culturally related (Kelly, 2008).

In the U.S., the most significant African criminal organization is the Nigerian crime syndicate. Having direct access to over 90 percent of the world's heroin production and two major trafficking routes, has made Nigerian O.C. a significant threat in the avenue of drug trafficking. Moving massive amounts of cocaine into Europe and the U.S. and heroin into Europe and South Africa, using women as couriers, this has become the Nigerian's most profitable activity. They have also been involved in a number of financial fraudulent scams such as, healthcare billing scams, bank, check and credit card fraud, document fraud in developing fake identities, and advance-fee-schemes known as 4-1-9 letters (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008).

Advance-fee-schemes or 4-1-9 letters, which Nigerian O.C. has become notoriously notable for, was a fraudulent ploy to extort money from Westerner's bank customers. The victim was given a monetary incentive for the relinquishment of their banking information; the information was supposedly required to initialize the transaction by removing a one-time banking fee which would ultimately be reimbursed upon receiving their incentive. As a result, all the money was extracted from the victims account. Some victims who seemed exceedingly greedy and chose not to participate, were lured to Nigeria on false pretenses where they were kidnapped and tortured for their

financial information, upon releasing that information the victims were either let go or murdered (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

According to the FBI advance-fee-schemes, in addition to other financial fraudulent schemes committed by Nigerian O.C., has cost the United States an estimated \$1 billion to \$2 billion each year. Within the U.S. they have been identified in several major cities, such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Milwaukee, New York and Washington, D.C Internationally, they have become one of the fastest growing and most violent criminal organizations in the world (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008).

Middle Eastern Organized Crime

Following the tragic events of 9/11, the U.S. federal government began to investigate the prospect of Middle Eastern crime groups operating within the U.S., that have no tie to terrorism. Shortly into their investigations, federal law enforcement officials discovered that these organizations do exist and have been operating with the same goals as traditional organized crime since the 1970's (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008). Like all criminal organizations their bases of operations has been isolated to store fronts, within Middle Eastern communities.

In the mid 1990s, the United States declared Oded Tuito as the first Israeli narcotics kingpin that posed a threat to national security. For half a decade he headed massive ecstasy operations, exporting millions of pills into the U.S. from France, Germany and Belgium, which were mainly sold along the eastern seaboard from California to Miami (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). In 2001, 11 of Tuito's associates were

arrested in Los Angeles, CA where they along with Tuito were indicted for pumping 100,000 pills of ecstasy, a month, into the L.A. community (2005).

Today a number of Middle Eastern criminal enterprises operate within the United States. In addition to Israeli's federal law enforcement officials have identified criminals from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008). They have said to be involved in a number of financial fraudulent schemes and the more traditional organized crime activities such as money laundering and drug trafficking (2008).

Latin Organized Crime (Mexicans, Colombians, and Dominicans)

The environment of the Mexican border has provided Latin criminal organizations with the opportunity to control the illegal drug market. Utilizing the same pipelines to smuggle illegal immigrants, Latin O.C. has trafficked countless amounts of cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy, methamphetamines, anabolic steroids and heroin into the U.S. (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). The most prominent Latin criminal organizations operating within the United States today are the Mexican, Colombian, and Dominican Drug Cartels (Abadinsky, 2003).

Colombian cartels, for nearly a decade (1980s-1990s), ruthlessly operated on both sides of the U.S. – Mexican border. Notoriously known for their involvement in the trafficking of cocaine, the Medellin and Cali cartel settled territorial disputes in both the streets of Mexico and the U.S., leading to mass casualties and countless innocent victims. The most infamous Colombian drug lord, Pablo Escobar (founder of the

Medellin Cartel), handled his business very much like the Sicilian Mafia in the early 1900s, where anyone who even attempted to destroy his organization (including police and members of the judiciary) would be assassinated without question (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

On December 2, 1993 the reign of Pablo Escobar came to an end, when he was shot down by Colombian drug agents as he attempted to evade capture. In 1997, Escobar's rivals the Orejuela brothers, founders of the Cali Cartel, were also brought down after being convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison for drug trafficking (Abadinsky, 2003). Since then, the shipment of cocaine into the U.S. has changed in nature.

Colombia remains to be the source of 90 percent of the cocaine and half of the heroin smuggled into the U.S. (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005). Up and coming cartels such as the Norte del Valle Cartel (NVC), have begun using alternative methods of smuggling cocaine into America. While traditional cartels employed Mexican "drug-runners" to cross their drugs over the U.S. border, the NVC are choosing to use a more unconventional method of small civilian aircrafts and "go-fast" boats to secure the delivery of their shipment (Abadinsky, 2003). In 2004, the NVC was reported to having smuggled 1.2 million pounds of cocaine into the U.S. since its creation in 1990 (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2004). Accompanying these operations have been activities of kidnapping, murders and brutality.

The destruction of Colombia's two major drug cartels has spawned a creature of greater evil, Mexican Organized Crime. Their merciless tactics for controlling the

gateway into the U.S. has made Mexican criminal organizations the primordial ooze that has crawled out from under Colombian trafficking organizations. Using their drug running for Escobar and Orejuela as a springboard, criminals in the Mexican underworld have evolved into a ruthless criminal organization (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

By utilizing former members of the Mexican armed forces, Osiel Cardenas the, Mexican equivalent to Pablo Escobar, is able to control Mexico's most notorious criminal organization, Las Zetas, from behind bars. Responsible for the protection of Cardenas' territory, Las Zetas are employed to annihilate anyone who gets in the way of his operations. These conditions have resulted in the murder of many innocent victims along the U.S. and Mexican border, including journalists, policemen, federal agents, and a mayor and his two sons (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

In 2004, federal law enforcement officials in the U.S witnessed the emergence of another Mexican criminal organization, the Mara Salvatrucha or MS-13. A report released by the FBI in 2008 indicated the membership of MS-13 to consist of anywhere between 6,000-10,000 members, who are operating within at least 42 states in the U.S. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2006). Their expansion into the U.S. and similar aggressive nature of Las Zetas has made them one of the most feared criminal organizations operating in America today. They are involved in exceedingly violent crimes such as murder, rape, home invasions, robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, auto theft/carjacking, immigration offenses, and drug distribution.

Since the Norte del Valle Cartel takeover of the cocaine business in Colombia, Mexican drug runners have been replaced with Dominican couriers. The prime location

of the Dominican Republic as a “command-and-control center” for drug smuggling, has allowed Dominican criminals to permeate into the realm of Organized Crime (Abadinsky, 2003). In addition to the services they provide for Colombian Cartels, Dominican organizations have been involved in the movement and distribution of heroin and ecstasy. Like their Mexican and Colombian counterparts, Dominican organized crime is structured based on relational and marital ties (Nicaso & Lamothe, 2005).

Combating Organized Crime: Combative Tactics

The sophisticated and violent operations of today’s criminal organizations are levels of organized crime which federal law enforcement officials in the U.S. are being challenged to combat in more innovative ways than before. With the majority of these organizations being foreign based, federal agents are running into barriers that were never once an issue when fighting homegrown organized crime, such as La Cosa Nostra. Obstacles such as language barriers, technology proficiency, and overseas jurisdictional compliance, are forcing federal law enforcement to collaborate with a number of overseas task forces.

The FBI, for example, has joined forces with a number of international working groups to combat organizations such as the Eurasians, Asians, and Nigerians, all of whom seem to pose a significant threat nationally but whose base of operations seem to be in their home countries overseas (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). From an intelligence perspective, teaming up with oversea affiliates has allowed for a better understanding of how these organizations operate from ground zero. The assessment in this thesis, will take a closer look at combative tactics being used specifically in the U.S.

Defining and Assessing the Threat of Organized Crime

Before a formal assessment of organized crime can be made, a clear definition of the term must be established. There have been multiple attempts by researchers to come to an agreement on a general definition in hopes that the phenomenon of organized crime can finally be explained (Albanese, 2007; Albanese, 2008; Finckenauer, 2005; Hagan, 1983; Hagan, 2006). Furthermore, not only will a general definition provide for a better understanding, it will also provide for a more sound and thorough assessment of organized crime and the possible threat it poses to the U.S.

By assessing how other researchers have defined organized crime and identifying the commonalities in their definitions a consensus can be reached on the elements that make up organized crime; fortunately, that research has already been done. In order to find those common characteristics, researchers conducted a comparative analysis of definitions listed within American criminology, criminal justice, and organized crime textbooks (Albanese, 2007; Hagan, 2006).

Both Albanese (2007) and Hagan (2006) found that among the many traits used to describe O.C., five characteristics existed that appear to be typical when defining organized crime: use of force/violence or threats, monopolistic through crime, corruption of public officials for immunity, focus on illicit markets, and a continuing criminal structure. According to Albanese (2008, p. 263), the term organized crime can commonly be defined as:

a continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit from illicit activities that are often in great public demand, its continuing existence is

maintained through the use of force, threats, monopoly control and/or the corruption of public officials.

In addition to the five most common traits used to define organized crime, Finckenauer (2005) emphasizes the need to consider characteristics such as: criminal sophistication, self-identification, and authority of reputation. While the traits found in both Hagan and Albanese's study fit more of a traditional definition of organized crime, the characteristics focused on by Finckenauer are more suitable for more modern day organized crime, such as the Eurasian or Nigerian O.C. Finckenauer also suggests that there are distinctions between certain concepts that need to be made before attempting to generally define organized crime; such as the difference between criminal organizations and other criminal groups, and the distinction between organized crime and crimes that are organized (2005).

While practitioners are required to investigate under a definition that focuses on the activities rather than the group, researchers suggest that the "phenomenon" of organized crime can be best measured by addressing the group dynamic instead (Finckenauer, 2005; Hagan, 2006). With that notion in mind, the term organized crime, in this study will be defined by using a combination of both legal and academic elements that have been recognized as essential traits of O.C.

Attempting to assess the scope of organized crime and its severity does not come easy. The complex and serious nature of this phenomenon is in itself a barrier to measuring the overall threat of its repercussions. Unlike other types of crimes (e.g., murder, robbery, assault), organized crime cannot be measured by its propensity to repeat itself in a victimization or crime report. The wide ranges of activities which organized

crime are involved are quite intricate, and in more than one instance, consist of multiple infractions in one scheme, making crime counting virtually impossible.

The complexities of defining organized crime and finding data to measure it by seem to be the two biggest issues amongst researchers when assessing the threat of O.C. (Albanese, 2008; Van Dijk, 2007; Vander Beken, 2004). If an adequate definition of organized crime is not used, a researcher runs the risk of measuring groups who may not qualify as a criminal organization, ultimately misinterpreting the dynamics and interrelations of an actual organized crime group (Vander Beken, 2004). Additionally, any data used to measure organized crime, whether empirical or qualitative, faces the issue of being both reliable and valid; inevitably empirical studies will also face issues of intricacy (Van Dijk, 2007).

Finally, and most important to this study, are the difficulties associated with choosing to measure the scope of O.C. by criminal organizations versus criminal activity (Albanese, 2008). As we now know, it is a common characteristic among organized crime groups to recruit their members from the same ethnical background, this factor alone can result in the measurement of a crime perpetrated by a group of immigrants who fit the ethnical background of an O.C. syndicate, but are in fact not a criminal organization. On the other hand, it is quite difficult to empirically measure O.C. based on their criminal activities do to the complex nature of a single scam. All three of these complications, defining O.C., the data used for measurement, and measuring groups versus activities are all important factors when compiling a method to assess the occurrence of O.C.

Suggested Methods used to Assess Organized Crime

To better illustrate the complexities of measuring organized crime, two studies, one employing a statistical assessment (Van Dijk, 2007) and the other utilizing a highly qualitative risk-based assessment (Vander Beken, 2004), will be examined. In addition to these studies, a third article will be reviewed that suggests a market and product-based model, which will essentially be used as the method of measurement in this thesis.

In 2007, Van Dijk proposed a statistical assessment of the effect of organized crime, rule of law, and corruption on national wealth. Drawing from sources such as official crime statistics, the assessment of investment risks in 150 countries, and a series of annual surveys conducted among CEOs of larger companies, data was collected on five different indicators of O.C. in order to create a Composite Organized Crime Index (COCI). These five indicators: perceived prevalence of organized crime, unsolved homicides, grand corruption, money-laundering, and the extent of the black economy were ranked among 17 different regions world-wide.

The rank of each variable was averaged within every region, which quantified the extent of a criminal organizations detriment on that regions wealth. This study concluded that there was a high level of consistency between the 17 regions measured with the exception of Central America, which showed a high level of activity in money laundering. Also within this study Van Dijk concluded that while a cost-benefit ratio does exist within certain regions, the corruption factor alone proves to be much more detrimental (Van Dijk, 2007). While this study was able to quantify the affects of organized crime on a society, some speculation could be casted on the variables that

cannot solely be contributable to organized crime, such as the number of unsolved homicides per region.

Capitalizing on the fact that measuring organized crime will always rely on certain resource limitations and imperfect information, Vander Beken (2004) proposed a more qualitative, risk-based model, to assess the overall threat of O.C. After evaluating the methodological flaws in two previous assessments of O.C. in Belgium, Vander Beken created a three pronged model that focuses on qualitative measures of organized crime, such as the dynamics and environment of criminal markets exclusive to O.C. Vander Beken believed, that by examining the environment of these exclusive criminal markets in addition to the criminal organizations that participate in them, a better understanding could be reached of the susceptibility to organized crime. While Van Dijk similarly focused on the environment of money laundering and corruption, her analysis was highly statistical; in comparison to Vander Beken whose research is purely qualitative (Vander Beken, 2004).

The proposed methodology in Vander Beken's study consisted of three parts: an analysis of organizations and counter strategies, environmental scanning, and an analysis of licit and illicit sectors. Since this study was conducted to improve the techniques used in previous assessments, Vander Beken is only able to conclude on the benefits of utilizing his proposed model in comparison to others. Vander Beken concludes that by identifying the illicit markets that are more susceptible to organized crime activity, further examining the strengths and weaknesses of that sectors environment, and intently analyzing the organizations that operate within them, a better understanding can be

reached of the organized crime and the possible threat they pose within a certain region. If this model was utilized correctly a conclusion can be reached as to whether or not a licit or illicit sector could fall victim to organized crime based on its environments vulnerability (Vander Beken, 2004).

These two studies illustrate the differences the differences found in utilizing a qualitative method in comparison to a quantitative one. While employing a more empirical method may yield in significant numerical data, its validity will always remain in question, simply because the criminal activities explicit to organized crime cannot be individually counted. On the other hand, utilizing a highly qualitative method such as Vander Beken's could result in a misinterpretation of results, due to the complexities of finding a consensus on the indicators that would make a environment "vulnerable." The next article being reviewed, which also looks at illicit sectors within the realm of organized crime, avoids the matter of misinterpretation by using previously delineated markets infiltrated by criminal organizations.

For years, researchers and practitioners have been attempting to measure organized crime by assessing the criminal organizations that are prone to their area. While these studies may add to the knowledge on the dynamics of certain organizations, they fail to recognize that organized crime is merely the independent variable that their activities solely depend on, resulting in the change of location and product to go unseen. Regardless of the criminal organization involved in the illicit activities, it is the activities themselves that have caused the most harm to society. According to Albanese (2008), by measuring the phenomenon backwards and focusing on criminal markets, the proper

assessment could not only reveal the criminal organizations involved with them but also the combative tactics needed to battle their efforts.

Unlike Vander Beken (2004), the illicit activities that Albanese suggests are those that have previously been defined by federal law enforcement officials within the U.S. (2008). These activities can be categorized into three different markets: provision of illicit services, provision of illicit goods, and infiltration of legitimate businesses (Albanese, 2007). While these activities have evolved over time as organized crime has transitioned from traditional to more modern syndicates, these markets still consist of the activities most commonly linked to O.C. such as gambling (illicit services), drug trafficking (illicit goods), and money laundering (infiltration of legitimate businesses) (Albanese, 2007).

As an enterprise, the survival of criminal organizations heavily relies on the revenue made from their participation in illicit activities. Also like any enterprise, there are factors that ultimately affect that profit and should be taken into extreme consideration when measuring the overall effect of organized crime on the public. Albanese (2008) has identified these factors (supply, demand, competition, and regulation) and has specified ten “indicators” associated with them that will lead to a more sound measurement of O.C. (Albanese, 2008).

Among these four factors, supply (source of goods), demand (need of good/service), competition (other criminal organizations), and regulation (law and order), are ten variables that heavily influence the overall success of organized crime. These variables include supply indicators ([a.] availability of product or service, [b.] ease of

movement or sale), demand indicators ([c.] current customer demand, [d.] nature of demand (ability to adapt)), regulation indicators ([e.] ease of entry into the market by regulation and skill, [f.] law enforcement capability and competence, [g.] level of local government corruption), and competition indicators ([h.] history of O.C. in market, [i.] profitability, [j.] harm). By conducting a more local assessment of the four contributing factors to organized crime, Albanese believes that a more efficient measurement can be made (2008).

The premise of this thesis is based on Albanese's (2008) suggestions of conducting a more thorough assessment on a regional level. Until now, assessing organized crime within America has been an illusion, while previous assessments have focused solely on criminal organizations and organized crime at the international level (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008; Van Dijk, 2005; Vander Beken 2005; Von Laumpe, 2007). This thesis proposes an assessment on a regional basis across America, by focusing on illicit activities perpetrated by organized crime. By exploring the notion of creating a formal assessment, that can be given across federal agencies, this study aims to isolate criminal markets and the criminal organizations that are involved in them per region, in addition to identifying the combative tactics being used to combat their criminal efforts.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

The premise of this thesis is based on the assumption that organized crime should be measured by criminal activity rather than criminal organizations and on a regional basis as opposed to a global one. While global assessments have been useful in drawing attention to the problem, they have been unable to provide the precise information (e.g., which activity occurs where) needed for local law enforcement to combat the efforts of O.C. (Albanese, 2008). This thesis is exploratory and qualitative in nature, through conducting a series of semi-structured interviews with ten federal informants, this paper attempts to examine O.C. as a threat to national security within the U.S.

In addition, it is important to understand the need for researchers and practitioners to operate on the same level. By conducting a thorough analysis of a social phenomenon, researchers are able to identify contributing factors that could possibly be affected by implementing certain policies (Copes, Vieraitis, & Jochum, 2007). Researchers and law enforcement officials being unable to reach a consensus on the best method of measurement when assessing threats to the United States, only hinders the advancement in both the field of academia and law enforcement. For this reason, the method used in this thesis was based on academic standards but formatted for the use of practitioners.

Influence was drawn from both previous studies on organized crime and information provided to the public on O.C. by federal law enforcement officials.

Although there have been numerous studies assessing the threat of organized crime in other nations and regions, such as Germany, Europe, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Canada, there has yet to be a local assessment conducted of Organized Crime within the United States (Europol, 2008; Klerks, 2007; Royal Mounted Canadian Police, 2006; Vander Beken, 2004; Von Laumpe, 2005). By tailoring the format used in the 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment (U.S. Department of Justice & NAGIA, 2005) to fit the parameters of organized crime, based on the variables indicated by Albanese and the activities and organizations delineated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008), this thesis aims to examine the local threat of organized crime in the U.S.

Research Questions

Criminal activities linked to organized crime are becoming more sophisticated, more extravagant, and are growing in a merciless nature. From the crossover into the smuggling and trafficking of synthetic drugs, from heroin and cocaine, to the more evolved form of the extortion of local businesses to world-wide fraudulent schemes, O.C. in the U.S. has resulted in the loss of billions of dollars and countless lives (Albanese, 2008; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). Although there have been numerous reports by both the media and federal agencies that shed light on the growing problem of organized crime, the matter of whether or not this phenomenon is a threat to national security within the U.S. remains unanswered, this thesis aims to examine that possibility by answering the following questions:

Research Question 1: Is there a perception of organized crime as a threat to national security within the U.S. among federal agents?

Research Question 2: What illicit activities, specifically tied to organized crime, are perceived among federal agents as threats to U.S. national security?

Research Question 3: What criminal organizations are perceived by federal agents to be involved in the activities that pose threats to U.S. national security?

Research Question 4: What tactics are being used by federal law enforcement officials to combat the illicit activities of organized crime in the U.S.?

Research Question 5: What is the perceived capability of federal law enforcement officials to combat organized crime in the U.S.?

Operational Definitions of Concepts

Organized Crime

For this study, a definition of organized crime will be used that utilizes the variables necessary for a crime group to be considered a criminal organization as provided in Albanese (2007, 2008), and the criminal activities in which they must be involved to be “organized crime” as listed by the U.S. Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Acts of 1968. Organized Crime, as it pertains to this study is defined as:

A continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit from illicit activities, its continuing existence is maintained through the use of force, the corruption of political officials, threats, and the infiltration of legitimate and illegitimate businesses and monopoly control. The illicit activities which these criminal enterprises are engaged in are subject but not limited to the supplying of illegal goods and services, such as gambling, prostitution, loan sharking, narcotics, labor racketeering, etc. (Albanese, 2007; Albanese 2008; the U.S. Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Acts of 1968).

By employing this definition, a better understanding can be attained, as to which illicit activities were chosen to be measured as “organized crime,” and why certain criminal organizations were chosen versus other crime groups as possible factors in posing a threat to the national security of the U.S.

Threats to National Security

Without understanding which criminal activities may qualify as a threat to national security, an assumption cannot be made that the activities in which organized crime are involved in even fall within that parameter. In order to establish which activities, if any, can be classified as a national threat, common threat categories must be found among those agencies which are responsible for combating the occurrence of organized crime: FBI, DOJ, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Alcohol Tobacco and Firearm Agency (ATF), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In order to find these commonalities, a content analysis was conducted of each agency’s website to determine what these investigative arms classify as a national threat.

By utilizing the National Threat List, established by the FBI, a template was created to determine what illicit activities are generally considered a threat to national security among federal agencies within the U.S. This National Threat List indicates eight categories that should be considered as a threat to national security: terrorism, espionage, proliferation in trafficking, economic espionage, targeting the national information infrastructure, targeting the U.S. government, perception management, and foreign intelligence activities (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008).

A content analysis of the remaining federal agencies websites (DEA, ATF, DOJ, and DHS) indicate that only five out of these eight categories can commonly be seen as posing an overall threat to U.S. national security. As illustrated in Table 1, only activities that are perpetrated under the categories of terrorism, economic espionage, proliferation in trafficking, targeting the national information infrastructure, and targeting the U.S. government can be seen as posing a significant threat to the nation's security.

Table 1: National Threat Commonalities among Federal Agencies that Combat O.C.

	Targeting the National Information Infrastructure	Economic Espionage	Proliferation in Trafficking	Terrorism	Targeting the U.S. Government
FBI	X	X	X	X	X
DEA		X	X		
ATF			X		
DOJ	X		X	X	X
DHS	X	X		X	X

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008; Drug Enforcement Agency, 2008; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm Agency, 2008; Department of Justice, 2008; and the Department of Homeland Security, 2008)

Since the NTL was used as the basis for this analysis, the definitions provided by the FBI to illustrate the type of activities that are included within these five categories will be

reiterated within this study as the operational definitions of these threats. The FBI defines these five categories as follows:

1.) Terrorism - Foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated activities that involve:

- Violent acts, dangerous to human life, that are in violation of any federal or state law within the U.S.;
- Acts which appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
- Acts which influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion;
- Acts which influence the policy or government by intimidation or coercion through assassination or kidnapping that occur outside of the U.S. or transcend national boundaries or locale in which their perpetrators operate to seek asylum.

2.) Proliferation – Foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments or persons, which involves:

- The proliferation of trafficking or creating weapons of mass destruction to include chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, and delivery systems of those weapons of mass destruction;
- The proliferation of trafficking or creating advanced conventional weapons;
- The proliferation of trafficking illicit drugs or;
- The proliferation of human trafficking.

3.) Economic Espionage – Foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons which involve:

- The unlawful or clandestine targeting or acquisition of sensitive financial, trade or economic policy information, propriety economic information, or critical technologies; or
- The unlawful or clandestine targeting of influencing sensitive economic policy decisions.

4.) Targeting the National Information Infrastructure – Foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons which involves the targeting of facilities, personnel, information, or computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications systems which are associated with the National Information Infrastructure. Proscribed Intelligence activities include:

- Denial or disruption of computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications services;
- Unauthorized monitoring of computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications systems;
- Unauthorized disclosure proprietary or classified information stored within or communicated through computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications systems;
- Unauthorized modification or destruction of computer programming codes, computer network databases, stored information or computer capabilities; or
- Manipulation of computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications services resulting in fraud, financial loss, or other federal criminal activities.

5.) Targeting the U.S. Government – Foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves the targeting of

government programs, information, or facilities or the targeting of personnel of the:

- U.S. intelligence community
- U.S. foreign affairs, or economic affairs community; or
- U.S. defense establishment and related activities of national preparedness

(National Threat List, Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008).

Based on the definition used to define organized crime within this thesis, we can see that the activities in which criminal organizations are involved fall under four out five of these categories: economic espionage (e.g., money laundering, extortion), proliferation of trafficking (e.g., humans, firearms, drugs), targeting the U.S. government (e.g., corruption of political officials) and targeting the national information infrastructure (e.g., cyber extortion, fraudulent schemes involving ID Fraud, counterfeiting of legal documents). Although there have been implications of organized crime syndicates being linked to terrorist activity, this evidence remains to be officially released by federal law enforcement officials, and therefore cannot be assumed without proper confirmation (Sanderson, 2004). Furthermore, while ties have been made between political officials and organized crime, the sensitive and complex nature of researching such an issue on behalf of both the researcher and the federal agency makes it a sticky one, and therefore will be avoided for the purpose of this study. However, the assumption that organized crime falls under the threat category of targeting the U.S. government, should not go unnoticed, and the need to research the issue further should be addressed.

While the issues of terrorism and targeting the U.S. government are ones that warrant individual analysis, the remaining threat categories, which are illustrated more clearly in Fig. 2, seem to be all encompassing of the activities tied to criminal organizations and therefore will be the categories of reference in this study when discussing national threats to security posed by organized crime.

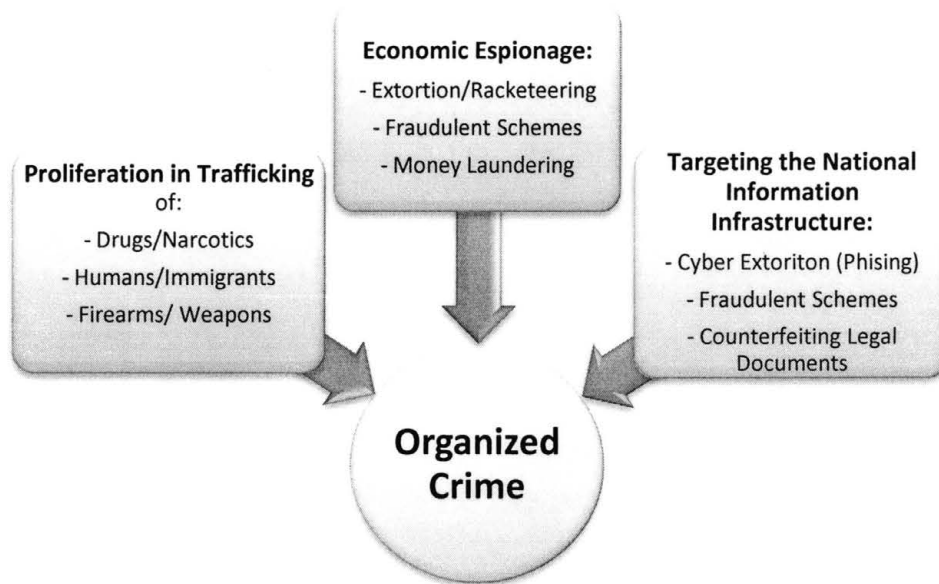


Figure 2: National Threat Categories as they pertain to Organized Crime

Operationalization

The coding method used in the operationalization of variables as they pertain to the research questions at hand are as follows¹:

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Question pertaining to belief of threat (#18)

- *Yes* – implication of O.C. as threat to the national security of the U.S.

¹ Refer to Appendix A.

- *No* – implication that O.C. is not a threat to the national security of the U.S.

Activities as Threats to National Security: Questions pertaining to illicit activity perpetrated by O.C. (#'s 1, 2, 4, and 5)

- *Economic Espionage* – indicated involvement of O.C. in activities such as, money laundering, identity theft, healthcare fraud, insurance fraud, credit card fraud, real-estate fraud, and cyber (phishing) and non-cyber extortion.
- *Proliferation in Trafficking* – indicated involvement of O.C. in the illicit trafficking of drugs/narcotics, firearms/weapons, humans/immigrants, human organs, and endangered species.
- *Targeting the National Information Infrastructure* – indicated involvement of O.C. in illicit activities involving the manipulation of the nation's information infrastructure such as cyber extortion (phishing), counterfeiting of legal documents, and fraudulent schemes that are perpetrated by targeting computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications systems.

Existing Criminal Organizations: Questions pertaining to criminal organizations (#'s 6-15)

- *Russian/Eurasian Criminal Organizations*
- *Asian Criminal Organizations*
- *Italian Criminal Organizations*
- *African/Nigerian Criminal Organizations*
- *Middle Eastern Criminal Organizations*

- *Latin Criminal Organizations* – Mexican, Dominican, and Colombian Drug Cartels

Tactics & Capability of L.E. Questions pertaining to combative efforts (#'s 3, 16, and 17)

Tactics

- *Proactive Measures* – which includes thorough investigation and intelligence collection
- *Targeting* – which includes the targeting of “made” groups within a specific region, trails of activities, and geographic areas of high activity, specifically through the collaboration of local, state, and federal law enforcement.

Capability

- *Decreased Significantly* – implications that O.C. activity has significantly decreased within the past 5 years within that region
- *Decreased Slightly* – implications that O.C. activity has slightly decreased within the past 5 years within that region
- *No Change* – implications that O.C. activity has not changed within the past 5 years within that region
- *Increased Slightly* – implications that O.C. activity has slightly increased within the past 5 years within that region
- *Increased Significantly* – implications that O.C. activity has significantly increased within the past 5 years within that region.

Selection of Subjects

Although it would be ideal to measure a phenomenon, such as organized crime, by using statistical data, it is highly improbable. As previously indicated, the activities linked to organized crime cannot be measured by merely counting crimes. It is, therefore, treated as a social behavior that relies on sensitizing concepts (Hagan, 2007). The need to gain insight into this particular area of behavior requires specific information from those who are present in circumstances relevant to the social process being studied (Mary & Pope, 1995). For this reason, a non-probabilistic method of sampling was chosen to conduct this study. Federal informants were chosen based on their relations to combating and investigating organized crime.

In total, there were ten informants interviewed for the purpose of this study. All were chosen based on their assignment to the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, OCDETF agents are currently the leading investigative force against organized crime within United States and, therefore, are able to provide the best insights into this social phenomenon. Included in these ten informants were six prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office and four federal agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, all of whom have been assigned to OCDETF.

Since this thesis involves a regional assessment, a criterion of location within the U.S. was also used to select informants. The regions used in this paper were delineated by the Census Bureau of the United States and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008). Per region, informants were interviewed in the Southern states of Florida, Texas, and

Maryland, in the Western states of California, Colorado, and Oregon, in the Midwestern states of Illinois and Michigan, and the Northeastern states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Data Collection

In 2005, the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Association (NAGIA), funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ) released a report entitled, *National Gang Threat Assessment*. In partnership with the FBI, the National Drug Intelligence Center, and ATF, NAGIA collected specific information about the illicit activities perpetrated by gangs (street, motorcycle, and prison) across America. This assessment was conducted on a regional basis across local, state, and federal agencies. In total 431 agencies participated in a survey on the different kinds of criminal activities occurring within their region. In addition to supplying this information, agencies were also asked to provide the name of the gangs most prevalent in their area, so a connection could be made between the activities being perpetrated and the gangs that are committing them (U.S. Department of Justice & NAGIA, 2005).

The purpose of this thesis is to recreate this assessment. By tailoring the survey used in the 2005 gang assessment to fit the contributing factors (supply, demand, regulation, and competition) and illicit activities of organized crime, a regional threat assessment of this social phenomenon was explored (Albanese, 2008). However, due to the sensitivity and dangerous nature of releasing information on criminal organizations, a complication arose in the matter of distributing this instrument across a national level without support from the proper authorities (DOJ, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the

National Institute for Justice). For that reason, ten OCDETF informants were chosen at the federal level, to illustrate the potential of the threat assessment used in this study, among law enforcement officials from the highest levels.

The semi-structured interview consisted of 18 questions which focused on the illicit activities perpetrated by organized crime, criminal organizations pertinent to the region, and the current combative tactics being used within the area. The impact, extent, and emergence of the following criminal activities were examined: drug trafficking, prostitution, human trafficking, firearms trafficking, and money laundering, fraudulent schemes (ID, credit card, insurance, and computer fraud), and cyber extortion (illegal use or access of information systems and passwords). The level of activity and amount of infiltration into the community (businesses, services and goods) were asked about the following organizations: Russian/Eurasian O.C., Italian O.C., Asian O.C., African/Nigerian O.C., Middle Eastern O.C., and Latin O.C. (Mexican, Colombian, and Dominican).

In addition to these three areas of focus, supplemental questions were asked about organized crime's link to terrorism and the overall contribution of immigrants to the activity of O.C. in the U.S. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to an hour and a half, and was conducted by phone. The interviewees were assured complete anonymity and have agreed to be identified by the region they serve, the state in which they work, and their agency.

Data Analysis

The best method for analyzing interview data, whether the approach is conventional, directed, or summative, is a content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Since a framework for conducting a more sound measurement of organized crime has previously been suggested (Albanese, 2008), a directed content analysis approach was used in this thesis. A direct approach to content analysis can be best described by the immediate coding of an interview based on predetermined codes. Data without pre-existing coding are analyzed at a later time to establish new categories or subcategories of existing codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The predetermined codes which have been established by both Albanese (2008) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008) can be categorized into two parts: Activities as Threats to National Security and Existing Criminal Organizations. The remainder of the data has been categorized as: Tactics and Capability of Law Enforcement and the Belief of Threat to the U.S. by Informants. These four categories both pre-coded and coded which were determined by key words and phrases found within each interview, provide for a better evaluation as to whether or not organized crime is a threat to national security within the U.S.

Assumptions & Limitations of Study

Based on the responses given within each semi-structured interview and the four categories used to code them, this thesis attempts to make three regional and one national assumption pertaining to organized crime within the U.S. On a regional basis, this paper assesses the highest level of activity perpetrated by organized crime, a concentration of

criminal organizations within the area, and the tactics being used to combat them. On a national level, this thesis attempts to answer the question of whether or not the phenomenon of organized crime fits within the parameter of a security threat.

One major limitation of this study is that this assessment would be better served as a survey throughout the nation and given across all levels of law enforcement (local, state, and federal). However, due to the sensitive nature of investigating organized crime, this assessment could never be distributed to such an extent without support from the proper authorities (BJA, DOJ, NIJ). Unfortunately, it takes the approval of a federal funding agency to raise the participation rate of law enforcement agents. This issue not only affects the capabilities of distribution, but the response rate of agents as well. Although numerous informants were contacted, many of them refused to participate in the study due to the serious nature of reporting facts pertaining to organized crime. In addition to distribution and response issues, this study faced general limitations, such as time and funding.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Across all interviews, one thing was made abundantly clear; there are three specific types of activities which can be marked as “tools of the trade”: drugs, firearms, and money laundering. The participation of criminal organizations in the trafficking of drugs and firearms and their infiltration into legitimate businesses for the purpose of money laundering is high within every region. The geographical scope of the trafficking of weapons and drugs breaches regional boundaries and can be found throughout the nation.

Since these activities fall under two of the national threat categories (Proliferation in Trafficking and Economic Espionage), they should not only be seen as side effects of the phenomenon but as a significant threat that is posed to the U.S. by organized crime. Due to these three activities being implicated by every informant as a high interest activity, every fourth or emerging illicit activity was rated as being specific to that region. A second general observation among interviewees was that Latin Criminal Organizations were indicated as being present in 9 out of the 10 states in which the informants were interviewed. Latin Criminal Organizations are seen to have essentially taken over organized crime. The findings of each interview and how they fall within the four-coded categories of the content analysis can be seen below in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Interview Findings by Coded Categories

Region/State	Perception of Threat by Informants	Activities as National Threats to Security	Existing Criminal Organizations	Tactics/Capability of Law Enforcement
<u>Southern Region</u>				
Maryland	Yes	Human Trafficking & Cyber Crime	Latin O.C.	Pro-Active Measures & Decreased Slightly
Texas	Yes	ID Theft	Latin O.C.	Pro-Active Measures & No Change
Florida	Yes	Fraudulent Schemes	Eurasian O.C.	Pro-Active Measures & No Change
<u>Western Region</u>				
California	Yes	Human & Drug Trafficking	Asian O.C.	Targeting & Slightly Increased
Denver	Yes	<i>ID Theft & Counterfeiting</i>	Eurasian O.C.	Pro-Active Measures & Slightly Increased
Oregon	No	Cyber Crime	Asian O.C.	Targeting & No Change
<u>Midwestern Region</u>				
Illinois	Yes	Fraudulent Schemes	Latin O.C.	Targeting & Slightly Increased
Michigan	Yes	Fraudulent Schemes	Italian O.C.	Pro-Active Measures & No Change
<u>Northeastern Region</u>				
New Jersey	Yes	Fraudulent Schemes	Eurasians	Pro-Active Measures & Increased Slightly
Pennsylvania	Yes	ID Fraud & Cyber Crime	Eurasians	Pro-Active Measures & No Change

(For a more in-depth look at these interviews see Appendix B).

Interview Results

Due to this assessment being conducted on a regional basis, the regions previously indicated by the U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Bureau of Investigations (South, West, Midwest, and Northeast) will serve as an outline for the content analysis.

Southern Region: Florida, Maryland, and Texas

In the Southern region, organized crime groups are involved in a wide range of activities, which fall under all three threat categories. However more recently, states within the south are seeing high activity in both the proliferation of drugs, guns, and humans, and an emergence in fraudulent schemes, such as ID, mortgage and healthcare fraud. All of these activities have been defined as falling under the threat of Economic Espionage and the Proliferation in Trafficking. The criminal organizations more associated with the southern region are Latin Criminal Organizations, which can be explained by the region's proximity to the Mexican border. Currently, law enforcement officials are relying on pro-active measures to combat organized crime within the region. However, they have yet to see any change in the level of activity perpetrated by organized crime, and they consider the phenomenon to be a significant threat to their area and the nation.

Western Region: California, Colorado, Oregon

In the Western region, organized crime groups are involved in a number of activities that are included under all three threat categories. In addition to the inordinate amount of weapons, guns, and trafficked immigrants within the region, the emergence of such illicit activities as fraudulent schemes (healthcare, mortgage, and ID Fraud) and

cyber extortion (phishing) has made the western region susceptible to all three threat categories: Economic Espionage, Targeting the National Information Infrastructure, and Proliferation of Trafficking. The criminal organizations more prevalent within the western area are Asian Criminal Organizations, which would explain the sophistication of the illegal activities being perpetrated. Unfortunately, the combative strategy of targeting “made” organizations within this area has led to no improvement in the level of activity perpetrated by O.C. and has resulted in a slight increase in activity across the western region. Informants within this area also indicated that organized crime, especially organizations with international ties; pose a definite danger to the overall security of the U.S.

Midwestern Region: Illinois and Michigan

In the Midwestern region, organized crime has seen an influx of illicit activities linked to the threat of economic espionage. Fraudulent schemes being perpetrated by O.C. within the Midwestern region include credit card, healthcare, ID, insurance, and fuel fraud. More common among this region are Italian and Latin Criminal Organizations which have been speculated to be in collaboration with more sophisticated organizations, such as the Eurasian and Asian crime syndicates. The combative tactics being used to address organized crime within the Midwest have been both pro-active measures and the targeting of specific groups and activities. However these tactics have yet to yield any change within the activity perpetrated by the organized crime within that region, and according to both informants should be considered a national threat.

Northeastern Region: New Jersey and Pennsylvania

In the Northeastern region, law enforcement officials have also seen an influx in activities linked to the threat of economic espionage, such as healthcare fraud, fuels scams, and insurance fraud. More recently, the Northeastern region has also seen an emergence of cyber extortion (phishing), making the region vulnerable to both threats of Economic Espionage and Targeting the National Information Infrastructure. While there has been speculation as to whether or not organized crime has increased or stayed stagnant within the Northeast, it seems as if pro-active measures alone are not changing the activities being perpetrated by O.C. within that region. According to both informants, organized crime should absolutely be considered a threat to national security, especially organizations that are operating from an international base, such as the Russians/Eurasians and the Nigerians.

Summary of Results and Findings

Currently, Organized Crime in the U.S. fits within three out of the five national threat categories that federal agencies have commonly agreed upon (DEA, ATF, FBI, DOJ, and DHS). These three national threat categories are Proliferation in Trafficking, Economic Espionage, and Targeting the National Information Infrastructure (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). By being involved in such illicit activities as cyber extortion in the Midwest, fraudulent schemes (ID, healthcare, insurance, and fuel fraud) in the West and Northeast and the trafficking of drugs, firearms, and humans in the South, criminal organizations have been indicated as posing a significant threat to national security.

In addition, the combative tactics currently being used to address this occurrence have had little if any effect within the past five years on the activities linked to organized crime throughout the U.S. While Latin Criminal Organizations have infiltrated America, specific organizations have been identified as belonging to specific regions. As expected, Latin crime syndicates have been recognized as being the predominant organizations in the South, while Asian criminal organizations have taken control of the Western region. In the Midwest, Italian and Latin organized crime has become more cooperative with their Russian/Eurasian competitors in the Northeast. While African/Nigerian and Middle Eastern O.C. was not indicated as a primary organization in any region, it has been identified as ranking within the top three in the South and Midwest.

Although the number of agents who were interviewed was small, the scope of the assessment, which focused on such suggested variables as the supply, demand, regulation, and competition of Organized Crime, has provided a glance into the capabilities of the assessment created in this study. The overall goal of this thesis was to explore the opportunities of a formal national organized crime threat assessment, which contained previously defined concepts and definitions by both practitioners and researchers. If supported by a federal funding agency and distributed across local, state, and federal levels, this assessment could potentially provide as much information as the 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment, which would allow for a more precise conclusion to be drawn on the activity level and criminal organization per region, along with a more concise measurement of the combative tactics currently being utilized across the nation.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Based on the findings and results of this study, it appears that federal agents across America have a perceived notion that organized crime poses a threat to national security. With criminal organizations becoming highly involved in fraudulent schemes (especially ID fraud), human and narcotics trafficking, and cyber crime, law enforcement officials are being faced with the task of combating a more modern type of organized crime. The combative tactics currently being used to address this phenomenon in the United States has no unanimity and has shown little if any affect on the repercussions of criminal organizations within the past five years.

Organized crime in the U.S. is undoubtedly growing and is seeing the emergence of a more sophisticated breed of criminals. Eurasian and Asian crime syndicates are amongst the most intelligent in the criminal underworld, currently responsible for costing the U.S. billions in dollars, these syndicates pose a serious threat by Targeting the National Information Infrastructure and Economic Espionage (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). With the elimination of the Medellin and the Cali cartel in Colombia, Mexican drug organizations (e.g. MS-13 & Las Zetas), have succeeded in a take-over in the trafficking of goods over the U.S.-Mexican border and have infiltrated

America as far as the Canadian border. By being involved with criminal organizations such as the Asians and Eurasians, Latin crime syndicates not only pose a threat to the U.S. by Proliferation in Trafficking, but in Economic Espionage as well.

Conclusions

This assessment was conducted across a regional level, and aimed to achieve a regional description of the illicit activities being committed by O.C., criminal organizations specific to the area, and the tactics being used to combat their efforts. Keep in mind, while there were only a small number of informants interviewed, this thesis was purely exploratory as creating a national threat assessment is not easy in task and needs to be tested multiple times before it can be dispersed for a final collection of data. Fortunately, it did not take more than ten informants to achieve a glimpse into the sectors of O.C. across America, as they are indicated as posing a threat to national security. While, most law enforcement officials refer to these activities (money laundering, drug trafficking, and firearm trafficking) as “tools of the trade,” the involvement of criminal organizations in these activities alone illustrate how organized crime fits within two out of the five threat categories agreed upon by federal agencies.

Results indicate that while the activities being perpetrated by crime syndicates across the nation are high in Proliferation of Trafficking (drugs, humans, and firearms), they are expanding and growing into avenues of Economic Espionage (fraudulent schemes and money laundering) and Targeting the National Information Infrastructure (cyber extortion and fraudulent schemes). With Asian criminal organizations “upping the ante” in the Western region by committing mortgage, ID, healthcare and insurance fraud; Italian and Mexican crime syndicates in the Midwest have been “meeting their match” by

collaborating with the Eurasians/Russians in the Northeast as they have been found to participate in cyber crimes in addition to fraudulent schemes. As expected in the South, Latin Drug Cartels have been suggested as one of the main sources of firearms and drugs entering the U.S., and have managed to expand their criminal enterprise across the country.

The current combative tactics being used, are showing little if any effect on the overall activity of O.C. within the last five years, and show a desperate need for a reallocation of funds. In all, organized crime has been indicated as being involved in 60% of the illicit activities currently posing a threat to the United States. It is for this reason, in addition to the inabilities of law enforcement officials to combat their efforts that this study should be considered in future research on conducting a national threat assessment of organized crime in the U.S.

Policy Recommendations

As of today, RICO has been indicated as the best prosecutorial tool against criminal organizations in America. This act however was not established solely to combat organized crime as a phenomenon; it was designed to combat organized crime as an offense. The statutes in RICO hold any enterprise, regardless of their criminal nature, responsible for committing crimes in an organized manner. Certain enterprises such as Major League Baseball and Mohawk Industries have been tried under the RICO Act (Doyle, 2004). It has been suggested by one of the federal agents interviewed in this study that the RICO Act of 1970 be revisited to amend a section specifically for the prosecution of criminal enterprises (Anonymous, 2008). This study supports that suggestion.

Furthermore, law enforcement officials need to reach a consensus among investigative and combative tactics to address organized crime. Though the combination of targeting and pro-active measures seem to be effective for identifying certain individuals and the crimes they commit, these tactics have proven to be ineffective when combating an entire criminal enterprise. In Florida and New Jersey, a new approach has been taken, following the guidelines established in RICO, task forces have expanded their investigate net to include the collection of evidence on a much broader spectrum (Anonymous, 2009). The statutes delineated in RICO in combination with carefully laid out “multipronged attacks” on the established components of a criminal enterprise, allows U.S. Attorneys to prosecute any member of a criminal enterprise, regardless if they committed the crime or not. The Enterprise Theory of Investigation focuses on the crime committed as it benefits the enterprise and not the individual, making the criminal organization, as a single entity, liable for the charges (McFeely, 2004).

Future Research

This assessment was purely exploratory and should be furthered by utilizing the instrument as a survey, rather than an interview, across local, state, and federal levels, to determine whether or not it would provide the information required to make a more sound evaluation of the threats posed to U.S. by organized crime. Furthermore, because of the constant changing nature of O.C., short intervals of the assessment should also be conducted to illustrate a criminal organization’s ability to adapt to their political and physical environment. Additionally, once an activity and criminal organization is established as being specific to that region, follow up assessments must be made solely

focusing on those activities and organizations in order to tailor combative efforts to decrease the level of organized crime occurring within that region.

Also indicated within this assessment were questions regarding the connection between criminal and terrorist organizations, however due to the sensitive and dangerous nature of reporting on terrorism, only a few informants responded, which was not enough to deduct any inference about a connection. However, there has been plenty of research suggesting linkages between these two organizations, and should be furthered researched, as this would confirm organized crime as being involved in 80% of the illicit activities that pose a threat to security in the U.S. (Sanderson, 2007).

APPENDIX A: National Organized Crime Threat Assessment Survey

1. Please rate the impact of the following crime problems in your jurisdiction:					
	High	Moderate	Low	None	Unknown
Drug Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prostitution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weapons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Burglary/Theft of a Gun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straw Purchases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Possessions Offenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explosives/Explosive Devices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money Laundering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fraud-Identity Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Card Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyber Extortion - Illegal use or Access of Information Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyber Extortion - Illegal use of Passwords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please rate the level of organized crime involvement in the following offenses:					
	High	Moderate	Low	None	Unknown
Drug Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prostitution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weapons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Burglary/Theft of a Gun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straw Purchases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firearms Possessions Offenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explosives/Explosive Devices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money Laundering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fraud-Identity Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Card Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyber Extortion - Illegal use or Access of Information Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyber Extortion - Illegal use of Passwords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please rate the level of organized crime activity in your region:					
	Increased Significantly	Increased Slightly	No Change	Decreased Slightly	Decreased Significantly
Within the past 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the past 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What emerging organized crime trends have you seen in your community?

(i.e.; racketeering, drug smuggling, prostitution, sex slave trades, human trafficking, money laundering)?

5. Are organized crime groups in your jurisdiction using technology to facilitate criminal activity (i.e.; internet, falsified websites, and specialized computers)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide description:

6. Please rate the level of activity of each organization in your jurisdiction. If an organization does not exist in your jurisdiction, please choose N/A:					
	High	Moderate	Low	None	N/A
Russian/Central/East European Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italian Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La Cosa Nostra Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nigerian Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle Eastern Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mexican Drug Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colombian Drug Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dominican Drug Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please list the top three organized crime groups in your jurisdiction:

Organization name 1:

Organization name 2:

Organization name 3:

8. How long has the organization been in your region?					
	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1yr.	1yr. to 2yrs.	2yrs. to 5yrs.	More than 5yrs.
Organization 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Where did this organization originate?

Organization 1:

Organization 2:

Organization 3:

10. If this organization originated from a different area, what brought it to your region?

Organization 1:

Organization 2:

Organization 3:

11. Is this organization migrating from your region to other areas, and if so, where?

Organization 1:

Organization 2:

Organization 3:

12. Please indicate how many members of this organization are illegal aliens or political refugees:					
	Most	Some	Very Few	None	Unknown
Organization 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What is the country of origin of these illegal aliens or political refugees?

Organization 1:

Organization 2:

Organization 3:

14. What is the estimated membership of this organization within your community (do not include incarcerated in state or federal prison)?

Organization 1:

Organization 2:

Organization 3:

15. Are organized groups associated with any domestic or international terrorist organizations or extremist groups within your jurisdiction?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide description:

16. What organized crime interdiction, intervention, or suppression strategies have been most effective in your jurisdiction?

17. Does your jurisdiction lead or participate in a multiagency gang task force?Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide description:

18. Please describe what you believe is the overall national threat?

Please provide the following information:

Agency Name:

City/State/Zip:

Jurisdiction/Region:

Total Population of Area Reporting on:

APPENDIX B: Analysis of Interviews

Southern Region U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF) Baltimore, Maryland

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking (crack cocaine = highest concern)
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- Human Trafficking (moderate to high)

Emerging Activity

- Cyber Crime (will use ANY technology available)
 - ID Theft
 - Fraudulent Prescription Drug Sales

National Threat: Proliferation in Trafficking and Targeting the National Information Infrastructure

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

1. Mexican Cartels
2. Asians (Yakuza & Triads)
3. Eurasians (“measured by quality of job not quantity”)

Existing Criminal Organization: Latin Criminal Organizations (Mexican)

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- Decreased Slightly (dying nature of Italian O.C.)

Tactics and Capability of Law Enforcement: Decreased Slightly

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Pro Active Strategies (quality investigation & follow ups)
- Targeting (quality intel & cooperation between agencies)

Tactics and Capability of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures and Targeting

Belief of National Threat Posed by Organized Crime

“In this area there are two main things that have caught our attention & hold equal weight as a cause for concern...they are tied neck and neck if you will. The first is drug trafficking; it's destroying the community and families who live in those communities & second is organized crime's potential connection to terrorism. Any involvement any organization has with those who want to destroy our nation (terrorists), can't be good.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Southern Region
Federal Bureau of Investigations (O.C. Task Force)
Miami, Florida**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- Money Laundering
- Identity Theft

Emerging Activity

- Fraud
 - Healthcare
 - Mortgage
- Smuggling, Trafficking, & Facilitation of Cocaine to Europe

National Threat: Proliferation in Trafficking and Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

1. Eurasian
2. Italian (La Cosa Nostra)
3. Middle Eastern & Nigerian (Close Tie)

Existing Criminal Organization: Russian/Eurasian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- No Change

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: No Change

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Enterprise Theory Investigation, which utilizes:
 - The notion of “criminal enterprises” not classical organizations
 - Asset Forfeiture Statutes (RICOs best bet)

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“I can tell you that in a current study that has been done within our agency, we show the Eurasians and Asian organized crime groups as posing the most threat to our nation’s safety...their abilities to network internationally has made investigations quite difficult. However, if you were to ask me personally, I would say that it is the little organizations, even gangs who work together that pose the greatest threat to our country.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Southern Region
Federal Bureau of Investigations (O.C. Task Force)
Austin, Texas**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking (“everything from Marijuana to Black Tar Heroin”)
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)

Emerging Activity

- Identity Theft (credit cards)
- Increased Activity of Money Laundering (“a lot more store fronts”)

National Threat: Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Mexican
- Colombian
- Dominican

Existing Criminal Organization: Latin Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- No Change

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: No Change

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Long Term Investigations w/Intense Intel
- Targeting “made groups”

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures and Targeting

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“Overall I would say that organized crime poses a threat through the amount of trafficking they do, both drugs and firearms. It all ruins the communities in which they operate and harms the safety of many innocent lives. They also pose a potential threat through their possible ties to terrorism. If both forms of evil are on the same team, it makes the fight a lot harder.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Western Region
U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF)
Sacramento, California**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- Prostitution (attached implication of trafficking)

Emerging Activity

- Drug Trafficking of Heroin (new kind of drug for their region)
- Multi-Faceted Criminal Activity (violence becoming much more prevalent)
- Health Care Fraud
- Cigarette Smuggling

National Threat: Proliferation in Trafficking

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

1. Asian (have been present in CA for over 200 years)
2. Latin Organizations (Mexican, Colombian, Dominican)
3. Eurasians ("huge influx w/in the past 20 years")

Existing Criminal Organization: Asian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- Slightly Increased

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Slightly Increased

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Targeting Specific Geographical Areas of "known activity"
- Targeting Specific Groups of "known identity"
- Long Term Investigations

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Targeting

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“The strongest national threat posed to our country by organized crime is those groups who have ties to international communities. These ties make it easier to commit the crimes that have the greatest weight, such as drug trafficking, white collar scams, and infiltrating governmental entities to force misappropriation of funds. Those who have no geographical tie are the organizations that make it difficult to combat.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Western Region
U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF)
Denver, Colorado**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking (methamphetamines are a growing problem)
- Money Laundering
- Weapons
- ID Fraud (moderate to high)

Emerging Activity

- Counterfeiting (money, jewels, etc.)
- Prostitution

National Threat: Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Eurasians (growing presence)
- Asians
- Mexican Cartels

Existing Criminal Organization: Russian/Eurasian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- Slight Increase (increasing opportunities)

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Slight Increase

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Collaborative Efforts (between agencies both federal & local)
- Thorough Investigations (based on "factual information, not hunches")

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

"Organized crime is as much a threat to this nation as gangs are...when monitored properly all you can do is keep them under control, maintain them. It's when one organization starts working with another that law enforcement should be concerned..."

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Western Region
U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF)
Portland, Oregon**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking (cocaine & heroin biggest problem)
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)

Emerging Activity

- Cyber Crime
- Fraudulent Scams
 - Credit Cards, Insurance, Health Care, etc.

National Threat: Targeting the National Information Infrastructure

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Asians
- Latin Organizations (Mexican, Dominican, Colombian)
- Eurasian (growing population)

Existing Criminal Organization: Asian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- No Change ("just different")

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: No Change

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Targeting Areas w/High Activity & "Known" Criminal Affiliates
- Collaborative Participation of All Agencies

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Targeting

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“There are other pressing issues that should be considered more of a threat, like the number of known gangs, both in and out of prison. These gangs are committing crimes behind bars and are growing at an exponential rate...in essence, they are organized...directly and indirectly criminal organizations harm numbers of innocent people.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: No

**Midwestern Region
U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF)
Fairview Heights, Illinois**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- Prostitution (attached implication of trafficking)

Emerging Activity

- ID Fraud
- Healthcare Fraud ("a lot of recent occurrences")

National Threat: Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Mexican ("seem to be involved with everything")
- Italian/Sicilian
- Nigerians & Eurasians (tie for third)

Existing Criminal Organization: Latin Criminal Organizations (Mexican)

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- Slight Decrease

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Slight Decrease

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Follow the Activity
- Target Certain Groups
- Target Certain Areas
- Collaboration Between Agencies

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Targeting

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“Guns and drugs...economically, criminal organizations are proving to become more a nuisance as far as combating cyber crime and healthcare and insurance fraud, but overall, the amount and guns and drugs organized crime brings into this country is just...detrimental.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Midwestern Region
Federal Bureau of Investigations (O.C. Task Force)
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- Prostitution

Emerging Activity

- Fraudulent Scams (credit card, insurance, healthcare, fuel)
- Cyber Crime
- Human Trafficking (seeing slight increase)

National Threat: Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Italian
- Latin Organizations (Mexican, Colombian, Dominican)
- Eurasians & Asians (growing population)

Existing Criminal Organization: Italian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- No Change (just different)

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: No Change

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Strong Intel
- Pro Active Measures

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“I would say that the overall threat posed by organized crime, would be the amounts of weapons and drugs that they have at their disposal, these drugs and these guns are trickling into our community and falling into the wrong hands (e.g. kids & teens), it’s real sad. In addition to that...the changing nature of organized crime and their ability to go “under the radar” has definitely become a cause for concern.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Northeastern Region
U.S. Attorney's Office (OCDETF)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Money Laundering
- Weapons (possession, trafficking, theft, etc.)
- ID Fraud

Emerging Activity

- Fraudulent Scams (healthcare, fuel, insurance, mortgage)
- Cyber Crime

National Threat: Economic Espionage

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Eurasians
- Latin Organizations
- Italian ("has bin's of the O.C. world")

Existing Criminal Organization: Russian/Eurasian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- No Change (just different)

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: No Change

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Thorough Investigations
- Collaboration Between Agencies

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

"Organized Crime poses threats in a number of ways, from the number of drugs and guns that they run, the diseases they spread by employing prostitutes, and to the less violent crime of extortion and scams...they're all over the place."

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

**Northeastern Region
Federal Bureau of Investigations (O.C. Task Force)
Trenton, New Jersey**

Most Activity per Region Associated with Organized Crime

- Drug Trafficking
- Money Laundering (“every way possible”)
- Weapons
- Fraudulent Scams (credit card, mortgage, fuel, insurance)

Emerging Activity

- Cyber Crime (“taking crime virtual”)
- Human Trafficking (always been present, but on the rise)

National Threat: Economic Espionage and Targeting the National Information Infrastructure

Presence of Group per Region (Ranked by Severity of Threat)

- Eurasians (rapid growing population)
- Italians (LCN)
- Latin Organizations (Mexican, Dominican, Colombian)

Existing Criminal Organizations: Russians/Eurasian Criminal Organizations

Increase/Decrease of O.C. Activity w/in the Past 5 Years

- Slight Increase

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Slight Increase

Combative Tactics Being Used

- Collaborative Efforts
- Thorough Investigations w/ Strong Intel

Tactics and Capabilities of Law Enforcement: Pro-Active Measures

Belief of National Threat Caused by Organized Crime

“The up and coming organizations that have bases outside of America, like the Nigerians, the Asians, the Eurasians...all groups that transcend our boundaries have limitless capabilities. More domestic organizations, like La Cosa Nostra are dying out and our investigations are breaking their structure...the real threat are groups that are committing crime not only within our nation but overseas as well.”

Belief of National Threat by Informant: Yes

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VITA

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