

TOWARD A RISK-BASED ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZED CRIME: THE EXPERIENCE OF CANADA

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Criminal Intelligence Service Canada is a national intelligence network that focuses on countering organized crime in Canada.

Issue: A proposal to reject law enforcement's traditional ineffective conceptual models for organized crime and adopt a hybrid model. The hybrid model will form the foundation of CISC's shift from threat to risk analysis in its assessment of organized crime in Canada.

The 'Godfather' is Dead: Rejecting the Pluralist Ethnic Model

Suggests control by a single criminal group (Cosa Nostra) or by large criminal conspiracies (e.g., Yakuza, Triads, Mafia) (Southerland and Potter 1990).

- Inaccurate depictions of ethnically or culturally homogeneous groups.
- Prone to misidentifications by police.
- Assumes legions of followers where few may exist.
- Members as 'outsiders' and 'foreign'.
- Criticized as racial profiling and ineffective for multi-ethnic groups.

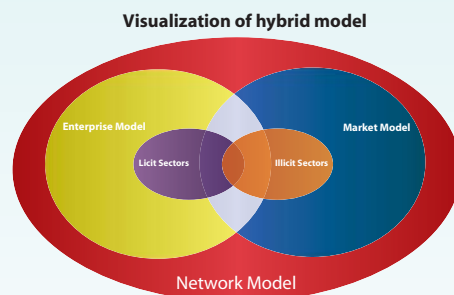
Not a Criminal Army: Rejecting the Bureaucratic/Hierarchical Model

Describes a monopolistic, authoritarian structure with limited membership, specialized division of labour and strict rules (Mastrofski and Potter 1987).

- Hierarchies and monopolies are rare.
- Few have explicit rules.
- Criminal organizations are often fragmented, fluid and resilient.
- Assumes targeting the leader will dismantle the structure.
- Assumes relationships of control rather than cooperation or competition.

Proposal of Hybridized Network and Market/Enterprise Model

Proposal that CISC adopt a hybrid model: a composite of the network, market and enterprise models.



"Shifting Coalitions": Adopting the Network Model

Small, loosely structured networks that react to fluctuations in the economic, political and legal environments (Mastrofski and Potter 1987).

- Emphasizes the fluidity, resiliency and multi-ethnicity of criminal networks.
- Patterns of collaboration and competition, not monopolies.
- Organized crime as 'enemy within' with much consensual illicit activity.
- Reflects nature of organized crime in Canada.

Adopting the Enterprise/Market Economic Models

Emphasizes the inter-connectivity and inter-dependency of licit and illicit markets and depicts criminal networks as rational and profit-maximizing (Halstead 1998).

- Focuses on the dynamics and interdependencies of the marketplace.
- Applies behavioural theories of businesses to criminal networks (Smith 1980).
- Grey areas between licit and illicit behaviour.
- Organized crime is largely symbiotic rather than parasitic.
- Free-market exchange of many goods and services.

Proposal of Risk Assessment Framework on Organized Crime

Under the old models, CISC focused only on the criminal actors. With the hybrid model, the focus is on both the criminal actors and their operating environment (the licit and illicit economic sectors). Using the hybrid model, CISC will determine which criminal networks and illicit and licit economic sectors pose the highest risks (combined threat and impact rating).

Conclusions

The proposed hybrid model and risk methodology mark a sharp departure from CISC's traditional analysis. CISC will be able to be more precise about risks from organized crime and alert decision-makers to trends in the licit and illicit sectors.

Selected References

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- Southerland, M. D., and Potter, G. W., (1993), Applying Organization Theory to Organized Crime, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 9:3, 251-267.