**Transnational Organized Crime: An Overview from Six Continents**: Jay Albanese and Philip Reichel (SAGE Publications, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4522-9007-2).

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Transnational Organized Crime: An Overview from Six Continents presents scholarly and well-researched information on transnational organized crime (TOC). Albanese and Reichel (2013) discuss TOC as a network of loosely affiliated criminal organizations located in different countries. These networks operate similarly to a legitimate business. The concept and applied application of a TOC’s goods and services will start in one country and then progress through other countries using supply chains affiliates, marketing, and delivery operations. The defining difference between TOC’s management businesses is that the goods and services are illegal and often negatively impact the general population. The book covers all areas of TOCs from discussions on organized crime in the US, human slavery, drug cartels, and Terrorism. Other topics are also covered and contribute to the general understanding of TOCs.

Chapter one introduces the overall concept of TOCs as networks that are affiliated throughout the globe. The comparison between TOCs with legitimate businesses is made here. For example, the supply chain for ecstasy is described using the model of the manufacture, production, and distribution business processes. The authors do an excellent job of explaining the elements and stakeholders. Additionally, criminal networks are dynamic organizations that can adjust to input from networks quickly. These networks have few levels and are associated with mutual interests in the forms of profit and power. Phil Williams (2001) validates these assertions in *Transnational Criminal networks* (Williams, 2001). Criminal networks are described as fluid or dynamic with the ability to act nimbly and quickly. Due to networks maintaining relationships, their connections are easy to model with sophisticated software now used by law enforcement.

Hierarchies are also discussed in chapter 1. Albanese and Reichel (2013) explain the differences between standard rigid hierarchies such as the mafia organizations with an all-powerful leader at the top and regional hierarchies. Albanese and Reichel give the example of motorcycle gangs. These organizations have a certain amount of autonomy between levels. Williams also validates this description. He makes assertions about the hierarchy characteristics with one exception. He claims that the Mafia allows some freedom to their local branches. This point stands in contrast to Albanese and Reichel. Another interesting finding was that 70% of TOCs operate in at least three countries for conducting business processes. This high percentage is surprising because of the number of broken laws and the number of actors needed (Albanese & Reichel, 2013).

Additionally, Albanese and Reichel (2013) assert that TOCs flourish in corrupt countries, do not respect the rule of law, and have weak governments. This assertion was supported by the work of Williams (2001). There is little doubt that TOCs become powerful and set up their bases of operations in countries with these traits. The high degree of poverty, hunger, unemployment, instability make easy prey of the locals. TOCs in some regions may often be seen as the authority or the law.

Probably the strongest argument for the growth of TOCs is the ingredients of globalization, the ability of the population to be highly mobile, and the high advancements in technology in the areas of communication specifically. The establishment of the Internet has allowed illegal activity such as fraud and gambling to prosper across borders and boundaries. These revelations were further validated by Williams (2001). An area where the authors were absent on material was in the vastness of the roles of TOCs. For example, Williams describes the networks in terms of defensive structures. He goes into detail about how the outer core of the organization is the first line of defense and how it is more difficult to penetrate the TOCs as you focus on the center.

Chapter two discusses TOCs in North America. The authors point out that due to the adjacent borders of the countries and the large population of the United States, fertile ground for organized crime is laid. Albanese and Reichel also state that North Americans’ wealth draws organized crime to the US. The geographical nature of the United States by both land and water accessibility further contributes to TOC’s appeal. Sadly, the authors do not project confidence in the American citizenry to dull the desire for illicit goods and services.
Additionally, a history of the development of organized crime is discussed. Traditional crimes such as murder, extortion, fraud, prostitution, gambling as a means of profit generation were examined. However, it was the discussion of modern TOC actions relevant to the contemporary world. For example, technology has provided the means to commit crimes from a distance, anonymously, and with higher profit potential. TOCs have tapped into data cables to steal credit card information from various department stores. The credit card information was then sent overseas, where they were used to create counterfeit cards. The level of sophistication and technical ability should raise eyebrows.

Albanese and Reichel (2013) focused on five ethnic groups, the Italian Cosa Nostra, Russian, Chinese, Mexican cartels, and Canadian TOCs. The activities, types of crimes, structure, and the preference for violence are discussed in detail. Of the five ethnic groups, the Russian organized crime (ROC) has exhibited strong stability for high-tech criminal activity. In addition to credit card fraud and other hacking-style activities, ROC has become proficient at creating fake companies that appeal to investors but make a money-making scheme. Stock market manipulation fraud is an area of active ROC focus. Of course, the Mexican drug cartels are primarily known for manufacturing and distributing drugs. Another trait of the Mexican drug cartels is extensive violence and intimidation. They have no issues killing journalists or using car bombs to convey their menacing authority. The authors mentioned an interesting point about the Chinese TOC: their activities tend to be constrained among their people/neighborhoods and, therefore, go unnoticed by the public. Aside from discussing the various criminal activities of TOC, the chapter does an excellent job of suggesting countermeasures for law enforcement.

Some of the countermeasures pinioned by the authors were the encouragement of outreach law enforcement in the countries where the TOCs have command control structures. The purpose is to engage collaboratively with local law enforcement and criminal justice organizations to stem the influence and actions of TOCs. Another recommendation is information sharing with these country’s law enforcement organizations. Collaboration and cooperation between international law enforcement are critical in the fight against TOCs. Furthermore, the authors believe that the borders are insecure. Unless more robust border security is implemented, illicit goods and services will continue to find a way into the US. Other studies such as William (2001) and Castle (1997) validated these assertions and suggestions. However, unless the citizenry of the United States takes it upon themselves to remove the demand for illicit goods and services, it is unlikely that law enforcement will stop the supply part of the equation.

Additionally, Castle (1997) better explained an area that Albanese and Reichel touched on. That was the threat of TOCs to state security. For example, Castle discusses four national security characteristics impacted by TOCs: core values, freedom from grave or existential threats, control or the use of force, and control over territory. As TOC grows, it threatens these state security characteristics (Castle, 1997).

Chapter three examines TOCs in Latin America.

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