

Models of organized crime executive summary



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Organized crime (OC) has been given several definitions but the 1998 international Warsaw conference defined it as “(g)roup activities of three or more persons, with hierarchical links or personal relationships, which permit their leaders to earn profits or control territories or markets, internal or foreign, by means of violence, intimidation or corruption, both in furtherance of criminal activity and to infiltrate the legitimate economy” (Abadinsky, n. d., p. 2). Empirical study endeavored to understand its structure and interrelationships that resulted to models. Scholars proposed several models. Two such models propounded by Albanese (1989; 1994, as cited in Lampe, 2003) is the bureaucratic model (hierarchical) and patron-client model. The crime group Cosa Nosa was originally studied to belong to the bureaucratic model but also categorized by other scholars under patron-client model who challenged the earlier categorization (Williams, n. d.; Lampe, 2003). Cressey (1969, as cited in Lampe, 2003) typifies the hierarchical model as a “ nationwide bureaucratic organizational entity” (para. 3). Joe Albini (1971, as cited in Lampe, 2003) and Francis and Liz Ianni (1972, as cited in Lampe, 2003) saw the patron-client model as a “ web of asymmetric ties” interlinked with the regional and cultural networks (para. 3). The organized crime bureaucratic model has a “ hierarchical or pyramidal structures” with branches nationwide, operates an illegal cartel, the bureaucracy governed by a central commission, and there is a clear-cut division of tasks and specialized functions among the branches (Williams, n. d., p. 62). Therefore, it is described as more corporate in structure with defined operative

functions. OC under this model has specific skills and expertise, administer the organization through hierarchy and follows a procedure (Abadinsky, n. d.). The structure depends on the particular skills and capacity of members and not on ethnicity (Abadinsky, n. d.). The organization even hires employees, secretaries, accountants and lawyers (Abadinsky, n. d.).

Embarking on new illicit ventures is motivated by purely financial concerns and not by power or personal consideration (Abadinsky, n. d.).

The patron-client model, used as a political machine, can be traced on the inflow of migrants from other countries (Abadinsky, n. d.). The migrants that grew dramatically from early 1900s to mid-1900 were discriminated upon, the object of hostility and worked on dangerous conditions (Abadinsky, n. d.).

They were harnessed by a broker or political boss as an ethnic group for their votes while the broker provides them with livelihood on a patronage basis (Hofstadter, 1956, as cited in Abadinsky, n. d.). Since the people approach the boss for personal gain (Abadinsky, n. d.) and the latter can utilize the relationship, gaining a specialization in “personal relations and personal loyalties,” the boss had been able to manipulate even the government (Hofstadter, 1956, as cited in (Abadinsky, n. d.). Patron-client model is characterized by reciprocity in the networks, embarking on activities further than commercial matters (e. g. protection of clients, assistance to enforce agreements), and working both with their connections and the government and legal businesses (Liddick, 1999; Paoli, 2002a, as cited in Harasymiw, 2003). The patrons may not engage in illegal business, politics or position in unions but on brokering of “informal power” outside of the institutions or government structure (Harasymiw, 2003, p. 7). The use of cruelty and compulsion once in a while is a mode by which power and

resources are distributed (Harasymiw, 2003). The parties involved in the patron-client relationship extend to businessmen, political figures and ordinary people in a give-and-take relationship and as “ active participants rather than as passive victims of organized crime” (Harasymiw, 2003, p. 7). As shown in the group Cosa Nostra, OC can be viewed either as a bureaucratic or patron-client. However, understanding the distinctions between the two models will provide a framework from which an organization can be studied and can determine the breadth and extent of the operation and the relationships, the mode of operation and management, key factors and elements involved, and the activities engaged in.

References

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