

# Obstacles and Techniques in Fighting Organized Crime

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

Organized crime, a term that evokes images of shadowy figures operating in the margins of society, has been a persistent and evolving phenomenon throughout human history. Often characterized by intricate networks, clandestine operations, and a code of silence, organized crime transcends borders and infiltrates various aspects of society. This essay delves into the multifaceted dimensions of organized crime, exploring its historical roots, defining features, and the challenges it poses to law enforcement and society.

### Historical roots

The roots of organized crime can be traced back through the annals of history, finding its origins in various cultures and civilizations. Ancient Rome had its criminal syndicates, such as the Sicarii, who engaged in political assassinations and extortion. In medieval China, secret societies like the Triads emerged, laying the foundation for organized criminal activities that would persist for centuries. However, it was during the Prohibition era in the United States (1920-1933) that organized crime truly flourished, with notorious figures like Al Capone leading powerful criminal enterprises, smuggling and distributing illegal alcohol.

### Defining features

Organized crime is marked by several defining features that distinguish it from other forms of criminal activity. One key element is structure; these criminal enterprises operate with hierarchical structures, often resembling corporations. There's a clear division of labor, with specialized roles for members, from street-level enforcers to high-ranking leaders. The Mafia, for instance, is renowned for its hierarchical structure, with the boss at the top, followed by underbosses, capos, and soldiers.

Another characteristic is the longevity of operations. Organized crime is not a transient or isolated event; it involves sustained, systematic criminal activities over an extended period. This longevity is facilitated by the establishment of intricate networks and connections, both within and beyond the criminal underworld.

The ability to adapt and evolve is crucial for organized crime groups, allowing them to navigate changing circumstances and law enforcement efforts.

### Economic ventures

Organized crime is not confined to illegal activities; it extends its influence into various legitimate and illicit economic sectors. Drug trafficking, human smuggling, arms trade, and racketeering are common illegal ventures, generating substantial profits for criminal organizations. However, these groups also infiltrate legal businesses, such as construction, waste management, and entertainment, using them as fronts to legitimize their wealth and activities. The integration of organized crime into legitimate businesses poses a significant challenge for law enforcement, as distinguishing between legal and illegal operations becomes increasingly complex.

### Globalization and transnational networks

The advent of globalization has transformed organized crime into a truly global phenomenon. Criminal enterprises operate seamlessly across borders, taking advantage of the interconnected world to expand their influence and evade law enforcement. Transnational networks engage in a range of activities, from drug trafficking and money laundering to cybercrime and human trafficking. The ability to move personnel, goods, and funds internationally enables these criminal organizations to exploit legal loopholes and jurisdictional challenges.

### Challenges to law enforcement

The fight against organized crime presents formidable challenges for law enforcement agencies worldwide. The transnational nature of these criminal enterprises means that traditional law enforcement methods, rooted in national jurisdictions, often fall short. Cooperation and information sharing between countries become imperative, requiring international collaboration and the dismantling of bureaucratic obstacles.

The clandestine nature of organized crime further complicates investigations. The code of silence, or omertà, prevalent in many criminal organizations, creates a culture of secrecy, making it

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difficult for law enforcement to gather evidence and witness testimonies. The fear of retaliation often prevents individuals with information from coming forward, perpetuating a cycle of silence that shields the criminal underworld from exposure.

Organized crime remains a pervasive and adaptive force that continues to challenge societies and law enforcement agencies globally. Its historical roots, defining features, economic ventures, and transnational networks contribute to its resilience

and enduring presence. Effectively combating organized crime requires a multi-faceted approach, combining international cooperation, legal reforms, and innovative law enforcement strategies. As society evolves, so too must the methods employed to confront this intricate and shadowy phenomenon, ensuring that the underworld symphony is met with a concerted and harmonious response.