

1 INTRODUCTION

The Central Question

SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR, transnational nonstate forces have been a major source of global instability, and many ominous disruptive flows of people, goods, and services have moved readily across international boundaries. Deflecting attention away from transnational organized crime as a primary facilitator of these critical disruptive flows was first the sense of euphoria associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and then later the focus on transnational terrorism triggered by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. Although some analysts go too far in claiming that currently “the dimensions of global organized crime present a greater international security challenge than anything western democracies had to cope with during the Cold War,”¹ the transnational criminal threat is nonetheless highly insidious at a lower level. There is now a pivotal hole in our understanding of transnational criminals’ decision making about the means to pursue their illicit ends and the security implications of these decisions.

This investigation begins to remedy this crucial analytical deficiency. Challenging puzzles requiring probing investigation surround the pervasive yet clandestine presence of transnational organized crime in the contemporary world, and focusing on these puzzles provides deeper insight into the nature of its operations and their consequences. So little is known about the modus operandi of transnational criminal organizations, and what little understanding does exist rarely distinguishes among their disruptive tactics or links these tactics to different kinds of security impacts. Consequently, an urgent need exists to explore within the contemporary international relations environment the dark logic behind transnational organized crime, its

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subtle fluid patterns, and the resulting interference with effective security protection.

Proper appraisal of the disruptive tactics, security impacts, and corrective responses pertaining to transnational organized crime involves considerable complexity. Indeed, upon closer scrutiny, many conventional assumptions about the causes, consequences, and cures of transnational criminal activities prove to be controversial, wrongheaded, or ill-advised. Disagreements abound among experts even about the most basic issue of whether transnational organized crime is worthy of security attention. Today many global political leaders possess conflicting conceptions and misunderstandings about how to gauge the elusive dangers involved, and, as a result, their policy responses have generally failed to achieve stated goals. This investigation's primary aim is to shed significant new light on the topic to create a more coherent and probing comprehension of the operational dynamics of transnational organized crime, the ways in which it disrupts security, the reasons for its success and the failure of attempts to constrain it, and some fresh ideas to help those responsible to grapple more successfully with this global threat.

THE NATURE OF THIS STUDY'S CENTRAL QUESTION

This study focuses on two particular issues: (1) *when and how* transnational criminal organizations choose corruption and violence tactics and (2) *when and how* transnational criminal activities generate individual/human and national/state security impacts. The specific central question is as follows:

Under what conditions is it most likely that transnational criminal organizations choose to rely primarily on *corruption* versus *violence* in their illicit cross-border transactions, and under what conditions is it most likely that transnational criminal activities primarily influence *individual security* versus *state security*?

This constitutes the first major study showing (1) when corruption and violence are most likely to be used, (2) when transnational criminal activities are most likely to affect individual security and state security, and (3) when the negative consequences of these tactics and activities can be most successfully combated. The presumed sequence is that first transnational criminal organizations select tactics to use in their activities, and then these activities generate security impacts, and discerning the criminal choice of tactics and their security impacts relies more on tangible observable behavior rather than elusive underlying motivations.

At this juncture, one might well ask, Why is the distinction between the criminal tactics of corruption and violence worthy of investigation? Certainly it could be argued that, because both tactics represent unruly disruptive behavior, those wishing to combat transnational organized crime would incur an equal responsibility to minimize each, thus making fine distinctions between the two unnecessary (in the colloquial words of one defense analyst, “since both are bad, let’s just stamp them both out”). As illustrated in later chapters, however, (1) the vulnerabilities that facilitate widespread criminal corruption are quite distinct from those that facilitate widespread criminal violence, (2) the targets for corruption differ markedly from the targets for violence, and, as a result, (3) the means for containing corruption differ markedly from the means for containing violence.

Similarly, one might ask, What is the rationale for differentiating between the influence of transnational organized crime on individual/human security and the influence of transnational organized crime on national/state security? One could readily assert that the most important issue—given the magnitude of the dangers involved—is to reduce the aggregate threat transnational organized crime poses with regard to any form of security, and that attempting to separate its impact on different types of security is like splitting hairs. Some analysts argue that, especially within democracies, promoting state security automatically enhances individual security, and most analysts of transnational organized crime make little distinction among different types of resulting security implications. Again, as discussed in later chapters, (1) the criminal threat to individual and societal well-being is vastly different from the criminal threat to government functioning; (2) the individual/human and national/state security impacts can occur in substantially different areas, taking advantage of different kinds of vulnerability and using substantially different disruptive techniques; and, consequently, (3) the means for protecting individual/human security are quite distinct from the means of protecting national/state security.

Because of the interconnections with broader security issues, this analysis emphasizes, wherever possible, how the patterns of transnational criminal use of corruption and violence tactics and individual/human and national/state security impacts are both causes and consequences of other more widely studied recent global security transformations. In the end, any attempt to alter the modus operandi of transnational organized crime would require both a full understanding of these relationships and an ability and willingness to address and transform the key security parameters directly facilitating crimi-

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nal behavior. It is worth noting at the outset that, on occasion, such willingness may necessitate compromising the principles embedded in enlightened liberal democratic values situated within an open globalized world.

Typical of a newly resurgent area of investigation, much existing research on transnational organized crime has been largely descriptive, serving primarily to outline the general scope and nature of the threat. Although these insights are important, as this unruly activity has evolved and proliferated, there is a need for much more refined and differentiated analysis. Despite their significance, little attention has focused on contrasting the transnational criminal tactics of corruption and violence: a few analyses scrutinize violence and corruption separately, without identifying when each tactic is selected; most studies of transnational organized crime simply give anecdotal evidence of the occurrence of the two activities across time, organizations, and locations, without identifying specific conditions under which each is likely to be chosen.² Similarly, few existing publications carefully differentiate between the individual security impacts and the state security impacts of transnational organized crime, preferring instead simply to describe emerging dangers in broad general terms. Furthermore, relatively few studies carefully situate the challenges associated with transnational organized crime explicitly within the broader international security context. There is certainly considerable value in providing colorful illustrations of how transnational organized crime operates worldwide and generates threat; however, not identifying overarching patterns and conditions surrounding tactics and impacts, not linking these with broader security issues, and not providing differentiated policy prescriptions can inadvertently condemn victims and observers alike to passive acceptance of seemingly inevitable dangers.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THE CENTRAL QUESTION

This study analyzes transnational criminal tactics explicitly from a security perspective—rather than from the popular alternative perspectives of international political economy and public administration—because the criminal choice of corruption or violence in its most extreme form appears to have the most direct influence on individual, state, and global security and because these security impacts seem to be more important than any other consequences of criminal activity. In today's world, “when the situation deteriorates to a point at which criminal organizations can undermine a government's ability to govern, as in Italy, Russia, Colombia, and elsewhere, then the prob-

lem goes beyond a law-and-order [or economic] issue and becomes a national and international security concern.”³ Given the frequency and severity within the last two decades of disruptive transnational criminal incidents, fears have intensified about the loss of protection and the potential coercive destruction of the political system, civil society norms, and persons and property. The disruptions generating these security-oriented fears appear to involve more far-reaching pernicious consequences—meriting both increased understanding and improved management—than those concerning economic downturns and disparities or administrative inefficiencies in carrying out essential functions. Nonetheless, even with its emphasis on security, this book makes a concerted effort to integrate insights from scholarly works approaching the topic from many different angles, in the process linking together especially the rather divergent perspectives of law enforcement and national defense.

Examining in detail the patterns of transnational organized crime’s corruption and violence tactics and the resulting individual and state security impacts provides a unique lens—in many ways, a behind-the-scenes lightning rod—for analyzing today’s global security dilemmas. Through this lens, one can grapple with fundamental security questions in international relations about the level and type of aggregate threat posed by (1) transnational organized crime in comparison to other unruly nonstate forces (such as terrorism), (2) disruptive nonstate groups in comparison to disruptive states (such as rogue states like Iran or North Korea), and, finally, (3) security challenges in the current international system in comparison with security challenges in previous global settings (such as that during the Cold War). This lens also permits analysis of the preparedness of targets vulnerable to transnational organized crime in comparison with targets vulnerable to other disruptive nonstate groups and to disruptive states or, alternatively, with targets in previous international systems. Placing the answers to this study’s central question within this broader context of threat, vulnerability, and preparedness seems helpful to understand fully how the dynamics of transnational organized crime interrelate with those of other pressing security issues, especially how criminal dynamics influence and are influenced by other sources of disruption within international relations.

More specifically, exploring the central question highlights several fundamental conceptual controversies. These include (1) how the nature of sovereignty is changing in today’s world; (2) how globalization can facilitate undesired transmissions across national boundaries; (3) how the increasingly

intertwined nature of public and private authority structures has dramatically decreased accountability for the actions undertaken; (4) how government officials and private citizens often resist curtailing these unsanctioned transfers, revealing the moral murkiness in any condemnation; (5) how observers and participants alike find it troublesome to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate enterprise in a world embodying multiple contrasting value systems; (6) how restraining authorities find it difficult to separate narrow law-and-order concerns and broader defense concerns; (7) how backfire effects are likely if knee-jerk responses to illicit criminal cross-state transfers are undertaken; and (8) how the tight and growing links among disruptive transnational nonstate forces in international relations, especially between terrorists and criminals, make orderly management much more complicated. Together these issues create challenges for security policy that call for major analytical shifts and significant deviation from standard responses.

This study's central question also highlights the covert security vulnerabilities of potential transnational criminal targets. Unlike a conventional military threat, transnational organized crime undermines the physical security of countries—including the economic, cultural, and political dimensions—in ways that are largely invisible until the intrusion is well advanced and difficult to reverse: "Rather like some diseases in the early stages, a response is easy but detection is difficult; when detection becomes easier, the cure is much more difficult."⁴ Because vulnerabilities are so multifaceted and intertwined with normal societal interaction patterns, they are frequently quite difficult to pinpoint and overcome.

More broadly, the study sheds light on how nonstate sources of insecurity work today within and across states. When does transnational organized crime work in a top-down (affecting first society and then government) versus a bottom-up (affecting first government and then society) manner? When does this phenomenon operate well within and radically outside of prevailing security norms? The answers to these questions shed more light on exactly how transnational disruptions function within the current global security environment and how those vulnerable to such disruptions should prepare for them.

Finally, this study reinforces the need to consider underground cross-border activities to discern what is really transpiring in the world today. For example, looking at published trade figures dealing with legitimate businesses transporting well-accepted commodities misses the boat on much of what really drives the global economy and what really creates security disruptions

within affected societies. It is somewhat puzzling that so many international relations analysts look only at aboveboard international transactions representing blatant threats when so much significant activity goes on beneath the surface in the world with such a monumental influence on global trends.

IMPEDIMENTS TO INVESTIGATING

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Despite its overall importance, three primary obstacles impede investigation of this study's central question: the absence of hard data, the difficulty of defining transnational criminal activities, and the ambiguity in attempting to isolate transnational criminals and their organizations. Although such obstacles are not unique to this topic, the elusive nature of transnational organized crime amplifies the challenges involved considerably. Together these three impediments have created chaos in much existing research on transnational organized crime, fostering "many inaccuracies, simplifications, exaggerations, and misconceptions."⁵

First, unreliable information surrounds transnational organized crime. Firsthand accounts are unrepresentative and tainted with bias and subjectivity, and broad impersonal generalizations are overly sweeping and do not capture the subtle distinctions among groups or their activities. Even with completely impartial researchers, the results from direct interviews with transnational criminals are of questionable value because of open questions about the credibility—and intentional use of deception—of the people being interviewed. There are no reliable aggregate data—qualitative or quantitative—on the global pattern of transnational criminal behavior. Little cross-checking or accountability exists when nobody has a systematic way of verifying claims. For example, estimates of the revenues or profits of different kinds of criminal activities vary widely. Both law enforcement groups and the criminals themselves closely guard data relevant to transnational organized crime.⁶ The reality that both those engaged in this illicit activity and those attempting to restrain it are opposed to transparency—for differing reasons—creates a nearly insurmountable obstacle for those attempting to investigate the subject.

Second, precisely defining the activities associated with transnational organized crime is a daunting task, in terms of both delineating the scope of activity covered and using the appropriate terminology to do so.⁷ Perhaps the most overarching definition of "transnational organized crime" is "sys-

tematic illegal activity for power or profit”⁸ across national boundaries, but that in many ways seems too broad. Simply listing the types of illicit activities covered⁹ as a definitional mode is thwarted by their continual transformation. Undermining use of the definition “acts that are offenses in one state that involve actions or actors in another state” are many states’ weak or poorly defined criminal codes that do not find uniform guidance about what constitutes an “offense”; in this regard, ambiguities are not eliminated by substituting “acts that entail avoidable or unnecessary harm to society, which are serious enough to warrant state intervention, and similar to other kinds of acts criminalized in some countries.”¹⁰ In reality, what is acceptable within states in the major realms of transnational criminal activities varies markedly. Equally problematic is determining whether transnational criminal activity is “organized”: many serious cross-border crimes are initiated by individuals,¹¹ and, even when they are not, determining a minimum number of associated criminals or discerning the degree of required premeditation or coordination is difficult. Finally, complexities surround the meaning of “transnational,” including whether perpetrators cross national boundaries, illicit products are smuggled out of a country, people enter a state illegally, proceeds move through foreign jurisdictions, or digital violations involve virtual boundary crossings.¹²

Third, it is challenging to differentiate among the various roles of the different shady and not-so-shady players involved in transnational criminal activity. In today’s globalized world, a depressing widespread belief is that nobody is considered to be completely pure, honest, trustworthy, and above-board, and everyone seems willing to consort with virtually anyone else in undertaking cross-border transactions.¹³ Moreover, “the identities of terrorists, guerrilla movements, drug traffickers, and arms smugglers are becoming more slippery,” with considerable “identity mutation” apparent.¹⁴ Transnational criminals work quite hard to conceal their true nature:

International organized crime in its highest form is far removed from the streets. These groups are highly sophisticated, have billions of dollars at their disposal, are highly educated, and employ some of the world’s best accountants, lawyers, bankers and lobbyists. They go to great lengths to portray themselves as legitimate businessmen and even advocates/benefactors for the local populace and others.¹⁵

The perpetrators of transnational crimes are not necessarily sinister outfits with dastardly motivations and goals, as sometimes “legitimate organizations

in pursuit of otherwise legal business goals” engage in criminal activities.¹⁶ Because illicit networks are tightly intertwined with both legitimate activities in the private sector and government entities in the public sector, globally “there is an enormous gray area between legal and illegal transactions, a gray area that the illicit traders have turned to great advantage.”¹⁷ Moreover, interdependencies between “dirty” and “clean” markets have become increasingly significant:¹⁸ transnational criminals have partnered with “governments, financial institutions, mining companies and traders, security companies, mercenaries, and even non-governmental organizations.”¹⁹ Indeed, transnational criminals “can acquire, sometimes as a result of a definite ‘public relations’ strategy, a degree of public legitimacy, whether this is through fostering a myth of community spirit (as witnessed by the Yakuza’s prompt dispatch of aid to the survivors of the 1995 Kobe earthquake) or by posing as champions of national or cultural identity (whether in Kosovo, Chechnya, or Kurdistan).”²⁰

Although some attempts have been made to establish precise criteria for differentiating transnational criminal activity from legitimate business operations—such as “the covert nature of its operations, its reliance on violence and intimidation to protect and develop its market share, its access to capital which is not necessarily encumbered as in legitimate financial dealings, its interests in monopoly market structures, its use of corruption to strengthen its market relationships, and its resistance to external regulation”—in this effort “the separation between legitimate and illegitimate commerce may not be neat.”²¹ Even with perfect information, one could deem a transnational business activity either legitimate or illegitimate depending on its context. Although norms sanctioning violence differ across societies, isolating corruption in particular can be culturally relative, as “the cost of doing business in many parts of the world includes bribery of those (mostly in government) in charge of granting access, franchises or rights of exploitation.”²²

METHOD OF INVESTIGATING THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Because the three major obstacles to systematic research on transnational organized crime are so formidable, in investigating corruption versus violence tactics and individual versus state security impacts, this study seeks to circumvent these impediments more by minimizing their intrusion than by eliminating them completely. To reduce the impact of the often-unreliable data on transnational criminal organizations and their activities, this investigation emphasizes highlighting ongoing controversies and differences of opinion and multiple diverse sources for any firm conclusions reached. To

overcome the difficulties of precisely delineating transnational criminal behavior, this study concentrates on the three major transnational criminal activities. To avoid being hampered by the ambiguity surrounding isolating transnational criminal organizations—and trying to separate them from legitimate businesses—this research effort focuses on the five major transnational criminal organizations. Finally, to increase the validity of the findings, this study tracks comparative cross-sectional patterns associated with transnational organized crime longitudinally across a couple of decades (specifically from the early 1990s until today), rather than examining these patterns at a single point in time. The intrusion of the research obstacles concerning transnational organized crime should be reduced, if not eliminated, using this combination of strategies.

This study's research methodology makes the underlying assumption that transnational organized crime, although not chaotic and disjointed, is not a collection of static monolithic entities that have operated in the same way across time and that have uniform and universal standard operating procedures controlling their global decision making. There are significant variations evident during different historical periods, within different geographical regions, across different types of transnational criminal organizations, and for different forms of transnational criminal activity. Nonetheless, a crucial premise of this undertaking is that enduring patterns do exist surrounding transnational criminal tactics and their security impacts that merit identification and analysis. Exploring these patterns should allow for much deeper understanding of the roots of transnational criminal behavior, better anticipation of what transnational criminal organizations might do in the future in response to the differing opportunities and countermeasures they encounter, and, ultimately, sounder ideas about effective containment of transnational organized crime. Nonetheless, the primary thrust of the book is more explanatory than predictive or prescriptive.

This study uses comparative case study analysis to investigate the central question posed earlier. It appears crucial in this investigation to explore the nature of both the transnational criminal organization perpetrators and the transnational criminal activities these perpetrators undertake, in order to analyze the patterns surrounding corruption versus violence and individual security versus state security. Although a burgeoning set of local, national, and international criminal groups exist, the emphasis here is on the major long-standing transnational criminal organizations exhibiting the greatest world-

wide power: for well over two decades, these have been the “Big Five”²³—the Chinese triads, the Colombian cartels, the Italian Mafia, the Japanese Yakuza, and the Russian Mob. Similarly, although the scope of transnational criminal activities has certainly grown, expanding well beyond the traditional focus on easy-to-monopolize vice goods and services to encompass a wide range of illicit activities, this study’s focus is on the three activities representing the largest global illicit markets²⁴ and exhibiting the greatest potential for security disruption:²⁵ illicit arms transfers, illicit drug transfers, and illicit human transfers. In undertaking this comparative case study analysis, there is extensive reliance on secondary sources because of the scarcity of primary materials, but—as noted earlier—key findings receive support from multiple independent sources so as to increase their validity.

Given that transnational organized crime operates throughout the world rather than confining itself within particular regions, the geographical scope of this study is explicitly global. This means that there is no special focus on transnational criminal organizations and activities within any one country or on any one country’s security interests, including the United States. Moreover, there is neither a summary of trends by country or region nor a comparative analysis of crime across countries or regions, for patterns uncovered clearly transcend national borders. The expansion of criminal operations to include different parts of the world and forms of illicit commerce has made encompassing this international scope—incorporating both advanced industrial societies and the developing world—essential to capture appropriately ongoing security implications.

Because of the major impact of the end of the Cold War upon (1) the dramatic transformation of transnational organized crime, (2) the increased volatility of the global security context, (3) the heightened vulnerability of potential targets to transnational criminal intrusion, and (4) the intensified security policy maker needs for assistance in dealing with the criminal threat, the time span for this investigation is the post-Cold War global security environment. For both organizations and activities, it appears crucial to analyze those that have been prominent during the entire post-Cold War period, instead of those that have surfaced only very recently, so as to be able to examine adaptation to changing circumstances. Many of the groups and activities explored have transformed dramatically to adapt to the new opportunities present within the contemporary global security environment. The roughly two decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall allow sustained reflection about

both how the emerging patterns have changed over time since the early 1990s and how current tactical choices and security impacts are likely to be altered in the near future.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The general organization of this volume is to present the changing nature of the transnational criminal threat, conceptual framing of the choice of tactics by transnational criminal organizations and the security impacts of transnational criminal activities, case analyses revealing empirical evidence surrounding these choices and impacts, identification of overarching patterns revealing when they are most likely to occur, links between transnational organized crime and transnational terrorism, and ways to manage the transnational criminal threat. Each chapter builds on the discoveries and findings of those that preceded it; to facilitate comprehension, comparison, and integration of key insights, these chapters make extensive use of illustrations to summarize key points. Wherever possible, the study earnestly endeavors to avoid leaving the reader with just sweeping generalizations and instead to uncover specific conditions under which the patterns it identifies and the conclusions it reaches are most and least likely to occur.

More specifically, this introductory chapter explains and defends the study's central question. Then chapter 2 analyzes the nature of the recent transformation in transnational organized crime; the origins of the transformation; the relationship of the transformation to the clash among sovereignty, anarchy, and interdependence; the emerging security threat; the debate surrounding the dangers associated with this transformation; and the ultimate resulting security disruption. With respect to the disruptive tactics of corruption versus violence and the disruptive security impacts of individual security versus state security, chapter 3 provides an overview of their global significance, the means of gauging their severity, their different orientations, and their particular relationship to transnational organized crime.

At this point, this book presents in two stages a detailed case analysis focusing on corruption versus violence and individual security versus state security. Chapter 4 explores the general organizational background, the choice of tactics of corruption versus violence, and the impact on individual/human security versus national/state security pertaining to the five major transnational criminal organizations—Chinese triads, Colombian cartels, Italian Mafia, Japanese Yakuza, and Russian Mob. Chapter 5 explores the general scope and nature of each activity, the roots of and responses to each activ-

ity, the key subcategories of each activity, the choice of tactics of corruption versus violence, and the impact of each activity on individual security versus state security pertaining to the three major transnational criminal activities—illicit arms transfers, illicit drug transfers, and illicit human transfers. Chapter 6 then analyzes the general patterns evident from these cases, including identifying the conditions under which transnational criminal organizations are likely to choose to resort primarily to corruption versus violence and the conditions under which transnational criminal activities are likely to generate primarily individual/human security impacts versus national/state security impacts. Chapter 7 places transnational organized crime in the context of other transnational disruptive nonstate forces and identifies its similarities and dissimilarities with transnational terrorism, the connections between criminals and terrorists, the modes of criminal facilitation of terrorism, and the security implications of this relationship. Finally, chapter 8 concludes by identifying security paradoxes in addressing transnational organized crime, the changes in orientation needed to overcome these concerns, and, ultimately, a concrete set of specific policy recommendations for managing transnational organized crime.

TARGET AUDIENCE OF THE BOOK

This study takes a fresh integrative conceptual look at the choice of tactics by transnational criminal organizations and the security impacts of transnational criminal activities so as to analyze and address the opportunities and limitations surrounding the ensuing global dangers. As such, this study is not designed to provide an encyclopedic empirical review of existing knowledge pertaining to the history and operations of transnational organized crime, but rather to generate new conceptual insights pertaining to its central question about corruption versus violence as transnational criminal tactics and individual security and state security as transnational criminal impacts in contemporary international relations.

Even though delving into transnational organized crime can be a jolting experience, this study makes every effort to maintain a detached and balanced analytical perspective. Rather than presenting insights from a particular normative vantage point that is subtly imposed on the reader, the patterns discovered regarding corruption versus violence and individual security versus state security are evaluated explicitly without an effort to judge the extent to which they are normatively objectionable. Rather than leading readers down a rigid linear path to produce a certain interpretation of these patterns,

the focus here is to make transparent the logic of both transnational criminal thought processes and the author's thought processes (which are assumed to be quite different) so that readers can decide for themselves how these modes of analysis fit with their own values and beliefs. Rather than taking a distinctly American perspective on the patterns identified, this study attempts to take into account differing political and cultural perspectives on illicit cross-national transactions.

Thus this study is aimed at readers who are intelligent critical thinkers interested in reaching their own conclusions and ready to be exposed to open controversies, instead of being passively led by the nose or expecting definitive sweeping black-and-white answers to questions raised. However, there is no underlying assumption concerning readers' background knowledge about transnational organized crime, corruption and violence, or individual and state security. For readers new to the topic, they should discover sufficient context that they will begin to be able to grapple with the complexities and paradoxes surrounding the underlying issues. For readers knowledgeable and experienced on the topic, they should find traditional ways of thinking called into question and fresh modes of analysis and response proposed. In either case, rather than simply being exposed to interesting empirical examples of how this threat operates in today's world, readers will be encouraged to engage in a concerted rethinking of commonly held assumptions about the ways in which transnational organized crime operates within today's global security setting. If, after finishing this book, readers end up questioning prevailing beliefs, then this book has truly accomplished its mission.

This book is thus designed to speak to students, international relations scholars, and security analysts and policy makers about (1) transnational organized crime, (2) corruption and violence, and (3) individual/human and national/state security. Bridging the gap between academic and government security studies is highly challenging, but absolutely crucial to increase sensitivity to and cross-fertilization of the different perspectives involved and to allow each group to benefit directly from the findings of the other. In keeping with this broad target audience, this study makes every effort to avoid reliance on scholarly or policy-making jargon, unexplained acronyms, or implicit assumptions of any prevailing school of thought. Given that the threat associated with transnational organized crime can endanger the average citizen just as much as government officials (or academic experts), it appears imperative to write in a way that is intelligible to all affected parties.