

Attributes of Organized Crime & Terrorism

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1-1 Discussion: Attributes of Organized Crime & Terrorism

1. Eight Attributes of Organized Crime (OC)

Organized crime (OC) is defined by critical attributes: continuity, structure, criminal activities, use of violence, corruption, organizational discipline, penetration of legitimate businesses, and an overarching code of secrecy.

Continuity refers to the long-term sustainability of OC groups, maintained through generational succession and stable leadership. Structure denotes a hierarchical organization, ensuring clear roles and efficient operations. Criminal activities include illegal endeavors like drug trafficking and money laundering. The use of violence enforces control and intimidates rivals. Corruption involves bribing officials to evade law enforcement. Organizational discipline ensures members adhere to rules, preserving order and loyalty. Penetration of legitimate businesses allows money laundering and legal influence expansion. An overarching code of secrecy protects against external threats and internal betrayal.

The two most critical attributes are structure and corruption. The structure ensures efficient operation with a transparent chain of command, enabling effective coordination of activities. Corruption facilitates uninterrupted illegal activities by neutralizing law enforcement efforts through bribery and manipulation, protecting the group from legal consequences. These attributes are fundamental for OC's sustainability and effectiveness, enabling operational efficiency and strategic protection. Evidence from scholarly sources and case studies, such as the Mafia and drug cartels, illustrates how these attributes contribute to their enduring success.

2. Terrorism Vs. Organized Crime

Terrorism and organized crime, while sharing some similarities, have distinct differences. Terrorism is defined as the use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in

pursuit of political or ideological goals. On the other hand, organized crime refers to criminal organizations that engage in illegal activities primarily for financial gain.

The primary distinction lies in their objectives: Terrorism aims to achieve political or ideological outcomes, such as creating fear to influence government policies, as seen with groups like ISIS. Organized crime, exemplified by syndicates like the Mafia, focuses on economic profit through activities such as drug trafficking, extortion, and money laundering.

Despite these differences, there are notable overlaps. Both terrorism and organized crime may use similar methods, such as violence and intimidation, to achieve their ends. They also share similarities in their organizational structures, often operating in hierarchical setups with transparent chains of command. Funding mechanisms can also overlap; for example, terrorist organizations sometimes engage in organized crime to finance their operations.

A real-life example is the financial operations of ISIS, which has been known to engage in smuggling and extortion similar to organized crime syndicates. Conversely, the Mafia has used violence and corruption to maintain control and influence, much like terrorist groups.