CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN CRIMINOLOGY

Edited and with a new introduction by Federico Varese, University of Oxford, UK

The systematic study of organized crime dates back to John Landesco’s classic of ethnography, Organized Crime in Chicago (1929). Since then, the field has grown considerably and, as well as criminologists and sociologists, the topic has been embraced by researchers from a broad range of disciplines, including political science, anthropology, and economics, as well as literary and film studies.

While at first attention was principally devoted to the study of ‘traditional’ organized-crime groups, such as the Sicilian and the American mafias, since the 1980s serious scholarly work has also emerged on, for example, the Russian mafia, the Japanese Yakuza, and the Triads in Hong Kong, China, and the USA. Furthermore, researchers have recognized that the behaviour and structure of ‘traditional’ organized-crime groups, and their role in both legal and illegal markets, can be fruitfully compared and contrasted to new forms of organized crime in places as varied as Africa, Colombia, Northern Ireland, and Asia. The study of organized crime has also attracted researchers interested in popular representations of the phenomenon, mainly in films and novels. Furthermore, after the events of 11 September 2001, the intersection between organized crime and terrorism, and the ability of organized-crime groups to operate transnationally and expand to new territories, has gained a new significance.

As research on organized crime continues to flourish, this new title in the Routledge’s Critical Concepts in Criminology series addresses the need for an authoritative reference work to make sense of a rapidly growing and ever more complex corpus of interdisciplinary scholarly literature. Organized Crime is a four-volume collection of the foundational and the very best cutting-edge scholarship. It is also fully indexed and includes a comprehensive introduction, newly written by the editor, which places the collected material in its historical and intellectual context. An indispensable reference collection, it is destined to be valued by scholars and students of the subject as a vital one-stop research and pedagogic resource.