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Organised Behaviour and Organised Identity

PDF (Size: 155KB) PP. 14-19 DOI: [10.4236/blr.2010.11003](https://doi.org/10.4236/blr.2010.11003)

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ABSTRACT

There is growing body of literature which offers reviews of the concepts of organised crime and political violence, while documenting the official efforts to address such concepts jointly and treat them as a single issue. It would be intriguing to investigate how members of organised criminal groups and violent political groups respectively react to such official efforts. In my own memory, when the 'mafiosi' happened to share a prison institution with members of the Red Brigades, they would steer away from those idealist Communists who got nothing out of killing. The former, when overcoming the disgust they felt in the presence of those who in their eyes adopted an incomprehensible political stance, and perhaps even a despicable sexual lifestyle, would simply suggest: "don't make revolution, make money, you cretin!". The latter, in their turn, would deal with the former as one deals with yet a different version of the economic and political power against which they fought. Echoes of this are found in an example coming from Greece itself, where the Courts have attempted to term 'common' rather than 'political' the offences attributed to the Revolutionary Organisation November 17. The fact that organised crime is guided by material motivations and terrorism by political ones may be seen as irrelevant by official agencies pursuing the objective of degrading the 'enemy' whoever that might be. Therefore, the ceremonies of degradation, including the choice of an ad hoc vocabulary, may well serve the task, as the mad, the drug user and the terrorist constitute an undistinguishable mob in the face of which quibbling differences may just obstruct the criminal justice process. The purpose of this paper is to try and clarify a number of issues that we encounter when dealing with organised crime and political violence respectively.

KEYWORDS

Criminal Enterprise, Criminal Partnerships, Identity, Repertoires of Action, Conflict, Frame Alignment

Cite this paper

V. Ruggiero, "Organised Behaviour and Organised Identity," *Beijing Law Review*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2010, pp. 14-19. doi: [10.4236/blr.2010.11003](https://doi.org/10.4236/blr.2010.11003).

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