

Criminological Theories

Terrorists have political goals, while criminal organizations pursue personal profit goals; but some analysts see growing convergence.



Mexican drug smuggling cartels are engaged in deadly combat against the Federales. Narco-traffickers use tactics – ambushes, assassination of officials, kidnappings – indistinguishable from terrorist methods. Violence has begun to spill across the US-Mexico border.

How often do terrorist groups turn to crime to finance their operations?

When and why might terrorists collaborate with organized criminals?

Crime scene: Someone has unlawfully entered a fur farm, destroyed the cages and machines, and set free all the minks, foxes, and rabbits.

Is it malicious destruction of property or terrorism? What do you need to know to determine how to classify the act for law-enforcement purposes? What difference will your conclusion make for enforcement actions?

Contrasts: Street Criminals & Terrorists

Sam Mullins argued that crime and terrorism should be compared on three main dimensions: Methods (actions); Motives (short- & long-term goals); Profiles (who's involved). Describe how “street criminals” (muggers, thieves, robbers) differ from terrorists:

<u>DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>Street Criminals</u>	<u>Terrorists</u>
1. Methods	_____	_____
Targets	_____	_____
2. Short-term goals	_____	_____
Long-term goals	_____	_____
Other motives	_____	_____
3. Profiles	_____	_____
Backgrounds	_____	_____
Training, experiences	_____	_____

Similarities: Organized Crime & Terrorism

Mullins claimed organized crime groups (mafias, syndicates) overlap in many ways with transnational terror organizations



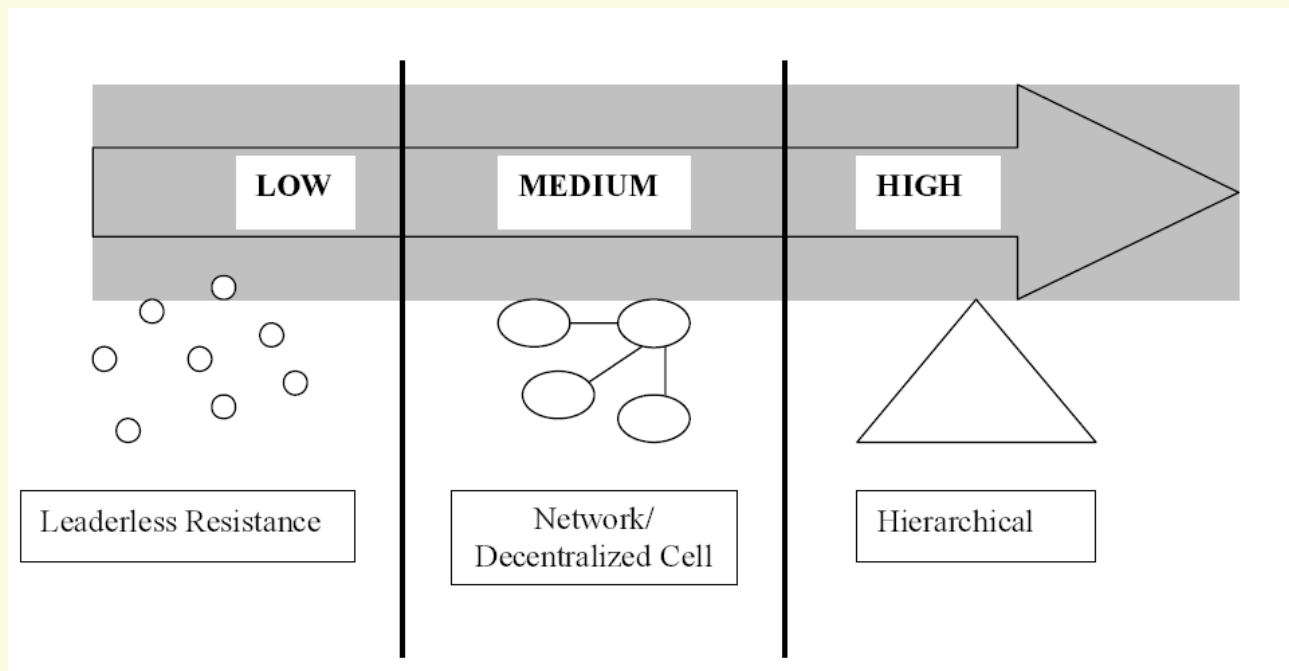
- ✓ Membership usually based on kinship & ethnicity
- ✓ Authority structures: hierarchical or decentralized
- ✓ Drug trafficking, fraud, robbery lucrative \$\$\$ sources
- ✓ Skilled in money-laundering, forgery, smuggling
- ✓ Front-orgs used to hide illegal activities
- ✓ Corruption of legal authorities (bribing police, judges)

Three patterns of collaboration, following a “**natural order of progression**”:

1. “**Alliances for mutual benefit**, where agreements are made purely for financial gain and/or to fund operations, without compromising ideology.
2. “**Direct involvement** of terror groups in organized crime, thereby removing the ‘middleman’ but maintaining ideological focus behind such tactics.”
(Seems the most common pattern: IRA, ETA, PKK, FARC, Taliban, ...)
3. “**Replacement of ideology** by profit as the main motivation for operations.”

Hierarchical Controls Breaking Down

Crackdowns by law enforcement & counterterror orgs are apparently breaking down criminal and terror orgs' hierarchical control mechanisms. Chris Dishman says fragmentation is encouraging lower-level cooperation.



Hierarchical – top leaders control all aspects of the org: recruiting, promotion, delegation of authority, planning major terror or criminal undertakings.

Network/Decentralized Cell – no single leader or command element controls entire network. Cell leader guides only activity of his own unit.

Leaderless Resistance – leader offers only inspiration; members act alone.

Cooperation at Lower Levels

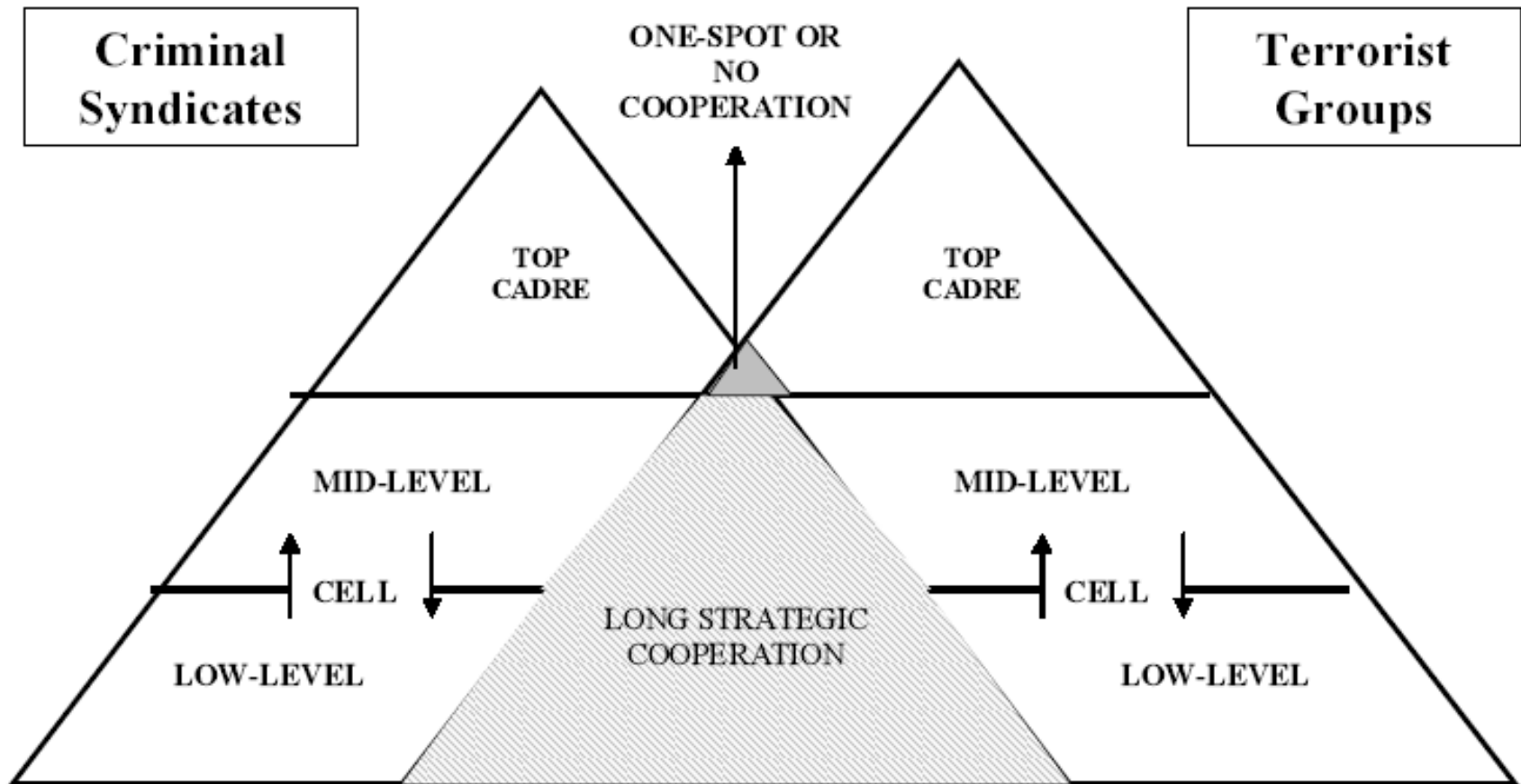


Figure 2. Graphic depiction of a new dynamic where low- to mid-level criminals and terrorists create strategic alliances with each other. These lower to mid-level members are the pillars of decentralized criminal and terrorist organizations, and cooperation between the two will lead to new challenges for law enforcement authorities.

Strange Bedfellows

Criminal orgs and terrorist cells may see mutual advantages from a collaboration, ranging from one-time illegal weapons purchase to long-term alliances in which both organizations seek the same political goals.



Class divides into small **Freedonia Liberation Org** cells to debate whether and how to cooperate with the **Sylvania Consortaria** – the neighbor-nation’s criminal syndicate.

What goods & services needed for FLO operations should your cell acquire from the Consortaria?

How can you raise enough fund\$ to buy them?

What services & skills could you barter for them?

Rufus T. Firefly, Freedonia’s ruthless dictator, has been cracking down on illegal border traffic, hurting the Sylvania Consortaria’s profits. What joint FLO-SC operation against his regime could reap mutual payoffs?

Should your cell seek a long-term merger with the Consortaria to advance Freedonia Liberation’s goals? What benefits & dangers?

The Terror-Crime Spectrum

Chester Oehme saw a growing **convergence** among criminals, insurgents, terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan, requiring “not only comprehensive steps, but very agile ones” to disrupt these hybrid networks.

“The interaction between terrorism & [transnational] organized crime is growing deeper and more complex all the time. In short, the lines of separation are no longer unequivocal.” (Shelley & Picarelli 2005:52)

The TERROR-CRIME SPECTRUM

- ✓ **Imitation:** Borrowing & copying one another's methods
- ✓ **Nexus:** Spot-market buying & selling goods and services
- ✓ **Symbiotic:** Working together regularly & sharing goals
- ✓ **Hybrid:** Terror and crime groups merge into one org
- ✓ **Transformation:** Fixates on one goal, dropping the other

Regions where a significant terror-crime **nexus** is most evident are Chechnya, former Yugoslavia, and Tri-Border Area of South America.

Oehme, Chester G. 2008. "Terrorists, Insurgents, and Criminals - Growing Nexus?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31(1):80-93.

Shelly, Louise I. and John T. Picarelli. 2005. "Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transitional Organized Crime and International Terrorism." *Trends in Organized Crime* 9(2):52-67.

The Tri-Border – An “Interstitial Zone”

Moving goods, weapons, money and people requires geographic logistics. Terrorists buy services of criminal networks to hide such transactions.

- Colombia’s FARC traded cocaine to Russian mafias for weapons
- Al Qaeda smuggled African “conflict diamonds” to fund its operations



Political instability and lawless cities of Tri-Border region lets narco-terrorism flourish. Business and illegal opportunities attract diasporas from the Mid-East, Africa, SE Asia. Huge border-crossing volume is unregulated. Hezbollah used Paraguay’s Ciudad del Este as staging area for 1992 & 1994 bombings of Israeli Embassy & Jewish-Argentine center.

Narco-terrorism: either using drug-trade profits to finance terrorism, or using terror tactics to support the drug trade.

Islamist groups used to shun drug trafficking: Afghanistan opium trade under the Taliban dropped to zero, but revived after U.S. invasion.

Are Taliban now hooked on the opium trade to fund their insurgency?