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The Divinity of Crime: How spirituality can strengthen the resilience of criminal organizations

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The Divinity of Crime:

How spirituality can strengthen the resilience of criminal organizations

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in International Crime and Justice, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City
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This thesis has been presented to and accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Crime and Justice.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis conducts a systematic analysis of open source data that discusses ideational factors of resilience in criminal organizations. It does this by looking at the role of spirituality – referred to as an individual’s moral or ethical codes influenced by cultural, ethnic, and religious values – and its effects on an organization’s durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. To understand spirituality as a factor of resilience in criminal organizations, it is delineated into four Dimensions of Spiritual Influence (DoSI). They are (1) trust, (2) spiritual neutralization, (3) strategic arenas, and (4) the logistical use of spiritual institutions. In order to analyze the role of spirituality as an element of resilience within criminal organizations, this thesis employs a systematic analysis of open source data and literature in order to collect, review, and analyze the existing secondary literature. These themes are applied to four criminal organizations in order to create a better understanding of the extent of spirituality’s influence on these organizations. The criminal organizations analyzed are (1) Jewish organized crime, (2) the Cosa Nostra, (3) the Vory v Zakone, and (4) La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar. This analysis highlights the potential influence spirituality can have on an organization’s resilience against disruption by law enforcement and rival criminal organizations.

Keywords: organized crime, criminal resilience, spirituality, systematic data analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

The most well known criminal organizations are very resilient to disruption by law enforcement and rival criminal organizations. Their resilience may be the outcome of the organization's motivation for illicit profit making, which establishes a more durable foundation for future criminal endeavors. It may be because the organization has a very cohesive structure whose membership is limited to select individuals, making it more exclusive and impenetrable to most. It may also be because the organization's structure and rules help bypass potential deterrents, thereby allowing it to adjust to any necessary changes making the organization more adaptable. In essence, these elements make criminal organizations more resilient to disruption from law enforcement, policy makers, or other criminals or criminal organizations. Resilience may also be achieved through a series of community-based or cultural bonds that help establish associational relationships among individual criminals that may eventually be the foundation for a criminal association (Ayling, 2009; von Lampe, 2016). Components of these associational bonds that have been analyzed in existing academic literature may be based on a common ethnicity, common culture, or on good relations within businesses or among a community (von Lampe, 2016). These factors are non-exhaustive and though they have been the primary components connected to associational structures, there are others that have not been sufficiently studied.

This thesis uses a systematic analysis of open source data and literature, including academic, governmental, and media sources that discusses ideational factors of resilience within criminal organizations. It does this through a data collection process that reviews the existing academic literature and uses governmental and media sources (herein

referred to as grey source) to help substantiate the academic literature. This systematic analysis looks at various pillars of criminal organizations, in particular the role of spirituality. Spirituality is referred to herein as a set of moral and ethical codes within an individual that is acquired in large part through cultural, ethnic, and religious values. Spirituality, as a kind of associational bond, is an inherent characteristic of most individuals and an important element in an organization's resilience (henceforth referred to as organizational resilience). By understanding this potential element in criminal organizations, law enforcement and policy makers can better tailor their counter-crime policies, approaches, and tactics.

1.1. Relevance, Application, and Significance

The "life span" of criminal organizations varies based on a number of factors. Some organizations are designed to function for a short period of time in a specific criminal market or racket. Others establish themselves or become established as a structured criminal organization with strict codes of conduct, selective membership, and an array of criminal activities. A key element that distinguishes between these two functional degrees of operations is an organization's resilience to disturbance that can cause unexpected change and impact the workings of the organization. The group's organizational resilience can be analyzed by looking at its durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. This thesis aims to study these three elements of organizational resilience as an outcome of the spirituality of its members by applying the concept of spirituality to Jewish organized crime, the Cosa Nostra, the Vory v Zakone, and La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar (LFM/KT).

By developing an in-depth understanding of a criminal organization's level of resilience and by understanding that spirituality can be a potential element in an organization's resilience, law enforcement and policy makers can adjust their strategies to better address and combat criminal organizations. It is important to note that spirituality is not the only factor in an organization's resilience. This study, however, will exclusively look at the role of spirituality in boosting criminal resilience defined along the lines of durability, impenetrability, and adaptability of criminal organizations.

1.2. Outline

This thesis starts by defining key terms and ideas used in the study, such as: religiousness, spirituality, resilience, the distinction between criminal organizations and terrorist organizations, and the Dimensions of Spiritual Influence (DoSI). The DoSI are: (1) trust, (2) spiritual neutralization, (3) strategic arenas, and (4) logistical use of religious institutions. It continues by briefly outlining the methodology used throughout this thesis, justifying the selection of the criminal organizations used in the paper, and describing and outlining the systematic of open source data and literature used in this paper. Finally, it applies the four (DoSI) to the four criminal organizations to better understand the effect spirituality has on the resilience of criminal organizations. The thesis concludes with a synopsis of the analyses and provides suggestions for future research in this emerging academic theme.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections constitute a review of the existing literature presented with the objective to define the key concepts used in the thesis and evaluate the current literature

on criminal resilience. It starts by defining spirituality and looking at the idea of criminal identity and the role of spirituality in it. To build on this, the concept of resilience will be looked at in reference to criminal organizations and how spirituality can directly or indirectly affect the resilience within the respective criminal organization. This is done by defining and contextualizing the Dimensions of Spiritual Influence (DoSI), which are used to represent spirituality.

2.1. Religion v. Spirituality

The following section will look at the difference between spirituality and religiousness. Considering the heavy emphasis put on faith and identity in this thesis, it is important to briefly discuss the key concepts that relate to this idea. “Religiousness” and “spirituality” are commonly used, often interchangeably, to describe and define an individual’s or a group’s overall level and type of faith. In reality, these terms have very different meanings. Before comparing the two, the term “religion” and its plural form will be used as an umbrella term for all recognized forms of organized or institutionalized religions (i.e. Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, etc.). The terms “religiousness” and “spirituality” will instead be used to refer to an individual’s or a group’s specific level of and type of self-identification.

The term “religiousness”, when used in general, and the term “religious”, when used to specify an individual’s or a group’s respective level of “religiousness”, refers to the level at which an individual or a group adheres to some form of organized or institutional religion (Jang & Franzen, 2013, p. 598; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997, p. 561) – herein simply referred to as “religion”. “Spirituality” is a more complex concept and refers to an individual’s subjective morals, be they religious or non-religious (Jang &

Franzen, 2013, p. 598; Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008, p. 88; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997, p. 561). The key difference is that spirituality is very individualistic (Jang & Franzen, 2013) and though it may be rooted in some form of religion, it does not necessarily have to be. Some scholars argue that spirituality blends individual beliefs and complements religion (Good, Willoughby, & Busseri, 2011). Others suggest that spirituality intrinsically opposes religion because of its individualistic approach (Zinnbauer, et al., 1997). This thesis combines the reasoning of Jang & Franzen (2013) and Good, Willoughby, & Busseri (2011). Spirituality is an individualistic concept in that every person has a unique type of spirituality. For most people, it is rooted in religious teachings and may be a complement to organized religion. For others, it is independent of religion and is instead based on community, ethnicity, or individual beliefs and morals.

Spirituality is a more flexible concept in that it is highly individualistic and is grounded in cultural, ethnic, and religious values that are interpreted by an individual and applied for his or her own moral purposes. It also helps identify an individual's morals and beliefs that are not necessarily found in religion. An individual's spiritual identity varies from one person to another and many individuals identify with religious teachings and principles, whereas many others do not.

The concepts of religiousness and spirituality are not independent from one another. In a study of 346 participants who represented six Christian churches, a mental health clinic, a nursing home, and three different universities, most of the respondents identified themselves as being both religious and spiritual; fewer identified themselves as religious and not spiritual; even less identified themselves as neither religious nor spiritual; and the least identified themselves as neither religious nor spiritual (Zinnbauer

et al., 1997). Zinnbauer defined spirituality as mystical experiences, “New Age” beliefs and practices, and a pantheistic or agnostic belief about God, whereas he defined religiousness as religious orthodoxy, intrinsic religiousness, and parental religiousness (Zinnbauer et al., p. 552). Though this study is not necessarily representative of the population as a whole, it attempts to show that spirituality is a very distinct concept (Zinnbauer et al., 1997) and means different things to different people because it is easily interpreted and often confused with “religiousness” (Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008). Religiousness, by definition, is more rigidly related to concepts, teachings, and beliefs in specific religions. In this sense, it is somewhat limited in its application because there are people that broadly interpret their religion and others who simply use religious teachings as general guidelines. This rigidity restricts the overall applicability of “religiousness” as a concept. Spirituality is more applicable because of its leniency. It relies heavily on an individual’s belief and moral identity, rather than an identity forced upon the individual or group by a religious institution.

2.2. Spiritual Identity and Resilience of Criminal Organizations

Transitioning from the comparison between spirituality and religiousness, this section first looks at “criminal identity”, which is defined as an individual’s self-perception and sense of being within a larger community or organization. It next looks at the idea of resilience within criminal organizations and the specific type of criminal organizations that are the most resilient. Finally, it looks at an individual member’s spirituality identity and how that can affect an organization’s resilience. For the sake of clarity, it is important to first briefly discuss associational structures and how they relate to criminal

organizations to better understand the application of “criminal identity” to criminal organizations.

Associational structures of organized crime play an important role in the establishment of criminal organizations in that they: create and reinforce social bonds, facilitate communication, promote mutual aid, and establish and enforce codes of conducts among their members (von Lampe, 2016, p. 172). Associational structures, because they are based primarily on patterns of social relations, are primarily established after models from larger communities that are founded on a common ethnicity, culture, and “sense of belonging”. To add to this, these social relations may be influenced by and established on a common spirituality among individuals who come together and form a criminal association. Criminal associations have varying degrees of formalization, which can have an effect on the organization’s durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. Though these factors may vary based on the formalization, criminal associations are, for the most part, more resilient because of their social foundations and functions (von Lampe, 2016, p. 184).

2.2.1. Criminal Identity

The following section looks at the general concept of “identity” and how it may apply to criminals and criminal organizations. Attempting to define, describe, or even categorize an individual’s or a group’s identity is a complex task aided in part by a theoretical realm of academic literature that attempts to provide some clarification of these concepts. Côté (1996) follows the patterns of “identity” over time and applied it to how individuals identify themselves both within a larger social structure and on a more individual level as a result of interactions within an institution.

An individual's identity within a larger structure is in small part based on the individual's personal accomplishments, achievement of merit, and material attainment. In large part, it's based on an individual's social interactions and the evaluation of the individual in that moment in the encounter (Côté, 1996, pp. 420-421). The importance of these short-term encounters on one's identity puts a heavy emphasis on how and where criminals interact. It shows that a criminal's identity within a larger structure is based on his or her ability to network and create dyadic ties. This has much to do with where a criminal spends time and with whom he or she interacts, as opposed to how successful and wealthy – both materially and through reputation – the individual is. It shows that from a law enforcement and policy perspective, heavy emphasis must be placed on locales in which criminals converge (criminal locales), in addition to looking at an individual's wealth and rank as a result of their criminality. This idea is addressed in a later section.

An individual's identity, in the sense of self-perception, is based on an uncritical acceptance of others' appraisal and expectations. This produces a "conformist" integration into the community where an individual will change his or her character to meet the perceived standards of the community. This permits one access to the community as long as the individual's image does not disturb the one projected by and accepted in the community (Côté, 1996, pp. 420-421). This very "judgment-based" form of identity pressures individuals to conform to the norms of their community. Though this may be difficult for someone who has already conformed to the norms and standards of another community, children, as an exception, more easily imitate the norms of the community in which they are raised (Côté, 1996). This exposure, if taken advantage of by

criminal organizations, can restructure an individual's identity to conform to the criminal organization rather than a larger legitimate society.

If a community is founded on a common spirituality, this belief may be absorbed and projected as a form of self-identification. Much like with a community, if criminals with a common spirituality establish social bonds, use their spirituality to facilitate communication and promote mutual aid among each other, and establish and enforce codes founded on their common spirituality, they in turn create a more resilient associational structure because the organization is more durable, impenetrable, and adaptable.

2.2.2. Resilience

This section looks at the concept of "resilience" and the degree to which some criminal organizations are more resilient than others. Resilience refers to the ability of a particular system to overcome disturbance and reorganize itself while undergoing unexpected changes, so the system can retain the same structure, identity, and responses over a long period of time (Walker, et al., 2004). When applied to criminal organizations, this essentially means that an organization (1) has the capacity to absorb and thus withstand disruption and (2) has the capacity to adapt, when necessary, to changes arising from that disruption (Ayling, 2009).

An analysis of criminal organizations, specifically their creation and resilience, has been conducted by a number of scholars (Abadinsky, 2010; Ayling, 2009; Fried, 1980; Gottschalk, 2008; Morselli, 2009; von Lampe, 2016). They looked at dyadic ties that create networks among individual criminals and the various applications of these ties. (Abadinsky, 2010; von Lampe, 2016). According to von Lampe (2003; 2016), such

ties, when active, can be combined among many individuals to form a network of ties that can result in a criminal network or organization. These ties are often based on a certain level of trust that may be formed directly between two individuals (von Lampe, 2016). Organizational resilience is strengthened if the dyadic ties are between members of a criminal organization and if the ties are founded on strong inter-personal relationships. There are many different types of criminal organizations and their resilience is each affected by different factors. This is in large part a result of an organization's "maturity level".

To more clearly delineate among the many different types of criminal organizations, Gottschalk (2008) categorizes criminal organizations by organizational maturity levels. He described four maturity levels that can be used to better classify criminal organizations. These classifications are as follow: level 1 – activity-based; level 2 – knowledge-based; level 3 – strategy-based; level 4 – value-based. Organizational resilience is based primarily on an organization's maturity level and of these levels, 1 is considered the least mature and 4 the most. Activity-based organizations structure their rules and activities strictly around the business they are involved in (p. 108). An example of this would be a small dynamic group of amateur pickpockets who work together to make as much money as possible (Sutherland, 1937). Knowledge-based organizations, though still heavily business oriented, value individual knowledge of criminal businesses acquired through experience (Gottschalk, 2008, p. 109). Again an example using pickpockets would be if a group of pickpockets selected potential partners based on their level of experience rather than their interpersonal relationships. Strategy-based organizations encompass all of the characteristics of activity and knowledge-based

organizations, but also actively focus on their organizational structure and in establishing policies as tools for long-term resilience (Gottschalk, 2008, p. 109-110). Value-based organizations, being the most mature of organizations, put a heavy emphasis on their organizational culture. Organizational culture is a set of shared norms, values, and perceptions that are developed through extended interaction among members of the organization (Gottschalk, 2008, p. 110).

From among these levels of maturity, value-based organizations are the most advanced and resilient of the four levels. This level includes the more traditional and commonly recognized criminal organizations such as the Italian Mafia and the Russian Vory v Zakone (Gottschalk, 2008). Their maturity and heavy focus on organizational culture make traditional organizations the most suitable for this thesis, as opposed to other emerging criminal organizations such as certain types of traffickers and cybercriminals. Many of these organizations have survived for decades through various political and economic transitions in a variety of locales. These organizations last as long as they do because they have a certain level of resilience. In the case of the Italian Cosa Nostra in the United States and in Italy, they survived through the Fascist regime in Italy during the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, the organization was able to adapt to numerous policies and economic transitions within the United States and Italy that attempted to restrict the organization's criminal attempts. The Russian Vory v Zakone were able to overcome numerous leadership transitions within the country, as well as several attempts by the Soviet government that attempted to directly attack the organization and incarcerate its members (Varese, 1998).

2.2.3. Resilience through Spirituality

When looking at the elements of trust established through personal or social bonds noted earlier in the literature review, there is a feature not mentioned in the theoretical framework that, along with other elements, helps bolster an organization's long-term resilience. This overlooked variable is spirituality. Up until now, scholars may have viewed spiritual beliefs or association with a religious institution as a factor in a larger variable such as ethnic or community bonds, but spirituality is an important element among individuals and within groups that helps facilitate long-term resilience through four key DoSI. They are: trust as a result of spirituality, spiritual neutralization of wrongdoing and justification of criminal acts, adoption of spiritual locales for networking and creating dyadic ties, and the logistical use of religious institutions for committing or covering up crimes.

Spirituality as a form of self-identification is usually highly individualistic in that an individual's family, friends, and community can heavily influence one's specific spirituality and willingness to practice it. Using Côté's (1996) analysis of individual identity, if a community's perceived norm is a certain type and level of religious observance, it can have a substantial effect on an individual's spirituality. This conformity to spiritual identities may eventually be applied in a criminal organization by providing a level of standardization of spirituality – along with a common ethnicity and social environment – that further reinforces an organization's structure and purpose. It strengthens the individual's opinion and trust of the group because the group shares the individual's spiritual views. A criminal organization such as this creates members that are dedicated more to the ideas and philosophies of the criminal organization, rather than

simply the potential material benefits. When criminals are more dedicated to their organization, they more closely identify themselves with the organization, which only bolsters the organization. This reinforcement of social and personal morals thereby leads to greater organizational resilience because it distinguishes the organization as unique and separate from the general population and from other criminal organizations. As a result of this schism, this autonomous community becomes more secretive and tries to become more exclusive and impenetrable to outsiders, leading to greater internalization and further resilience.

2.3. Religion and the Crime-Terror Nexus

This section addresses the previously discussed differentiation between religiousness and spirituality as applied to religious extremist groups and criminal organizations. When thinking about criminal groups and their association with religion, religious extremist groups are generally the first that come to mind, which is why these groups are more closely associated with religiousness. Criminal organizations may relate to religious institutions in some ways, but it is not an inherent feature of the organization. Instead, these groups are spiritual, rather than religious.

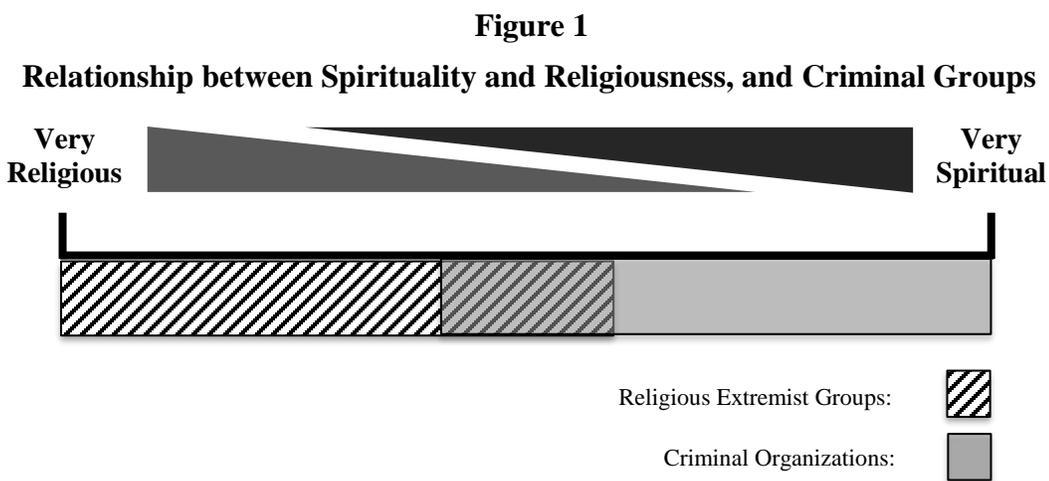


Figure 1 highlights the spectrum between religiousness and spirituality and it notes where “religious extremist groups” and “criminal organizations” fall on the scale. These two groups are only larger categories within which many active terrorist and criminal organizations fall respectively. At the points of overlap between religious extremist groups and criminal organizations, religiousness and spirituality each play a role in influencing the group. Even though a group may be primarily religious, a certain level of spirituality may also influence it, and vice versa. Because of this overlap, it becomes more difficult to establish whether a group is motivated primarily by religiousness, spirituality, or to some extent both.

Religious extremist groups refer to groups that engage in premeditated acts of violence for religious and/or ideological ends. It is done so with the intention of inflicting harm on the civilian population, intimidate the public, and coerce government or state compliance with the goals of the perpetrator (Rudner, 2006). Extremist groups are more commonly referred to as terrorist groups. When looking at their placement in Figure 1, they fall primarily on left – or the religious – side of the scale. This shows that these groups may be very religious in nature, less religious and a little spiritual, or somewhat religious and spiritual. This means that the majority of the group’s criminal acts and structures are driven by religious motivations, yet there are other extremist groups whose motivations for criminality are both religious and spiritual.

Criminal organizations refer to organizations that are made up of an enduring network of actors engaging in ongoing and continuous profit-driven activities (Hutchinson & O’malley, 2007). A prime example of groups that fall within this category would be criminal organizations such as the Sicilian Mafia or the ‘Ndrangheta, two

Italian criminal organizations. In Figure 1, criminal organizations fall primarily on the right – or the spiritual – side of the spectrum. This shows that groups or their members are very spiritual, less spiritual and a little religious, or somewhat religious and spiritual. As with extremist groups, this breakdown means that the majority of the group's criminality and structure are based on some degree of the organization's or the individual's spirituality. Another differentiation is that some groups engage in criminal acts without spiritual motivation, whereas others are motivated by their spirituality and potential religiousness when committing crimes. As is the concept of spirituality, it motivates the individuals within the group, rather than the actions of the group as a whole.

When looking at crimes committed by organizations influenced by religion, terrorist groups are generally one of the first groups that come to mind. Extremist groups are cited as being founded upon and committing crime as a result of their association with their religion (Ranstorp, 1996). This is highlighted primarily because it's a more widely recognized phenomenon that is perpetuated, in large part, by unequal media coverage (Basra & Neumann, 2016). It is necessary to understand that extremist groups were neither founded on nor commit crime for the same reasons as criminal organizations. Ranstorp (1996) argues that extremist groups are formed primarily as a result of a serious crisis in their environment. In essence, this crisis is a perceived threat to their identity and survival and therefore view their actions, licit and illicit, as defensive and reactive, to justify them in a way. These actions vary and are justified by extremist groups in different ways. Commonly recognized actions are committing "acts of terror" in general. Other less recognized actions are more criminal in nature executed with the sole intention

of funding their extremist group or terrorist organization (Bricknell, 2011). Some examples of these criminal acts are smuggling (Shelley & Melzer, 2008), drug production and trafficking (Dishman, 2005; Sharma, 2013), and money laundering (Bricknell, 2011). As opposed to criminal organizations where the organization's goal is to turn a profit, most extremist groups only engage in criminal acts to make enough money to fund their extremist actions (Makarenko, 2004).

Looking at the relationship between criminal organizations and extremist groups, scholars have created various arguments that attempt to highlight the relationship between these two groups. One argument is that terrorist groups derive from criminal organizations and that many of these criminal organizations are formed when many individual terrorists decide to work together. This can categorize the group as a criminal organization (Basra & Neumann, 2016; Bricknell, 2011; Hutchinson & O'malley, 2007; Makarenko, 2004; Sharma, 2013). An alternate argument is that terrorist groups and organized crime groups remain separate and distinct groups, yet work together in committing criminal acts to suit the group's respective needs (Dishman, 2005; Shelley & Melzer, 2008). It is as a result of this that the group's recognized association with religious institutions will be the main determining factor used to differentiate between a religious extremist group and a criminal organization.

This debate amongst scholars is independent from the main subject of this thesis, yet is crucial to mention because of the association between religiousness and extremist groups. If not mentioned, it could cause confusion about the relationship between religiousness and spirituality and religious extremist groups and criminal organizations. This confusion would be a direct result of this thesis's inability to properly delineate

between spirituality and religiousness and their relationships with these distinct groups. Now that this key debate has been discussed, the remainder of this thesis will focus primarily on the concepts of spirituality and how it can influence the resilience of criminal organizations.

2.4. Dimensions of Spiritual Influence

Looking at spirituality as a potential element influencing the resilience of criminal organizations, being as broad of a concept as it is, it is important to first break down the concept of spirituality and make it clearly distinguishable, measurable, and thus more understandable in terms of empirical observations. To do this, the application of spirituality was broken down into four main dimensions of spiritual influence (DoSI). These are the aspects of a criminal organization that spirituality can have an effect on in order to strengthen the group's resilience. They are (1) trust as a result of spirituality, (2) spiritual neutralization of wrongdoing and justification of criminal acts, (3) adoption of spiritual locales for networking and creating dyadic ties, and (4) the logistical use of religious institutions for committing or covering up crimes.

DoSI 1-3 apply more directly to the spirituality element and how it affects long-term resilience of a criminal organization, whereas DoSI 4 not only looks indirectly at the resilience concept, but also at an organization's logistical advantages as a result of their spirituality. These logistical advantages mostly relate to organizations or to individual members whose spirituality is related to or closely associated with a specific religion and its religious institutions. This association can create potential opportunities for organizations to engage in criminal acts with the facilitation or assistance of religious institutions that represent the respective religion that the organization/individual's

spirituality relates to. Though this may not have a direct effect on resilience, it hosts the potential for criminality.

The general DoSI outlined herein have been applied to organized crime (Felson, 2006; Sykes & Matza, 1957; von Lampe & Johansen, 2004; von Lampe, 2016) while looking at spirituality as the potential facilitator and element to the theory. The DoSI, though applied to criminal organizations, do not exclusively apply to the criminal arena and can be used to explain spirituality's effects in the legitimate realm.

The following sections will review the criminological theories of trust, spiritual neutralization, criminal convergence settings, and logistical use of certain businesses and enterprises. This analysis is presented with the objective to illustrate how these DoSI, when applied to a criminal organization, highlight the depth and type of spirituality in that specific group. Then it will describe how such spiritual application has an effect on the resilience of the criminal organization as a whole.

2.4.1. Trust

Trust is a necessary element when looking at a variety of arenas, be they political, economic, social, or criminal (Misztal, 1996). Trust in general, facilitates interpersonal relations and helps create and maintain a series of dyadic ties that can be exploited by criminals and non-criminals alike (von Lampe & Johansen, 2004). Considering the theme of this thesis, primarily trust among criminals will be analyzed.

There are a number of ways trust can be formed among criminals. One such example is through common areas that criminals frequent where they establish ties through this common locale (Felson, 2006). This form of trust building has been used to refer to bars, pool halls, restaurants, or any other locations where criminals may frequent

and meet other criminals with whom they can network (Felson, 2006). This also applies uniquely to organizations with a certain type of spirituality. As a result, this form of trust building has been identified as its own DoSI in that a spiritual institution may take the place of a bar or restaurant and be used for establishing trust. It will be analyzed more in depth in “2.4.3. Strategic Arenas”.

Another form of trust building is establishing trust through criminality or illegal conditions, which can result from continuous interactions among criminals or groups (von Lampe & Johansen, 2004). An intermediary can mediate and establish trust between two parties by “vouching” for each (von Lampe, 2016). Trust may also be established because of a party’s criminal reputation and the trust is established more on a basis of necessity, rather than an interpersonal relationship (von Lampe, 2016). Lastly, trust among criminal organizations may form when organizations share a similar moral policy or code of conduct such as non-cooperation with law enforcement (Reuter, 1983).

Trust may also be established as a result of legitimate social relations. These social relations start as legitimate relations between criminal parties, non-criminal parties, or both criminal and non-criminal parties (von Lampe, 2016). In essence, the original interaction is non-criminal in nature, yet the relationship builds and this trust then results in some degree of criminality. One such relation may be that which individuals have with their family members (Giddens, 1990). This relationship, though in some aspects may be viewed as originating through a certain degree of obligation, is built on long-term interaction and similar familiar norms and values (Misztal, 1996).

Another relation is built around an individual’s local community and ethnicity. Communities may share norms and values similar to those an individual find within the

family (Giddens, 1990). This idea of common norms and values may also be attributed to an individual's ethnicity and ethnic upbringing (Kleemans & Van de Bunt, 1999), especially if the community in which an individual was brought up, shares a similar ethnicity. Ethnicity can play a big role in the facilitation of trust and may be a factor in the emergence of a criminal structure (von Lampe, 2016; see also, e.g., Arsovska & Craig, 2006; Decker & Townsend Chapman, 2008). Finally, another relationship may form from legitimate business relations among individuals within one company, individuals in separate companies, or between companies as a whole. These relations could result in some form of criminality among the parties (Kleemans & Van de Bunt, 2008). As mentioned previously, these various relationships can become building blocks for criminal structures.

After reviewing the literature on trust and the potential that trust has on facilitating criminality, there is a missing element. Spirituality was not often referred to in the academic literature on organized crime. When it is mentioned, it is usually done so in association with communities or its application in that community's common ethnicity (Misztal, 1996). Ethnicity has been recognized as a facilitator of criminal structures and an element of ethnicity may be the group's specific spirituality. Common spirituality can facilitate trust and create dyadic ties among individuals that may or may not be founded on criminal grounds. Spirituality would also be more effective in establishing trust when a community estranges those individuals who follow a spiritual belief inconsistent with that of the community (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). This trust built upon a common spirituality, in addition to other elements, can be used to create resilient criminal organizations. Trust, as an element of spirituality, is most effective when used together

with other DoSI. These other DoSI, starting with spiritual neutralization, will be analyzed in the following sections.

2.4.2. Spiritual Neutralization

Neutralization is a criminological theory originally proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957) where criminals will fail to recognize their actions as criminal and justifying their wrongdoings, thereby convincing themselves that their crimes are either not criminal, or are in some way justified. Sykes and Matza (1957) propose that this is done, in large part, through what they call neutralization techniques. They propose five techniques: *denial of responsibility*, *denial of the victim*, and *denial of injury*, *condemnation of condemners*, and *appeal to higher loyalties* (Sykes & Matza, 1957). They attempt to provide specific explanations or types of justification for specific types of criminality. Other criminologists have proposed additional neutralization techniques such as a *claim of normalcy*, *claim of entitlement* (Coleman, 2006), *denial of negative intent*, *claim of relative acceptability* (Lanier, Henry, & Anastasia, 2015), *metaphor of the ledger* (Klockars, 1974), and *defense of necessity* (Minor, 1981). Many of these neutralization techniques were established because of an in-depth analysis of a specific form of criminality. In other words some of these techniques are more applicable to certain forms of crime than to others, but overall, neutralization as a general concept can be applied to a variety of different crimes and provide a variety of different justifications for criminality.

Continuing along the general theme of this thesis, the criminological theory of neutralization is considered a DoSI because spirituality can act as a form of justification for an individual's or a group's actions. When looking at spirituality as justification for criminality, Sykes and Matza's fifth neutralization technique, *appeal to higher loyalties*,

is the most applicable. This technique does not specifically refer to spirituality as a “higher power”, but Sykes and Matza (1957) use it to refer to a specific group or community with which an individual is associated as the influential “higher power”. This is important because an individual may sacrifice the demands of a society, and instead act according to the norms of his or her specific group or community, even if those actions are criminal (p. 669). If these norms are spiritual in nature, then an individual may indirectly justify his or her actions by arguing that the actions were acceptable because they are consistent with the respective group’s spirituality.

To add to this argument, spirituality does not necessarily have to be involved indirectly. It may be the primary justification for a criminal act and therefore still fall under the general umbrella theory of “neutralization” instead of under one of Sykes and Matza’s neutralization theories because there may not be a specific neutralization technique that applies to this kind of justification for criminality. In other words, an individual may justify his or her actions based on his or her spiritual beliefs. This form of justification will be more specifically referred to as “spiritual neutralization”. This said, the individual might not necessarily say that his or her spirituality demanded the crime to be executed. Though this may happen, spirituality as a form of justification is more applicable on an individual level rather than an organizational. The type of spiritual neutralization focused on is one where spirituality is an indirect justification for criminality. This indirect justification is done so through organizational or individual platforms.

Criminal organizations may directly or indirectly be associated with some form of spirituality. The organization itself may be founded on a common spiritual belief, it may

be associated with an ethnicity that is culturally associated with a certain type of spirituality, or it in no way associates itself with any form of spirituality. The organizational platform may be easier to identify as being associated with a certain degree or type of spirituality, but this does not necessarily mean that the members of the organization have adapted the spirituality. The individual platform of spirituality, on the other hand, is more difficult to identify because if an individual does not openly identify his or her type and level of spirituality, it is impossible to identify. At the same time, if a group of individuals who share a common spirituality are members of a specific criminal organization, the members may affect the organization's level and type of spirituality altering or creating different justifications for crime. This indistinct phenomenon may make it difficult to identify the norms of the organization, thereby making it difficult for law-enforcement to properly address the criminal organization.

2.4.3. Strategic Arenas

The third DoSI, when looking at its affect on the resilience of criminal organizations, is the adoption of spiritual locales for the establishment of dyadic ties and for hosting meetings between individual criminals in one or more groups. This idea was based on Felson's (2003) concept of a "criminal convergence setting". This is a place where offenders are likely to converge, which then become hotspots for potential criminality. These settings can be used for potential networking, maintaining criminal relationships, and for the acquisition of intelligence for criminal acts (Felson, 2006). Considering the scope of this idea, the settings are herein referred to as "strategic arenas". This DoSI is further broken down based on the intended use of the locale. The term, "networking arena", will be used herein to refer to locales used, intentionally or unintentionally, for

networking purposes. The term “logistic arena” will be used herein to refer to locales used for the planning of or organization of crime. A locale may be both a networking arena and a logistic arena depending on its intended for unintended uses. As opposed to Felson’s (2006) argument that states that a criminal convergence setting becomes a hot spot for crime once more criminals converge in that area, a strategic arena is not criminal in nature and may not necessarily result in increased criminality in that area or locale, it is simply used by groups or individuals for criminal purposes without the knowledge of the arena. This feature differentiates criminal convergence settings from strategic arenas.

A strategic arena will often host a number of patrons. Ongoing interaction among these patrons may result in the unintended establishment of dyadic ties, which are the result of extended interactions and a certain level of trust (von Lampe, 2016). As has been mentioned previously, this establishment of trust may potentially lead to concerted action, perhaps even of a criminal nature. This may often be taken advantage of by criminals intending to network with other criminals or non-criminals. Non-criminals who network with other non-criminals may also use these arenas. In these circumstances, these locales would instead be considered “networking arenas”.

A locale is considered a logistic arena at that moment it is being used to plan, organize, or recruit for a criminal act. This is similar to Felson’s (2003) argument about the use of criminal convergence settings for networking, maintaining criminal relationships, and for the acquisition of intelligence. It differs; again, in that a strategic arena is not criminal in nature, otherwise its uses do overlap with those of criminal convergence settings.

When analyzing strategic arenas as a dimension of spiritual influence, a heavy emphasis is placed on strategic arenas that are spiritual in nature. Some examples of strategic arenas may be restaurants, schools, barbershops, or spiritual locations such as churches, mosques, and synagogues. The latter three and the events, functions, celebrations, and holidays relating to these locations will be the main focus of this section. There are instances where spiritual locales may be used logistically to facilitate crime or to aid criminals in committing crime. In these scenarios, they are not referred to as strategic arenas and instead fall within their own category, which will be analyzed in the following section.

2.4.4. Logistical use of Religious Institution

Though this DoSI is not a direct facilitator for organizational resilience, it is an important area to discuss when looking at criminality and spiritual organizations. As mentioned previously, an individual's spirituality may be based on a specific religion and the morals and codes expressed in that religion's teachings. Whether it is the organization or the individual therein that identifies with a certain type and to a certain degree of spirituality, the type of spirituality may be religious in nature. As a result, the organization or individual may still be closely associated with a religious institution. This creates a potential opportunity to take advantage of this religious institution, not only as a strategic arena but also as a logistical institution that can be used to help organize, facilitate, or execute a criminal act. This is not to say that all religious institutions are used for criminal purposes but to suggest that the potential for said application is present. This may be taken advantage of by individual criminals or organizations as a whole.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Organized crime is an ongoing problem in many parts of the world. Law-enforcement officials and policymakers have experimented with numerous tactics in order to limit an organization's network, restrict their criminal opportunities, and ideally break down the organization's structure. Scholars have looked at a number of different criminal organizations, but each organization is unique in its own way. These differences can vary significantly based on how and why they were founded, the types of crime they profited from, the community from which they originated, and how long they have been in existence. Some organizations only encompass a small network of criminals who specialize in one area of criminality, whereas others may have an extensive network of contacts and colleagues that are transnational and are involved in many different areas of criminality. Considering the diversity among criminal organizations, some groups are harder to identify and dismantle than others. To some extent, this inability to disband an organization has much to do with the specific organization's level of resilience. As has been discussed previously, criminal organizational resilience varies from one group to another and more resilient groups are, by definition, more adaptable and therefore more difficult to dismantle. There are many factors that may give one group an advantage when it comes to resilience, and scholars have looked at some of these factors with respect to more active and resilient organizations.

3.1. Research Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to explore additional resilience factors to contribute to the academic literature of the resilience of criminal organizations. This is not to say that the factors law-enforcement and policy makers have been addressing until now are

no longer relevant, but rather it hopes to add insight to another factor that may influence an organization's durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. "Spirituality" as this additional factor and its effects on several dimensions of criminal organizations is analyzed. These dimensions include the level and type of trust among criminals within an organization, an individual's justification of wrongdoing within an organization, the locales in which criminals interact, and certain logistical advantages granted criminal organizations. Spirituality's effect on these dimensions could directly lead to better organizational resilience, strengthening the organization's durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. By better understanding the effect spirituality may have on a criminal organization, the source of the organization's resilience can be better understood and therefore, more effective policies can be implemented in order to hinder the criminal organization.

3.2. Research Question & Design

This thesis addresses the research question: How does spirituality influence the resilience of criminal organizations?

This thesis employs a systematic analysis of open source data and literature in order to collect, review, and analyze the existing secondary literature in order to address the previously stated research question. The specifics of the data analysis, such as the search terms used and how the findings are applied to the thesis, will be discussed in detail in a later section. In short, the research acquired will be used to analyze the themes of this thesis and its elements. The themes – spirituality and resilience – were first established and categorized into more manageable ideas in order to simplify the analysis. Spirituality was broken down into four elements, referred to as, Dimensions of Spiritual

Influence (DoSI): (1) trust, (2) spiritual neutralization, (3) strategic arenas, and (4) logistical use of religious institutions. Resilience was broken down into three definable elements: (1) durability, (2) impenetrability, and (3) adaptability. These themes and their elements are defined in the following section. In order to analyze the effect spirituality had on the resilience of criminal organizations, four criminal organizations were purposefully selected for analysis. These organizations are Jewish Organized Crime, the Cosa Nostra, the Vory v Zakone, and La Familia Michoacana/Knight's Templar. The DoSI were applied to these organizations in order to better judge the organization's resilience. The analysis looked first at the number of sources that discussed one of the DoSI with respect to a criminal organization. After that, anecdotes and evidence is provided from the literature in order to substantiate the relationship between the DoSI and the Criminal Organization.

3.3. Description of Themes

Resilience*

** These elements must all be present for the best resilience within an organization. Some criminal organizations may focus on only one of the three elements more than others, but these organizations implement each element to some extent.*

Durability

- The general term is defined herein as a criminal organization's ability to withstand any internal or external pressures that have the potential to disrupt the structure or the functions of the organization.

Impenetrability

- This refers to a criminal organization's ability to withstand infiltration from law enforcement, accidental intrusion from law-abiding citizens, or from other criminal

organizations. An organization is more resilient if it's membership remains exclusive and if the organization restricts membership to certain individuals, and limits the number of inductees annually.

Adaptability

- This is defined as the organization's ability to acclimate to changes that arise as a result of changes in laws, policies, law enforcement practices, the availability or scarcity of technology, the expansion or contraction of illegal markets, competition, or any other factor that can have an effect on the structure or functioning of the organization.

Spirituality*

** The elements of the independent variable are referred to as "Dimensions of Spiritual Influence" (DoSI) because this thesis looks at how spirituality influences these elements in order to better impact the resilience of criminal organizations.*

Trust

- The general term is defined as the mutual confidence established between two or more parties as a result of one party's reputation, personal or professional interactions, or through the mediation of a recognized neutral party. This confidence helps facilitate criminal endeavors despite the potential risk of betrayal.

Spiritual Neutralization

- In the broadest sense, it is an individual's justification of wrongdoing. It is a means by which individuals, criminal or non-criminal, rationalize criminal actions and convince themselves that the act was either not criminal, even though it is illegal, or that the act was justified.

Strategic Arenas

- Locale that is used by criminals to network, maintain criminal relationships, and for the acquisition of intelligence. The locale is not criminal in nature and for it to fall in this

category; it cannot be associated with criminals nor intentionally or knowingly facilitate interactions among criminals.

Logistical use of Religious Institutions

- This refers to the intentional use of religious institutions for criminal endeavors, through the facilitation, permission, or knowledge of the institution.

3.4. Selection of Criminal Organizations

Criminal organizations are used in this thesis so that the effects of spirituality on an organization's resilience can be better analyzed. As has been discussed earlier, there are four dimensions that spirituality can influence within an organization. These DoSI have an effect on one of three elements of resilience within an organization. As can be expected, the DoSI have a different effect on each organization. The question then stands: Which criminal organization can best represent the effect a DoSI may have on resilience? There are many criminal organizations to choose from. This section looks at this selection process and why the four organizations analyzed in this thesis were chosen. Before looking at the options, a few general requirements were established in order to narrow the options from which to choose. Firstly, the main element that must be present in each organization is that it must fall under the category of a "mature", "value-based", organization as defined by Gottschalk (2008). This type of organization is more resilient than a "less mature" criminal organization making it easier to see the effect a DoSI may have on the organization's resilience. Once it's been established that the organization should be a "mature", "value-based" organization, an attempt should be made to identify a plethora of organizations that have certain key elements such as: various geographic areas, different time periods, are involved in a variety of criminal activities, and whose members may be spiritual yet do not conduct their business within the organization for

primarily spiritual purposes. This categorization of criminal organizations is necessary; in order to gain a broader understanding of the effects spirituality can have on an organization's resilience. This subject, in general, is fairly new and premature in academia and therefore, a broader application of criminal organizations can provide ideas and insight for future researchers and room for this field of research to grow.

From the pool of criminal groups, "criminal insurgents", low level pickpockets or thieves, and disorganized street gangs were immediately dismissed because of their lack of maturity and their one sided focus on either profit or morals. A mature organization would be profit-driven and oriented, but will also have some set of moral code or value system within the organization and among its members (von Lampe, 2016). As such, more reputable organizations were considered. These organizations first had to fit the characteristics described. Using purposeful sampling, the pool of criminal organizations from which to choose was narrowed. The first step of this narrowing process was using prior knowledge of a plethora of criminal organizations to select criminal organizations that would fit the necessary requirements outlined. The next step was to conduct a general preliminary review of the existing literature on each of the criminal organizations. This research looked to see which and how many of the DoSI effect the organization, as well as how spiritual the organization as a whole, or its specific members are. In addition, the review of existing literature also looked for organizations that had more of the key elements than others. Using this narrowing process, the four criminal organizations selected were Jewish Organized Crime, the Cosa Nostra, the Vory v Zakone, and La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar Cartel (LFM/KTC). Even though these four specific criminal organizations were selected, other organizations cannot be

discounted from being selected and analyzed. Some examples of other organizations that fit the descriptions are the IRA, the Triads, the 'ndrangheta, Albanian Organized Crime, and the Yakuza. Future research can focus on these other organizations, but the four criminal organizations selected are ideal for the purposes of this thesis. The following provides a brief description of each of the criminal organizations selected.

Jewish Organized Crime

Criminal organization founded in New York City's Lower East Side in the early 1900s. The organization's members were exclusively Jewish. Many were immigrants themselves or were born to Jewish immigrants that emigrated from countries around Europe. They profited primarily on the distribution of illegal alcohol during the Prohibition Era. They were also involved in prostitution, extortion, gambling, bookkeeping, and other forms of criminality. The organization eventually fell apart between the 1940s and 1950s. The remaining members of the organization either died of natural causes or they continued with their specific criminality by involving themselves with and eventually working for various American Cosa Nostra families across the United States (Fried, 1980; Joselit, 1983; Rockaway, 1993).

Cosa Nostra

Organization of Italian Americans founded in cities along The US's East Coast in the early 1900s. The members were exclusively Italian. They must have emigrated from Italy or been born to Italian parents. The Cosa Nostra, much like Jewish Organized Crime, began by selling illegal alcohol during the Prohibition Era. They were also heavily involved in the trafficking and sale of weapons, drugs, and other illegal goods, extortion, gambling, prostitution, the protection racket, and many other criminal activities. The

organization has undergone many transitional and hierarchical shifts throughout its long and active career. The Cosa Nostra in the United States and Italy presently, continues to be an active criminal organization (Anderson, 1979; Morselli, 2009; von Lampe, 2016).

Vory v Zakone

The loosely structured organization was founded in the gulags of the Soviet Union in the 1920s. Potential members were required to have been imprisoned for an extended time for serious and heinous crimes committed with the intent to directly and negatively impact the the Soviet State or its various satellite states. Members, upon completing their sentence, were involved in a wide range of criminal activities including, but not limited to, extortion, protection services, prostitution, gambling, and trafficking of various illicit goods. The vory v zakone collapsed along with the Soviet Union in the late 1980s.

Former members are still active in the Russian Criminal underworld (Cheloukhine, 2009; Friedman, 2009; Goscilo, 2012; Varese, 1998).

La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar Cartel

La Familia Michoacana (LFM) first appeared in the Mexican state of Michoacán in the 1980s. It was formed as a vigilante group that hoped to bring order to the state by opposing drug cartels and kidnappers. It eventually transitioned into a recognized drug trafficking organization specializing in the production and sale of methamphetamines, in addition to marijuana, cocaine, and heroine. In 2010, as a result of internal conflict, the Knights Templar Cartel (KTC) was created as an offshoot of LFM. According to Mexican authorities, LFM was disbanded in 2011. The KTC continues to be an active cartel throughout Mexico and in the United States (Beittel, 2012; Flanigan, 2014; Horton, 2014; Worthman, 2011).

3.5. Data Analysis

The data used for this thesis was acquired through an in-depth data collection process and analysis of academic literature acquired from academic search engines in order to systematically gather and review the existing secondary literature that discusses themes of this thesis. The search terms in Figure 2 were used to gather sources for analysis from Google Scholar, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost. The figure shows each of the search terms used, the sources presented by the various search engines, and the final number of sources used from each search engine. The process of acquiring the sources will be reviewed in the following paragraphs.

Figure 2
Table of Search Terms

Search Term	Search Engine	Source Results	Sources Used
spirituality/religion AND “organized crime”	Google Scholar	1100	5
	ProQuest	125	2
	EBSCOhost	4	1
spirituality/religion AND resilience AND “organized crime”/“criminal organization”	Google Scholar	119	7
	ProQuest	37	0
	EBSCOhost	12	1
spirituality/religion AND “Jewish organized crime”/“Jewish mafia” AND identity	Google Scholar	117	3
	ProQuest	19	0
	EBSCOhost	25	0
spirituality/religion AND “cosa nostra”/“Italian mafia” AND identity	Google Scholar	3890	7
	ProQuest	26	1
	EBSCOhost	2	1
spirituality/religion AND “vory v zakone”/“Russian organized crime” AND identity	Google Scholar	171	4
	ProQuest	244	1
	EBSCOhost	13	3
spirituality/religion AND “la familia michoacana”/ “knights templar gang” AND identity	Google Scholar	60	5
	ProQuest	38	1
	EBSCOhost	47	7

The search terms were input and used with each search engine in order to acquire a reasonable number of academic sources for the thesis. To go about a systematic acquisition of sources, a consistent process was used to narrow the sources identified across search engines. Some steps of this process include specific changes to the search terms or search format with the various search engines. When using Google Scholar, for example, the “keyword” feature was used so that only sources that contain the search terms in their “keywords” would be shown. A common phenomenon with Google Scholar was that it would present many sources that focused on spirituality but did not relate it to crime, but rather religion. These sources were primarily Oxford sources. After conducting an extensive review of the Oxford sources highlighted in Google Scholar, there was a noticeable pattern that the sources did not refer to spirituality and crime, but rather spirituality and religion or spirituality and religious institutions. In order to circumvent this unnecessary inflation of possible sources, the “without word” function in Google Scholar was taken advantage of and “-oxford” was added to the end of the search terms if this inflation of sources occurred with the search term. This removed all sources that contained the phrase “oxford”. Another step was when using ProQuest, only “Scholarly Journals” or “Dissertations & Theses” would be searched for in order to gain the most reasonable variety of sources for review. In addition to this, some of the search terms were replaced with other commonly used, and often interchangeable, words or phrases in order to see a broader variety of sources. Some examples as can be seen in the table of used terms is replacing spirituality with religion because even though this thesis makes a distinction between these two phrases and ideas, many scholars have not made said distinction and use these terms interchangeably. This example is shown in the table

as: “spirituality/religion” and other terms whose alternates were used are listed in the table and follow the same format.

After narrowing the sources presented by the search engine, it was necessary to “clean” the presented sources by narrowing them to only those relevant to this paper. In an attempt to do this as systematically as possible, several steps were taken in order to thoroughly clean the data. Firstly, the title of the article or chapter was read. If it was clear that there was no noticeable relevance, that source was passed. If there was a potential relevance or a definite relevance, the keywords of the source were reviewed. If the keywords were not consistent with the themes of the paper, the source was passed. If there were no keywords found or if the keywords were definitely or potentially relevant, the abstract was reviewed. If the abstract showed that there was no direct relevance, the source was passed, but if there was a potential or definite relevance of the paper, as per the abstract, the paper was first skimmed to confirm the relevance and if it remained relevant, it was read more thoroughly and applied to the thesis where necessary. The results of this “data cleaning” are seen in Figure 2.

In addition to the search terms listed in the table that were used in the academic sources, a general search was conducted for each of the criminal organizations and their alternate aliases: i.e. Jewish organized crime/Jewish mafia, Cosa Nostra/Italian mafia, Vory v Zakone/Russian organized crime/Russian mafia, and La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar gang. This search for criminal organizations yielded general information about each of the organizations in order to gain a better understanding of how spirituality can be applied to the organization’s resilience. In addition to the systematic analysis of sources acquired from the search terms and from

the general review of the criminal organizations, there were several sources that were cited in some sources that were looked up and used because of their relevance to the thesis.

3.6. Limitations

There are several limitations that must be addressed before going into the analysis. The two main limitations from a research perspective are personal bias and generalizability. Though it is impossible for a researcher to put aside his or her personal bias in its entirety, it is important to limit it and be as objective as possible. A systematic review of open source data was used for this reason. It allowed for an objective and consistent analysis of literature that was relevant to the themes and topic of this thesis. This systematic review is beneficial in that limits the amount of personal bias present within the thesis.

Excessive generalizability is a potential side effect of the themes and the design of the thesis. It is easy for both the researcher and reader to generalize certain elements and aspects of this topic. By implementing a systematic analysis of open source data and literature as the research design, the researcher is left with a reasonable amount of discretion in analyzing the applicability of the sources to the themes and topics of the thesis as well as in the selection of sources to serve as an evidentiary basis. This biased selection could be the result of a small amount of personal bias, but it also results in potential generalizability of the subject because only one perspective is highlighted for the most part. In addition to the selection of sources through the use of systematic data collection process, the selection of criminal organizations can also create a certain amount of generalizability. Four criminal organizations were purposefully selected to fit

the needs of the thesis in order to best apply the DoSI to the organizations. The applicability of the DoSI would most likely change if different criminal organizations were selected. In addition, it would also change if more than four criminal organizations were selected to analyze the applicability of the DoSI on an organization's resilience. In this analysis, both the criminal organizations and the DoSI may be generalized. In other words, the level and type of spirituality of the criminal organizations may be generalized because only key instances are selected for the analysis that help show the applicability of a particular DoSI to a criminal organization. In addition, this also generalizes the dimension of spirituality in that it may not apply to all criminal organizations in the same way, if at all. The selection of particular structures, rituals, and practices within an organization were chosen to act as examples of the application of DoSI within a criminal organization. They are not exhaustive scenarios applicable to all criminal organizations, but they give readers a better understanding of how spirituality may be applied to a criminal organization. The applicability of spirituality to all criminal organizations should not be assumed nor generalized, but they should simply give potential insight to the possibility that an organization's and an individual's spirituality may, among other factors, help bolster that organization's resilience. This is a reasonably new field of study and these examples should provide readers and future researchers a context in which to apply spirituality to criminal organizations.

Looking at the limitations that focus specifically on the acquisition of sources that help support the arguments within the thesis, there is very little evidence or information that can be found in the secondary literature that, without looking at terrorism, directly compares religion and/or spirituality with organized crime. The lack of specific literature

on this relationship, forces this thesis to be more deductive in nature and manage with the less evidence. With the necessary resources, the research question would be better answered through an extensive interview process with convicted organized criminals from one or several criminal organizations, law-enforcement officials who specialize in organized crime, and policy makers. These first-hand responses would provide a more in-depth perspective on the impact of spirituality and the DoSI on the resilience of criminal organizations.

4. ANALYSIS

This section looks at how the four dimensions of spiritual influence (DoSI) influence and organization's resilience. Using the sources acquired through the systematic data collection process of existing academic literature, each of the four criminal organizations will be analyzed with respect to each of the four DoSI. This analysis is built around the results of the data collection as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows the number of sources used to analyze each of the sets of DoSI and criminal organizations. The sources listed in each of the quadrants met the sampling criteria established during the data collection process and were included in Figure 3. The sources must have been from the 80 academic sources acquired through the data collection process. After reviewing each of the sources, it was established what DoSI or criminal organization the source best addressed. If it only addressed a single DoSI, it was added to all four quadrants to the right of the specific DoSI that represent the four criminal organizations. If the source addressed a specific criminal organization, it was listed under the respective organization, but only in line with the DoSI it best corresponds

to. If the source addressed a specific criminal organization and a specific DoSI, it was only added to the quadrant that represents both the respective organization and DoSi.

This description of the breakdown of sources applies only to the academic sources in Figure 3. To the right of the quadrant for academic sources, a quadrant was added for grey sources. These sources include only non-academic sources, including sources by the media, government, or books by investigative journalists. These grey sources were acquired differently than the academic sources. There are more grey sources than academic sources and because many grey sources may be interpreted in a way inconsistent with the intentions of the author in order to suit the needs of this thesis, grey sources were only used if there was not enough information about the topic the grey source addresses in the existing academic literature. To clarify, if during the analysis of an academic source, a case or scenario was discussed briefly that was consistent with the themes of the thesis, that case was further pursued. It was first searched in the academic databases to see if it was also addressed in other academic sources. If not, it was searched in non-academic spheres such as Google and LexisNexis. The grey sources are only supporting sources to the academic ones in order to better substantiate the case or scenario used during the analysis.

Before delving into the analysis of the DoSI and how they influence the resilience of certain criminal organizations, it should be noted that simply because there are more sources in one quadrant than another, it does not mean that the specific DoSI and criminal organization have a stronger association than others. Those with more sources will be more closely analyzed in this thesis, but there may be associations between certain groups

and DoSI that have not yet been analyzed properly and therefore will not be found in the academic literature.

Figure 3
Data Collection Results used for Analysis

		Resilience of Criminal Organizations							
		Jewish Organized Crime		Cosa Nostra		Vory v Zakone		La Familia Michoacana/ Knights Templar	
		A	G	A	G	A	G	A	G
Spirituality	Trust	23	1	17	1	18	1	28	0
	Neutralization	10	1	18	1	16	1	18	0
	Strategic Arenas	15	2	18	2	17	3	10	0
	Logistical Use of Religious Organizations	6	1	12	3	13	1	7	0

KEY:

A: Academic Sources

G: Grey Sources

4.1. Trust

The first DoSI analyzed is trust and how it is influenced by spirituality in order to create a more resilient criminal organization. To reiterate, the definition of trust used in this thesis is the mutual confidence established between two or more parties as a result of one party's reputation, personal or professional interactions, or through the mediation of a recognized neutral party. This confidence helps facilitate criminal endeavors despite the potential risk of betrayal. Looking at the results of the systematic collection and analysis of data in Figure 3, aside from the sources that discuss trust in general, which were added to each of the criminal organizations, the most sources that discuss trust with respect to a criminal organization fall under Jewish organized crime (23 sources) and LFM/KT (28

sources). The Cosa Nostra and Vory v Zakone had less sources discussing trust and how it influences their organization with only 17 and 18 sources respectively. Much of the literature that looks at the latter two of the four criminal organizations focuses on trust based on a common ethnicity or community upbringing among the individuals within the organization, rather than specifically looking at a common spirituality. Trust is applied differently in Jewish organized crime and LFM/KT. The literature focuses more heavily on the spiritual element of trust within these two criminal organizations, instead of looking at their ethnicity or upbringing.

Looking first at Jewish organized crime, the organization consists of members who have a common religion but varying degree of spirituality (Joselit, 1983). The organization's structure and goals were not influenced by their common religion, but rather they started out by protecting their Jewish community from gangs and organizations that would harass and take advantage of the members of the community (Rockaway, 1993). The group's Jewish spirituality helped establish trust among members as they expanded their organization across the United States (Fried, 1980; Joselit, 1983; Rockaway, 1993). Looking at two distinct members who helped achieve this, Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel and Myer Lansky started the Bugs-Meyer Mob that stretched from New York to California, dominated the bootlegging racket, and then held a series of leadership positions across the United States for decades. They often worked with members of the Cosa Nostra, but were partial to working with other Jews across the US (Rockaway, 1993). Lansky had a lot of control in the East Coast, whereas Siegel first moved to the West Coast as a bookkeeper and later moved to Las Vegas where he saw potential and

began to turn it into the city it is today. Between these two partners, Jewish organized crime spanned the United States (Rockaway, 1993).

Looking at a younger member of Jewish organized crime, Mickey Cohen started his criminal career working with street gangs and making little money. He befriended Jewish organized criminals who introduced him to Myer Lansky. Through Lansky's advice and guidance, Cohen moved to Los Angeles in the 1940s where he was introduced to Siegel. After Siegel's death in 1947, Cohen took over the Los Angeles arm of Jewish organized crime. His connections with Lansky, Siegel, and many other Jewish organized criminals helped him gain control over the west coast territory even though he was reasonably inexperienced relative to his counterparts (Fried, 1980; Rockaway, 1993). Siegel, Lansky, and Cohen built their connection on their common spirituality established through their common religion and their shared communities in New York City.

Looking next at the "La Familia Michoacana/Knights Templar" (LFM/KT) drug trafficking organization, the members of the organization share a common spiritual outlook that was created and emphasized by the cartel's leader (Worthman, 2011). The organization as a whole, as well as its individual members, relied heavily on spiritual trust in order to establish networks and maintain control within their organization. The basis of spiritual trust differs with Jewish organized crime in that LFM/KT is established around Christian evangelical ideals and the ideals outlined in *Pensamientos* ("Thoughts"), a book written by the LFM/KT's founder and leader, Nazario Moreno Gonzalez (Beittel, 2012; Vergani & Collins, 2015; Worthman, 2011).

Moreno acted as an unofficial leader and guardian in that he settled disputes and oversaw the protection of many areas within his state. He also supported the people by

building schools, hospitals, and through his many charitable donations to the community (Flanigan, 2014). His community supported him because he and his organization claimed to act as guardians and protectors of the Michoacán State until the Mexican Government was able to properly govern it (Althaus & Dudley, 2014; Flanigan, 2014). Though he received some pushback from the government and from private militias (Althaus & Dudley, 2014; Flanigan, 2014; Horton, 2014), for the most part he was well liked and this helped him establish many positive relationships. His spiritual leadership brought together many like-minded individuals who he was able to further mold into individuals that shared some of his spiritual beliefs. This establishment of common beliefs led to a more resilient organization. Moreno's leadership indirectly facilitated trust in that his leadership style and spirituality resulted in a community that, for the most part, supported him because of his generous contributions that were based on his spiritual ideals of charity (Flanigan, 2014). In addition, he also molded cartel members into like-minded individuals that he could trust because of the spiritual outline the cartel members are required to follow (Althaus & Dudley, 2014).

Members of Jewish organized crime and LFM/KT identify with different spiritual frameworks, around which they build their lives and establish networks. The organizations differ in many ways, but one thing they have in common is that leaders and members of the organization have build relationships that are based on a common spirituality. The extents of these relationships vary and the applicability of spirituality on trust also varies from one individual to the next. It was used in the case of Siegel, Lansky, and Cohen, as well as with Moreno and his cartel, but this should not be generalized and applied to all individual criminals and organizations. It is simply a means for establishing

trust among individual criminals that has not yet been thoroughly analyzed in the academic literature.

4.2. Spiritual Neutralization

The second DoSI analyzed is spiritual neutralization and it refers to the neutralization or justification of wrongdoing through spiritual motives. To briefly restate the definition of spiritual neutralization, it is a means by which individuals, criminal or non-criminal, rationalize criminal actions and convince themselves that the act was either not criminal even though it is illegal or that the act was justified. As per the results of the systematic analysis of academic literature, the most acquired sources fell under the Cosa Nostra (18 sources), the Vory v Zakone (16 sources), and LFM/KT (18 sources). Though there were 10 sources listed under Jewish organized crime, a majority of those sources were general sources of neutralization that apply in some part to all criminals and criminal organizations. There were no sources that specifically looked at the justification of wrongdoing of members of Jewish organized crime.

Starting first with the Cosa Nostra, the organization is by no means an organization driven by spirituality though it is a key pillar in the organization's history. This is seen in key elements of the organization, such as its induction ceremony and in the code of conduct that is originally shared with new members upon induction and further emphasized throughout their criminal careers (Anderson, 1979; Merlino, 2011). For example, in Joseph Valachi's testimony against the Cosa Nostra, he discussed the ritual rite of passage that individuals have to take before being made a "man of honour" – also referred to as "being made". The initiation ritual is interesting in that it enforces social ties though the incorporation of an existential dimension that is used to provide

continuity and unity to the Cosa Nostra's social order (Merlino, 2011). The ritual itself incorporates spiritual elements. A godfather would make a small cut on the right hand of the prospective member so blood may be drawn. This blood is then dropped onto a picture of a saint, after which the picture is burned in the inductee's hands. While the image burns, the new member must recite an oath to the Cosa Nostra, pledging allegiance and secrecy (Maas, 1968). The use of blood instead of holy water symbolizes a binding bond between the recruit and the organization and the presence of fire signifies purification (Ruggiero, 2009). This process instills a sense of entitlement in the inductee in that it represents the birth of a "man of honour", someone who stands above everyone else and is justified in any criminal acts because they are supported by a higher divine power (Coppola & Lo Verso, 2010; Merlino, 2011).

A leader within the organization may self-declare himself a "false saint" through his actions when he donates to charitable causes and when he organizes large public religious ceremonies where these high ranking members will march behind spiritual banners and sacred statues of saints (Pipyrou, 2014; Ruggiero, 2009). This reassures the community of the individual's relation to the community's traditions. It also neutralizes any negative thoughts the individual may have had with regards to his criminality, thanks to the community's support as a result of the celebration (Coppola & Lo Verso, 2010; Ruggiero, 2009). These practices may act as justification for their criminal actions because of their self-perceived relationships with the community and with divine powers (Ruggiero, 2009).

Moving next to the vory v zakone, most members (referred to as vors) were raised as Russian Orthodox Christians and even though the vory v zakone did not emphasize

spirituality as one of the key foundations and pillars of the organization, many vors were very spiritual (Varese, 2001). Over time, they slowly incorporated their spirituality into their individual criminal lives. Some expressed their spirituality by bowing and reciting prayers when attending church (Varese, 2001). Others would make large contributions to their local churches as an act of charity towards the church and their community (Shelley, 2006; Varese, 2001). These contributions were mostly made by a single vor, but often, multiple vors would donate part of their communal fund to a local church (Varese, 1998). Though it is not the most significant of actions, even this small contribution can justify a criminal act when a part of its proceeds goes into funding a religious institution that represents an individual's spirituality.

Among other things, tattoos were a way for vors to communicate non-verbally. Every tattoo on a vor had information about that individual's criminal charges, convictions and his term served, psychological predispositions, and criminal rank within the organization (Cheloukhine, 2008; Varese, 1998). The images depicted a variety of scenes, but among them were tattoos worn to represent the vor's spirituality as well as others that were worn to reinforce the legitimacy of certain criminal actions (Goscilo, 2012). Oftentimes, a vor would have a tattoo on his chest depicting Christ. This tattoo is one of the most important in that it helps certify the individual's rank as a member of the *vory v zakone* (Goscilo, 2012). This tattoo is usually accompanied by praying angels on either side of the image of Christ with the words, "O Lord, save thy slave!" (Varese, 1998). In addition to Christ and praying angels, vors will also have tattoos depicting a renaissance-like rendition of the Madonna with or without a baby Jesus (Goscilo, 2012). These spiritual images are worn as a symbolic representation of the individual's status

within the organization, as well as a protective talisman that is believed to help shield the individual from harm (Goscilo, 2012; Phelan & Hunt, 1998). The presence of these tattoos, together with other spiritual elements such as church attendance and the possession of prayer cards, act as an act of piety of the individual criminal. This in addition to his status as *vory v zakone* or “thief in law” may lead a *vor* to believe that he is on a higher, more spiritual plain of society when compared to the general public.

Looking lastly at LFM/KT, the organization justifies much of its wrongdoing through its spiritual foundation, its name and crest, and its application of “divine justice”. Starting off with its spiritual foundation, LFM/KT was founded on Evangelical Christianity and the spiritual beliefs of one of its founders, Nazario Moreno Gonzalez (Beittel, 2012; Flanigan, 2014; Vergani & Collins, 2015). In an effort to highlight their spiritual foundations, the organization, under the leadership of Servando Gomez Martinez released “The Secret Code and Oath of the Knights Templar”. This booklet outlines the responsibilities of the members of the organization (Vergani & Collins, 2015). Some of its codes dictate that members of the organization will act as guardians of their specific community within the state of Michoacán, specifying that the LFM/KT will establish “an ideological battle” to defend the community’s ideologies (Vergani & Collins, 2015, p. 418). Other codes restrict the consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs for leisure (p. 418). In addition, much like with the Cosa Nostra, LFM/KT incorporates religious symbols and practices in their initiation ceremony. Inductees wear ceremonial white robes with red crosses so that the initiation emulates the values and symbols distinct to certain groups that defended Christianity – referring in this case to the original Knights Templar (Aguirre & Herrera, 2013; Vergani & Collins, 2015).

A degree of self-divination can also be seen in the organization's title and crest. The original Knights Templar was an organization in 12th Century Europe that defended Christianity and was known for its charity and good deeds (Flanigan, 2014). LFM/KT's crest mimics this medieval theology in that the official symbol of the organization is a medieval shield adorned with a flowery crown, axes with spearheads, a purple cross representing the original Knights Templar, a Jesus Christ icon, and the inscription "Caballeros Templarios" ("Knights Templar" in Spanish) (Aguirre & Herrera, 2013; Vergani & Collins, 2015). The ability for a member to call himself a "Knights Templar" and wear the crest of the organization, further instills a sense of belonging and entitlement that could help justify crimes the organization may or may not have committed.

To further build on the organization's justification of criminality, Moreno and Gomez used the phrase "divine justice" when referring to certain acts committed by LFM/KT members. These acts may be bloody and gruesome, but they are done to protect and safeguard the community, women, and children from harm, theft and rape and to protect the organization by combatting other drug cartels (Beittel, 2012; Flanigan, 2014; Grayson, 2011; Horton, 2014; Worthman, 2011).

The argument can be made that the examples of the various criminal organizations provided in this section do not prove that members of this organization acted knowing they would justify their criminal wrongdoings, but rather their neutralization comes as a result of their actions and in some cases the practices and representations of their organizations. This should not be generalized to all criminal

organizations, as even among the four organizations represented in this thesis, this DoSI does not apply to Jewish organized crime.

Moving forward, instead of looking at the effect spirituality has on the various DoSI within and among an organization and its members, the following sections will look at the DoSI that have to do with spiritual institutions and how they can be taken advantage of by individuals or organizations for networking or logistical purposes.

4.3. Strategic Arenas

This DoSI looks at strategic arenas of a spiritual nature that are taken advantage of by criminal organizations. These arenas or locales may be religious institutions, ceremonies, or common religious or spiritual practices that may or may not take place in a religious institution. To reiterate the definition of a strategic arena as used in this thesis, it is a locale that is used by criminals to network, maintain criminal relationships, and for the acquisition of intelligence. A key aspect is that the arena is not criminal in nature. For it not to be criminal, it cannot be associated with criminals nor intentionally or knowingly facilitate interactions among criminals. Based on the findings of the analysis, three of the four criminal organizations have more acquired data discussing the organizations and its members' use of religious institutions and ceremonies as strategic arenas. They are Jewish organized crime (15 sources), the Cosa Nostra (18 sources), and vory v zakone (17 sources). LFM/KT only had ten academic sources. Of these sources, a majority of them were sources that discussed strategic arenas in general. The remaining sources did not discuss LFM/KT's use of locales as strategic arenas. This does not mean that the organization did not use religious locales or ceremonies as strategic arenas; it simply notes that this topic was not discussed in the academic literature.

Starting first with Jewish organized crime, many Jewish organized criminals were spiritual in that they attended synagogue occasionally and respected many Jewish customs such as wedding traditions and the ritual mourning of the dead (Fried, 1980). Weddings and funerals are a common phenomenon in all circles, criminal or not. When a person gets married or dies, their friends and loved ones come to celebrate or to mourn. This can be a means by which friends and family of the happy couple or the deceased meet each other, network, and establish trust through mutual contacts. In addition, it is also a way for friends and family members to stay in touch, despite many elements that may get in the way (Hupkova, 2010).

In addition to religious ceremonies, religious institutions such as synagogues are good strategic arenas in that they allow individuals to network and interact with others. In many Jewish areas, the synagogue, or Jewish temple, is the locale around which the community is built (Min, 1992). It is not only a place in which religious services are held, but also one where social norms are established and communal disputes are resolved (Min, 1992). This central institution within the community significantly influences the networks and relationships of its members and acts as a locale that bolsters and reinforces the temple's congregation (Keister, 2003; Min, 1992). When attending a synagogue, the people that attend may be strangers at first but over time and after frequent visits, the attendees becomes more familiar with each other. Going to temple on the Sabbath every Friday and Saturday or during other Jewish holidays is a common occurrence for many Jews. This consistent interaction and recognition of other individuals within the congregation helps build rapport among members and has the potential to lead to the establishment of trust. This trust may lead to criminality or it may simply lead to a

contact. For example, Myer Lansky and many of his friends traveled to Miami, Florida over the winter where they attended Beth Jacob Synagogue (Fantoni, 2012; Pollock, 2013). In one instance, Lansky approached a congregation member who frequented the temple and happened to own a shoe store. In this interaction, Lansky asked this businessperson to participate in the Miami bookkeeping racket by installing a phone in his store so illegal bets could be taken through the store's number (Pollock, 2013). Though this is a small instance and the individual allegedly refused to assist Lansky, it shows the networking potential that religious institutions can offer criminals who attend services.

Looking next at the Cosa Nostra, the organization in both Italy and the United States maintains a strong spiritual connection with the Roman Catholic Church, to the extent that members often attend church services on Sunday and during other important holidays (Anderson, 1979). In addition, members will also attend church for special events such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Scholars recognize baptisms, along with weddings and funerals, as public and private gatherings used to establish business partnerships, display the wealth of social connections, and stage networks of economic and political power (Coppola & Lo Verso, 2010; Dino, 2010; Ruggiero, 2009). Much like with Jewish organized criminals, weddings, funerals, and other spiritual ceremonies have the potential to act as facilitators for networking, maintaining relationships among members of the organization, and for the acquisition of intelligence.

As an example, the wedding in 1956 between Bill Bonnano, son of the leader of the Bonnano crime family in New York, and Rosalie Profaci, daughter of one of the heads of the Profaci family, was an historic affair in that it was the symbolic marriage of

the two largest crime families at the time in America (Knoedelseder, 1986). The wedding was attended by nearly 3000 people, including the heads of the 24 crime families from around the country, as well as a number of other recognized members of the Cosa Nostra (Knoedelseder, 1986). The Bonanno-Profaci wedding is a prime example of how a spiritual function, such as a wedding, could be used as a spiritual arena in that it provides a completely legitimate and inconspicuous locale that could be taken advantage of by leaders and members of the organization's families for networking purposes, maintaining criminal relationships, and for the acquisition of intelligence.

Before taking an in-depth look at the *vory v zakone*, it's important to understand that the organization does not encourage – yet, doesn't restrict – church attendance and marriage (Cheloukhine, 2008; Varese, 1998). As a result, the use of religious institutions and weddings as facilitators for networking, maintaining criminal relationships, and for the collection of intelligence is a far less common phenomenon with the *vory*. A more realistic arena is instead a funeral.

When Vyacheslav Ivankov, a well-respected *vor*, died in 2009, his funeral was attended by over 500 mourners, many of whom were members of the criminal underworld in Russia, Ukraine, and from countries throughout Central Asia (Eke, 2009; Schwirtz, 2009). Russian officials recognized the criminal attendees but were nonetheless made no attempt to detain any of them even though many were “wanted” by authorities (Eke, 2009). For the duration of Ivankov's funeral, the criminal attendees were considered mourners and were not bothered by authorities (Schwirtz, 2009). In most other situations, authorities would have detained many of the attendees for their crimes in the Russian underworld, yet because of the nature of the gathering, they were “given a

pass". As a result, the funeral of a highly respected vor became a potential strategic arena that could be used by a plethora of criminals to network, maintain relationships, or to gather intelligence.

These three organizations were used to show how a religious institution or ceremony can be used by individuals or an organization as a strategic arena. The use of these locales should not be generalized to all criminal organizations, but rather these examples should act as justification that strategic arenas have been used in some situations and that bars, restaurants, and street corners are not the only types of strategic arenas, or criminal convergence settings as outlined by Felson (2006). The following section looks at spiritual institutions, not only as strategic arenas or locales taken advantage of by criminal organizations, but rather as direct facilitators of criminality by criminal organizations.

4.4. Logistical Use of Religious Institutions

The fourth and final DoSI looks at the logistical use of religious institutions by various criminal organizations. This DoSI refers to and is defined as the intentional use of religious institutions for criminal endeavors, through the facilitation, permission, or knowledge of the institution. Unlike with strategic arenas, the religious institution in this scenario is in some way involved in the criminal acts, either by facilitating or through their lack of opposition. The criminal organizations with the most sources as a result of the systematic analysis of data and literature are the Cosa Nostra (12 sources) and the vory v zakone (13 sources). Jewish organized crime only had 6 sources whereas LFM/KT had 7 sources. This DoSI has the least amount of sources as compared to others because it is a very under-researched area.

The best example of the logistical use of religious institutions by criminal organizations is the Vatican's facilitation of crimes, purportedly committed by the Cosa Nostra. The Cosa Nostra is an Italian and Italian-American criminal organization whose members have varying degrees of spirituality rooted in the Roman Catholic religion (Anderson, 1979). Because of the influence certain leaders of the Cosa Nostra held, they maintained good relationships with clergymen and oftentimes donated sizable contributions to their local church (Merlino, 2014; Pipyrou, 2014; Posner, 2015).

An example of this relationship is between the Vatican and the Vatican Bank (IOR) and their relationship with Michele Sindona. The IOR worked closely with Sindona who started his career as a tax attorney and eventually through contacts in the Vatican, he was later selected as a private liaison to help the IOR develop a strategy to protect and diversify the Vatican's Italian holdings (Posner, 2015). Sindona was nicknamed "The Shark", "God's Banker", and "the Mafia's Banker" by other bankers, the media, and the Italian and U.S. governments respectively. These nicknames were chosen because of his ferocity in the banking sector, his close relationship and extensive work with the IOR, and because of his alleged relationship with members of the Cosa Nostra in Sicily, Milan, and New York (Posner, 2015; Yallop, 1984). Sindona's relationship with the Cosa Nostra was further implied after allegations that he worked for the Gambino family in managing and laundering the family's profits from heroine sales (Yallop, 1984). Sindona's dual relationship with the Vatican and the Cosa Nostra leads to questions about the likelihood that he facilitated criminality between these two parties.

Another example of the collaboration between the Cosa Nostra and the Vatican is seen when looking at the case surrounding Vincent Rizzo, Matteo de Lorenzo (Rizzo's

captain in the Cosa Nostra), and a few of their contacts. Rizzo, a soldier in the Genovese crime family, acquired \$950 million worth of corporate bonds, stock certificates, and some U.S. Treasury Bonds, which were discovered to be counterfeits of the original stolen bonds and certificates (Posner, 2015). Through contacts in Germany and Austria, Rizzo and de Lorenzo were able to successfully sell the bonds for \$650 million in five installments to the Vatican through some high-ranking prelates who were in partnership with individuals in Italy's Central Bank (Hammer & Coffey, 1982; Posner, 2015). Rizzo and his captain agreed to "kick back" \$150 million to the Vatican as a "commission" (Hammer & Coffey, 1982). These counterfeit bonds were going to be used by the IOR to act as collateral for a large investment the bank planned to make. If the investment was successful, it would pay off the loans and the validity of the bonds would have never come into question. Before the investments were made, charges were filed against members of the Cosa Nostra, their acquaintances, and clergymen representing the Vatican and the IOC (Lubasch, 1973; Posner, 2015). Rizzo, along with some of his contacts were convicted, though de Lorenzo and members of the Vatican and the IOC were acquitted due to lack of evidence (Lubasch, 1973).

The Department of Justice, the FBI, the New York District Attorney (DA), the DA's Detective Squad, and the NYPD acquired the evidence for this case through intelligence, fieldwork, and testimonies of some of the Cosa Nostra's contacts involved in the sale of the Bonds and Certificates (Hammer & Coffey, 1982; Posner, 2015). The Vatican and the IOR refused to relinquish any of their records kept within Vatican City, as well as in churches in major cities in the world (Hammer & Coffey, 1982). The lack of evidence from the Vatican exonerated the Vatican and the IOR's representatives from the

crime, though a connection was still made with the Vatican (Hammer & Coffey, 1982; Posner, 2015).

Looking next at the vory v zakone, the vor's use of religious institutions for criminal endeavors vary slightly from that of the Cosa Nostra. As members of the Cosa Nostra are for the most part Roman Catholic, vors are, for the most part, Russian Orthodox. The use of religious institutions for criminal endeavors occurs on an individual level rather than by the entire organization (Posner, 2015). In other words, the entire criminal organization does not necessarily begin working with a religious institution, but rather, individuals in both the criminal organization and in the religious institution facilitate the relationship (Posner, 2015). There are fewer cases discussing vors and their relationships with the Orthodox Church as compared to those that discuss the Cosa Nostra and the Vatican. The following are some examples of the few cases that discuss the relationship between vors and the Russian Orthodox Church.

A relationship between vors and the church may be mutual beneficial. Vors have an opportunity to make donations to local churches in order to justify their wrongdoings, while at the same time, more closely associating themselves with a holy institution as a form of self-promotion (Varese, 2001). The Orthodox Church is an institution with a good reputation. A vor who has a good relationship with the church has greater legitimacy in both legitimate and illegitimate spheres (Varese, 2001). While vors gain legitimacy and respectability to some extent, the church gains "muscle" for when it needs to collect debts for the Diocese central office. Though this is not often the case, bishops are dependent financially on their parishes to make dues. If parishes do not make dues or if they refuse to pay their dues for any particular reason, the bishop, as was the case with

Bishop Nikon, may use members of the criminal underworld to help collect dues (Varese, 2001). Again, this does not occur often, but it should be noted because there are such cases that exist and have been addressed in the academic literature.

This DoSI is most likely the least common of the four. This is reflected in the lack of academic literature on the subject. It had to be briefly discussed and mentioned because it acts as a way a criminal organization can build on its resilience. By working with and associating itself with religious institutions such as the Vatican and the Orthodox Church, criminals gain legitimacy and build relationships that can help bolster the organization's durability, impenetrability, and adaptability. Again, this association between religious institutions and criminal organizations is not a common one and should not be generalized to all criminal organizations. It is a phenomenon that has occurred in the past though, and as a result, should be mentioned as one that may happen in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis addressed how various dimensions of spirituality, referred in this study as DoSI, can effect on the resilience of criminal organizations. It is argued that there are dimensions of spiritual influence that can strengthen a criminal organization's resilience by positively impacting the organization's durability, impenetrability, and adaptability.

5.1. Summary of Findings

To analyze whether or not the DoSI had an impact on the resilience of criminal organizations, a systematic analysis of existing data and literature was conducted in order to systematically review academic databases and the existing academic literature. To do

this, a general search for each of the four criminal organizations was conducted, followed by a more specific search where key sets of words and phrases were used to acquire the most relevant and applicable sources. These words and the results of the searches are listed in Figure 2. 80 sources were acquired in total that were relevant in one-way or another to the themes of the thesis. Following the initial search and acquisition of sources, each of the eighty sources were reviewed and using the themes in Figure 3 as a guide, it was decided in what quadrant each of the sources fit. Each source could apply to multiple quadrants depending on its applicability. Using the sources acquired for each quadrant, each the applicability of each DoSI to the four criminal organizations was analyzed and anecdotes and examples were provided in order to better illustrate the applicability of the DoSI on the criminal organization.

The first DoSI analyzed was “trust”. It was applied to Jewish organized crime and LFM/KT because trust based on a common spirituality was most prevalent in these two organizations based on the number of sources acquired in the data collection process. Trust was found to increase the impenetrability of these two organizations. A common spirituality better established trust among members and potential members of the organization, which strengthened the ties holding the organization together. This common spirituality also made it difficult for individuals with differing spiritual outlooks to join the organization. This increased the organization’s resilience through its reinforced impenetrability.

The second DoSI, “spiritual neutralization”, was best applied to the Cosa Nostra, the Vory v Zakone, and LFM/KT based on the sources acquired in the data collection process. Criminals within these organizations justify their wrongdoings through various

spiritual elements, be it by donating to charity, incorporating spiritual elements into initiations, or considering certain actions as “divine” in nature. This spiritual neutralization increased the organization’s durability in that it provided a “divine” justification for its crimes. Its members were able to use this as a rationalization for their actions so they could continue committing crimes and justifying their actions within the organization.

The third DoSI, “strategic arenas”, did not look specifically at how spirituality affects the organization’s inner workings and structure. Instead, it looked at how the organization took advantage of a variety of locales that relate to the organization’s spiritual identification for networking, maintaining criminal relationships, and for acquiring intelligence. Some examples of this are churches, synagogues, baptisms, weddings, and funerals to name a few. Jewish organized criminals, the Cosa Nostra, and the Vory v Zakone were analyzed for this DoSI because they had the most acquired academic sources based on the review of academic literature. These spiritual arenas increase an organization’s impenetrability in that networks are established, relationships are maintained, and intelligence is gathered among individuals with similar spiritual associations. Strategic arenas also exemplify a criminal organization’s ability to adapt to law enforcement’s attempts to break up non-spiritual arenas such as bars and restaurants. This adaptability to use spiritual strategic arenas, strengthened impenetrability and as a result, reinforced the organization’s resilience.

The logistical use of religious institutions is the fourth DoSI analyzed within the thesis. As per the systematic analysis of open source data, this was best seen in the academic literature that discussed the Cosa Nostra and the vory v zakone and their use of

religious institutions for the facilitation of criminality. This emphasizes the organization's ability to adapt by involving itself in less conspicuous yet lucrative endeavors that are not as easily traced because of certain privileges religious institutions are awarded in many countries around the world. This adaptability shows the organization's ability to evade law enforcement by involving itself in more creative means of acquiring profits. This involvement can bolster the organization's resilience against law enforcement and against a potential lack of criminal opportunities.

The findings acquired are based on the information acquired from the 80 academic sources acquired as a result of a systematic data collection process and analysis of open source academic literature. The information acquired in these sources are not exhaustive and should in no way be generalized or unconditionally applied to other organizations or even the four organizations discussed herein. This thesis hoped to simply provide a perspective not analyzed to the same extent in prior research. It shows purposefully selected examples that help show how spirituality has and can affect the inner-workings of a criminal organization, be it knowingly or unknowingly. The DoSI do not apply in their entirety to all criminal organizations or even all aspects of a single criminal organization. The DoSI represent a phenomenon that should be taken into consideration as a possibility when discussing the resilience of criminal organizations.

5.2. Contribution and Future Research

While prior research has looked at various elements of criminal organizations and how they influence the organization's resilience, this thesis provides an in-depth theoretical analysis of spirituality as a factor of resilience in criminal organizations. This is not to say

that it is the only factor, but it has been a highly overlooked element in the analysis of the resilience of criminal organizations.

Although spirituality may not be relevant for all criminal organizations, it may be an important factor in organizations, other than the four analyzed in this thesis. By analyzing other criminal organizations, a better understanding of spirituality's application on organizational resilience can be more thoroughly developed, which can in turn expand criminologists' and society's knowledge of the extent of spiritual influence within criminal organizations around the world. To best understand this level of spirituality within an organization, interviews of current or former members of the organization can provide more current intelligence about their respective criminal organization. These interviews would also shed light on the inner workings of the organization and be able to help determine the organization's resilience in addition to establishing the extent to which spirituality strengthens the organization's resilience.

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