

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Hall, Tim. *The Economic Geographies of Organized Crime*. New York: The Guilford Press, pp.223, paper, (9781462535194).

The Economic Geographies of Organized Crime by Tim Hall is a thoroughly researched and excellently conceptualized account of the analytical contributions of economic geography to the study of organized crime. Broadly, the academic study of organized crime has been the home of criminologists, sociologists, political scientists, legal scholars and the like; Hall's work convincingly places economic geography as a discipline that can contribute to our understanding of organized crime through its considerations of spatiality. Economic geography is, as Hall presents it, a latent consideration in scholarship on organized crime—studies of illicit networks and economies generally require a consideration of jurisdictional implications, given the nature of crime, law, and justice—and Hall makes clear that the spatialized study of crime can help better understand the genesis and operations of, and responses to, illegitimate economies and their attendant activities. The monograph makes a convincing case for creating an intellectual space for economic geography to contribute to the study of organized crime, conceptually and empirically examining the spatial configurations and scalar patterns of organized crime, and responses to organized crime. Scholars of organized crime will find engaging the argument that the genesis and functioning of organized crime groups and their activities can be better understood by studying the problem with a geographer's eye.

As one might anticipate, questions of space and scale shape the terrain Hall covers, and Hall makes a convincing case for economic geographers to take up the study of organized crime, and for scholars in other disciplines to engage in these debates. In his assessment of contemporary studies of organized crime, Hall demonstrates that substantive areas within organized crime studies—money laundering, environmental crime, organized crime and the state, and so on—implicitly address the geographies of the economies in which these crimes take place, making clear that these contemporary illicit global markets are themselves as much products of place as of other relevant factors contributing to criminal activity. Economic geographers and scholars of organized crime will no doubt appreciate the chapter measuring and researching organ-

ized crime, which sets out the contributions and limitations of different methods and approaches to the field, and which highlights the contributions made by works that address questions of scale and space. Raising scale, space, mobility, and other geographical considerations offers criminologists a new way of thinking through methodological questions in scholarship on illicit markets, and gives place a new salience for the criminological researcher.

As a criminologist who works outside the field of geography, I found Hall's work both engaging and accessible in its ability to articulate a political-economic approach that demonstrates the importance of spatial considerations as part of an analysis of organized crime. In criminological research on organized crime, the *where* of crime is often implicitly addressed or secondary to the work done, addressed as a dimension of jurisdictional issues related to policing or punishment, giving context to the work. Where crime happens matters insofar as legislative or policy responses by the state (or regional/transnational agreements) are concerned, however, criminologists working in the field take those as secondary concerns and do not generally engage in spatialized analyses of organized crime. Hall demonstrates that geographical interpretations of organized crime can offer understandings of the structures of criminal networks and markets that transcend the cultural interpretations that define many (ethnic) studies of organized crime, provide insight into the development of criminal economies in the local and transnational contexts in which they may operate, and provide insights into the way responses to criminal problems shared by the global North and South can lead to inconsistent, contradictory, or fragmented responses by individual states.

Hall's work makes clear the importance of critical engagement with questions of place, space, and scale to the formation of and social and political responses to criminal markets. The assessments of organization, mobility, and spatiality are particularly adept at demonstrating how considerations such as organization, mobility, and spatiality that are central to economic geography are also central to the functioning of illicit markets. The forces of globalization are meant to render the influences of time, space, and place less relevant to the functioning of both licit and illicit markets, yet, in its assessment of the workings of organized crime groups, Hall convincingly demonstrates that the influence of globalization on organized crime groups is labile, as these forces shape the work of illicit crime networks, these same networks respond to and use these forces for their own economic ends. Likewise, Hall's assessment of spatiality demonstrates that we can better understand why organized crime networks develop if we consider the interplay of geographically specific factors. Criminology and sociology are disciplines that are concerned

with the idea that ‘context matters,’ however, Hall’s engagement with spatiality sheds light on the multi-scalar, networked, and geographically influenced nature of illicit networks and markets. Criminal mobilities can be better understood through the lens of economic geography: transnational criminal trade in goods, people, and services produce and are produced by the spaces through which these criminal trades move, and Hall’s questioning of policy and legislative responses to illicit (transnational) networks and markets likewise suggests that criminological scholarship would benefit from considering the role of place in (failed) attempts to control criminal markets. Economic geography can teach us much about the genesis and production of criminal networks and criminal markets, and criminologists would do well to heed Hall’s call to put space at the centre of the contexts they study. Illicit markets are far from analogues or counterparts to legitimate markets; rather, they are products of the geosocial relations that produce them.

The Economic Geographies of Organized Crime offers a convincing argument for economic geographers to turn their attention to organized crime and illicit economic activity; likewise, it reminds criminologists and other scholars of organized crime that empirical study of illicit crime might also benefit from engagement with the geographical influences that shape their empirical sites.

Saint Mary’s University

Vanessa Iafolla

Vanessa Iafolla is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her areas of research include financial crime and financial regulation. She holds a doctorate from the Centre for Criminology and Sociological Studies at the University of Toronto.

