

Future for Organized Crime

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the future for organized crime. There are quite a number of issues that ought to be taken into account. For instance, the reader must understand what organized crime refers to and the current situation on the same. Organized crime may be defined as a conspiratorial entity where criminals engage in illicit operations so as to generate income. The main activities in organized crime involve illegal gambling, frauds on credit cards, insurance, smuggling, ransom kidnapping, prostitution, gun running, drug trafficking, money laundering, and vehicle theft. Organized crime also involves the coming together of individuals with the potential of committing grave offenses on a long term basis. In addition, such activities would involve aspects of planning, coordination, and control where the main motivation would not necessarily be financial gain. Evidently, mafia activities as well as corporate crimes have been reported in different parts even in third world nations. Increased growth of organized crime in other regions derives from weak and collapsing governments, ethnic tension, wars, widening poverty and economic instability, faulty privatizations, and incidences of high level corruption. Wealthier nations have the highest rate of consumption of illicit drugs as well as trafficking of poor people. In the same vein, motor vehicles and firearms are ferried from developing nations to poorer ones but then the people do not manage to buy such commodities at the market price. There will be more use of new technologies by groups involved in organized crime as a way to boost their operations. Moreover, advancement of communications technology would assist in providing new targets as well as improved security for perpetrators of organized crime. EUROPOL has been involved in monitoring the trends in organized crime across Europe. In its findings it discovered that there are approximately 3600 groups engaged in organized crime in the EU.

Keywords: Organized crime, EUROPOL, Drug trafficking, Illegal gambling, Money laundering

1. Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of the future for organized crime. There are quite a number of issues that ought to be taken into account. For instance, the reader must understand what organized crime refers to and the current situation on the same. It means in assessing the current situation the researcher will make projections on what would be the situation in the future. The study will also be presenting ongoing debates on matters related to organized crime.

The following encompass the objectives of the paper:

1. To understand organized crime
2. To assess the current situation on organized crime
3. To evaluate the policies and on-going debates on how to prevent organized crime both now and in the future
4. To present statistical analysis and projections on organized crime

1.1. Definition of Organized Crime

Organized crime may be defined as a conspiratorial entity where criminals engage in illicit operations so as to generate income (Abadinsky, 2003; Lyman & Gary, 2004). In addition, the main activities in organized crime involve illegal gambling, frauds on credit cards, insurance, smuggling, ransom kidnapping, prostitution, gun running, drug trafficking, money laundering, and vehicle theft just to mention but a few (Wright, 2006). Organized crime also involves the coming together of individuals with the potential of committing grave offenses on a long term basis. In addition, such activities would involve aspects of planning, coordination, and control where the main motivation would not necessarily be financial gain. Another point worth noting is that individuals that work in coordination for a specified period of a criminal activity or operations are what may be termed as "Organized crime group" (SOCA, 2013).

Furthermore, organized crime groups have their different structures. For instance, in the case of successful groups in organized crime there are other individuals such as specialists, subordinates as well as additional transient members including a wide network of associates (SOCA, 2013). In other words, most groups engaged in organized crime serve as loose networks involving criminals whose cooperation last within the period of the criminal operation. Therefore, such individuals play diverse roles in relation to their skills as well as expertise (SOCA, 2013).

In Europe there was established a “Special Committee on Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering (CRIM)” in the period 2012. The European legislative body resolved to address the dangers posed by organized crime. Therefore, this special committee would have a mandate for one year but renewable for another six months. The main roles were to assess and analyses the criminal activities and develop a mitigation plan that would be applicable at EU level (CRIM, 2013). It was also noted that organized crime and all its related activities posed serious dangers to citizens across Europe hence the need for a special committee. Moreover, CRIM has deliberated on inviting different institutions and other EU organizations as well as investigators and judicial authorities in order to devise a plan that would assist in combating organized crime in the region (CRIM, 2013).

2. Assessment of Organized Crime at Present

Research indicates that inasmuch as organized crime started in the period 1950s among developed nations, the same has expanded to other parts of the world. Evidently, mafia activities as well as corporate crimes have been reported in different parts even in third world nations (Pathy, 2006). However, due to scarcity of resources in combating the problem the effects of Organized criminal activities continue to be intense. On the other hand, increased growth of organized crime in other regions derives from weak and collapsing governments, ethnic tension, wars, widening poverty and economic instability, faulty privatizations, and incidences of high level corruption (Pathy, 2006).

Notably, wealthier nations have the highest rate of consumption of illicit drugs as well as trafficking of poor people. In the same vein, motor vehicles and firearms are ferried from developing nations to poorer ones but then the people do not manage to buy such commodities at the market price (Pathy, 2006). Indeed, looking at the global scope of organized crime today, for instance, corruption and terrorism there emerges the need for enhanced international governance. The greatest question would be: to what extent is the International Community and other efforts of cooperation doing to combat the vice? (Siegel & Zaitch, 2003).

In United States statistics demonstrate that from 2003 there have been 8 million persons that succumbed to ID theft which approximately represents 4% of the overall population (Tomison, 2013). In the case of UK it is reported that losses deriving from identity fraud approximated at £1.3 billion the same involving 80,000 victims. In the same context, such was reported to have increased with 32% since 2009. In addition, 85,000 victims succumbed to impersonation fraud while 24,000 suffered ID takeover (Tomison, 2013). Australia is also another case where identity fraud amounted to \$1.1 billion with a record of 499,500 victims meaning 3.1% of the population. Furthermore, in the period 2008-09 there was recorded 242,150 counterfeit transactions which amounted to about \$111 million. This was up to 92% compared to the period 2006-07 as well as 2008-09 (Tomison, 2013). In terms of risks and responses it is held that there are continuing improvements towards protecting information for protocols, and enhancing authentication techniques for passwords. However, in the future research indicates that there will be increased trafficking in terms of child pornography, for instance, movie files or actual images using stronger broadband services. Other activities include use of search engines so as to locate children in order to abuse them sexually online (Tomison, 2013).

There is likelihood that perpetrators of organized crime would aim to carry out their operations within the changing technological, social as well as financial environment. It is true that some of the fundamental aspects of organized crime may not undergo a lot of changes but their engagement in various criminal operations will turn out to be more essential. In the same vein, illicit drugs may in the future be the actual criminal activity in organized crime. All the same, there will emerge new sectors and engagements that would appeal more or even be lucrative in organized crime (Australian Crime Commission, 2013). Another point worth noting is that there will be more use of new technologies by groups involved in organized crime as a way to boost their operations. Moreover, advancement of communications technology would assist in providing new targets as well as improved security for perpetrators of organized crime. In this regard, they will be in a position to undertake their operations or activities at a distance or even internationally (Australian Crime Commission, 2013).

It is believed that facilitators with financial expertise that provide assistance to criminals will in the future continue to ensure such activities emerge successful. This will require a sound regulatory mechanism in the financial sector so as to prevent organized crime (Australian Crime Commission, 2013). Further studies indicate there will be more possibility to hide real identity of crime groups. However, there are stronger legal mechanisms already in place to monitor or prevent the misuse and such malicious alterations of identity (Australian Crime Commission, 2013). It is also held that cannabis will remain one of the largest smuggled drugs, for instance, in Australia. The same will be the case with cocaine and heroin which also enjoy a wide market (Australian Crime Commission, 2013). In the case of money laundering it is held that there will be stiffer laws making it difficult for organized crime groups. Therefore, the enactment of other anti-fraud mechanisms in both private and public sectors will minimize the future occurrence of financial offenses. In the same context, use of advanced technologies will assist to reduce fraudulent activities (Australian Crime Commission, 2013).

EUROPOL has been involved in monitoring the trends in organized crime across Europe. In its findings it discovered that there are approximately 3600 groups engaged in organized crime in the EU. In this portion 30% indulge in drug trafficking and a similar percentage engages in over one crime (Edwards, 2013). According to research organized crime has shifted to online. For instance, a greater part of the threats derive from online activities. The evaluations conducted by EUROPOL reveal the activities to include smuggling of drugs, violation of intellectual property rights, fraud, firearms, trading of counterfeit goods, and destruction of the environment among others (Edwards, 2013). The trading involved in such activities takes place via the internet.

EUROPOL did link organized crime with terrorism in the sense that terrorist groups converge to undertake common crime so as to accumulate more funds. The fundamental point to note is that terrorists also engage in organized crime in different ways (Edwards, 2013). Other findings by the “National Security Strategy” in UK indicated that cyber-attacks succumb to more risks due to organized crime activities. The other point is that activities of this kind threaten public safety as well as the economy. In UK, for instance, statistics demonstrate that there are about 38,000 persons involved in organized crime making it difficult and that the same costs the economy approximately £20-40 billion per year (Edwards, 2013).

In line with the arguments above other research demonstrates that computer related organized crimes have been playing a critical role internationally. In other words computerized processes have boosted the execution of organized crime internationally. For instance, it has become much easier to commit crimes such as money laundering as well as fraud (Adamoli, 1998). In the same context, electronic networks have created more opportunities towards flow of capital without requiring using traditional entities to play the intermediary role. Furthermore, illicit transfer of funds can be undertaken in different nations where there lacks sound laws against money laundering (Adamoli, 1998).

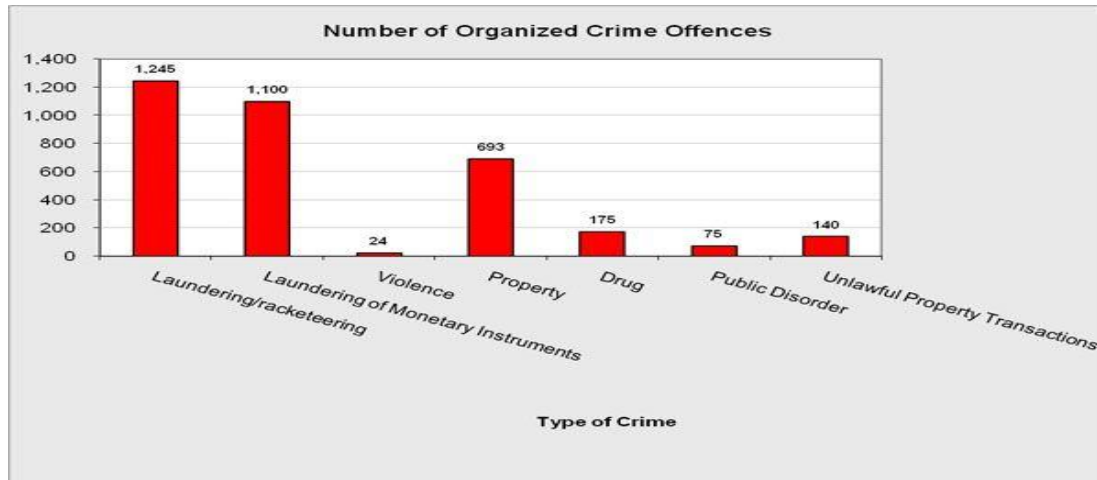
According to Borger (2007) organized crime at the international level consumes \$2 trillion worth of value where such threatens democracy at the same time being a recipe for global inequality. It is true that the world is accumulating more wealth due to increased trade and investment, but then the growing rate of organized crime emerges as a big threat to the world at large. Further studies by Borger (2007) indicate that the gains by criminal gangs globally equal Britain’s GDP; in addition, the same is over the budgets set aside for security efforts towards prevention of organized crime.

Other scholars have held the opinion that there is a promising future for activities related to organized crime especially in America. The other point is that inasmuch as crime organizations have been changing their methods, the possibility for other kinds of illegal activities will still be executed in future (McCarry, 2013). The other observation is that inasmuch as there are laws prohibiting crimes such as extortion or racketeering there will still emerge other complex criminal activities in form of computer, bank or tax fraud. This will be for the reason that such crimes may be achieved through technology hence making it difficult for criminal groups to be apprehended or prosecuted (McCarry, 2013).

2.1. Brief Statistical Analysis on Organized Crime

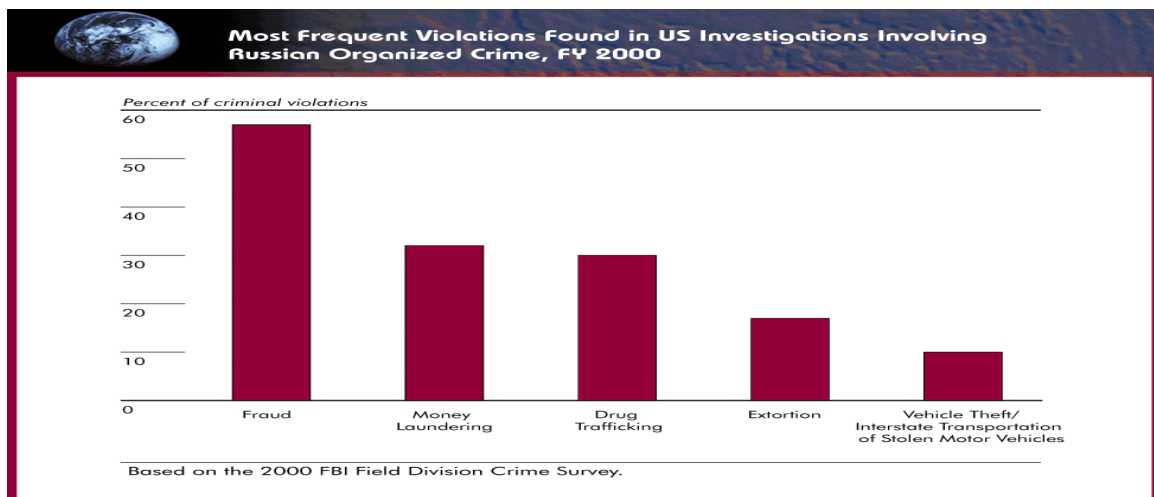
This section will provide available quantitative research on organized crime. In this regard, the researcher will make inferences based on such data to predict possible outcome in the future, for instance, in the period 2013-2017. Figure 2 below illustrates the trend for organized crime for the year 2005.

Figure 1: Trend of Organized Crime



Source: (U.S. Department of Justice/Bureau of Justice Statistics cited in. Project America, 2008)

Figure 2: Violations in Organized Crime



Source: (“International Crime Threat Assessment”, c.2013)

3. Evaluation of Policies and Control Mechanisms towards Organized Crimes

In Article 5 of the convention it invites states to have an active legislation as well as other mechanisms so as to criminalize any involvement in organized criminal activities. Article 6 goes ahead to indicate the need for the criminalization of activities related to laundering (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Therefore, it also invites states to have legislative policies that would ensure such criminal activities are responded to with necessary measures. In Article 7 the Convention lays emphasis on the need to develop measures towards combating money laundering. Therefore, each state should devise comprehensive preventive or regulatory strategies that would help detect money laundering activities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Further, pursuant to article 8 the convention also notes on the need to criminalize activities related to corruption. Therefore, every state must through its legislative body enact laws and policies that would prevent such criminal activities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004).

4. Analysis, Conclusion & Recommendations

In the overall findings it can be seen that the researcher has not made any absolute assertion or conclusion on what would be the future for organized crime. It is not possible to say it will be no more or it will be the only thing to take caution on. This is because as much as organized crime groups are changing their tactics so are governments improving their security measures to ensure such criminals do not get away easily.

There is no doubt that in every country the security institutions are very keen on organized crime due to the dangers such poses to the world even to the point of threatening global peace and security. Therefore, the reader will concur that organized crime will be one of the issues that will be treated as a matter of security concern in the future. In any case there is no evidence or rational formula that would be used to show organized crime will end in the future. Actually, the best position to hold is that in future there will be more preventive measures in combating organized crime. However, it would not be convincing to imagine that organized crime groups will come to an end in the future. Therefore, this is going to be a reality that governments will have to keep fighting in order to combat such criminal activities from occurring.

In the study, it was seen that there are those crimes that are more pronounced compared to others such as money laundering, fraud, and drug trafficking. It is arguably so that the reasons why organized criminal groups would opt for these activities are because they are highly lucrative. By this it means they can generate money quickly despite the risk involved. So, the researcher opines that the same activities will be more pronounced in the future because individuals will want to make fortune out of them. Thus, there should be more controls towards this end because such will constitute major crimes in the future.

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