



## The social dynamics of organized crime

Ojasi Gopikrishna, Anushree Shrivastava

Student, Gujarat National Law University, Gujarat, India

### Abstract

This paper theorizes that the organized crime sect has a greater impact on society than we generally seem to assume. These syndicates have an adverse effect on the daily lives of the people residing in the areas where they function and in the lives of the people with whom they have daily interactions, irrespective of the common man's involvement in the business and thus, we aim to analyze the various social dynamics involved in the organized crime and mafia gang scenario and the societal impact of the same, which includes aspects of the effect that the businesses headed by these syndicates have on the society at large. This includes the various illegal trades such as trading of illegal arms and drugs, trafficking of humans, smuggling of migrants. The basis of such organizations is usually a strong bond of unity and through this paper we also aim to shed light on the community aspects of why people join such syndicates and how social factors such as familial relations and socioeconomic status in the society are a decisive component. The exponential increase of transnational organized crime gangs, which have profited immensely from subsequent technological advancements and the great changes produced by geopolitical, financial, and cultural environment, has caused the advanced international intelligence services to be unable to pursue them and restricting their authority, is a threatening and anxious phenomenon for the world organizations. As a result, we attempt to shed light on the most significant detrimental social repercussions of organized crime through this paper.

**Keywords:** organized crime, sociological theory of crime, criminal theories, social impact

### Introduction

Society today is an amalgamation of various individuals and theories that may not fully be able to comprehend the sociological aspects of an individual's behavior, but rather be open to interpretation and help us conclude a reasonable understanding of the motivating factors an individual considers before taking drastic steps.

Organized crime is a worldwide, widespread phenomenon and entails deep economic and

social consequences. It is a continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit from illicit activities that are often in great public demand. Social dynamics are an integral part of the society and its functioning and help understand the basic rationale behind why individuals are a part of the society or the motivating factors that encourage them to perform any kind of activity. The following paper analyzes the aspects of organized crime and how it affects the society. The various dynamics of society such as development of the underprivileged section or how Organized crime leads these regions and communities into an endless cycle of service, power and poverty, especially when on a transnational level where geopolitical players are involved. The paper analyses the various sociological theories of crime and how they relate to organized crime organizations. Explanations of why individuals behave the way they do and nearest sociological interpretations have also been provided in order to formulate and understand the behavior of individuals. This research focuses on the impact of Organized crime, explicitly and implicitly and how they have deeper sociological and socioeconomic consequences.

### Literature review

The literature gathered for this research includes news and research articles from various regions of the world. The region-specific research papers explain the socio-economic

and developmental struggles faced by people and communities residing in areas where Organized Crime is widespread. The articles provide varied perspectives on the social elements influencing organized crime syndicates. In addition to this they shed light on the implications that illegitimate activities carried out by such organizations have on society.

### Research methodology

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the social dynamics associated with the sector and dealings of organized crime. This includes the implications it has on society as a whole and the interdependency between these aspects.

This paper has been written using qualitative, analytical doctrinal research. The data for the same has been collected from the articles and research papers aforementioned in the Literature Review. The theoretical framework has helped the author in the analysis of the paper in order to fulfill the objectives of this research paper. The primary themes of focus that this paper analyses are organized crime, its characteristics and objectives and the social relation between components of the society and organized crime and how it leads to disruption.

The first section of the research focuses on the background information about organized crime Syndicates and its transnational aspect. The section also analyzes the reasons for the spreading of this phenomenon and the effect it has had in various regions of the world.

The second section of the research focuses on the various components of illegal activities carried out by these organizations and their societal impact. The section intends to analyze the impact that such institutions and their dealings have on the socio-economic and geopolitical dynamics and how it affects members of the society.

The third and final section of the research focuses on various sociological theories and their applications in this scenario. This section relates theories with real world examples and analyzes the social impact and the aftermath of crimes carried out by Organized crime syndicates.

## **Organized crime**

### **Introduction**

Organized crime is a longstanding criminal syndicate that seeks to capitalize from illegal activities that are frequently in high demand by the general public. The procurement of illicit commodities, unlawful services, and infiltration of business and government are the three basic areas of organized crime. Traditional crimes (such as larceny and assault) differ from organized crimes in that they require preparation, several players, and fraudulent means such as intimidation to continue and defend their continuous illicit activities. In organized crime, the interpersonal dynamic is both a social structure and a social universe in itself. Mutually profitable arrangements and privileges are the significant element here. Organized crime associations have several distinctive qualities, such as acting as an organizational structure with a professional relationship between members and each member having a specific assigned role based on their specialties. The significance of loyalty and secrecy among members of the organization is emphasized. The fundamental purpose of the syndicates is to gain supremacy, money, and power, for which they exploit law enforcement institutions' flaws and employ intimidation and corruption to achieve their objectives. Profit is the most essential component in any investigation into the linkages between organized crime, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, illegal arms trade, or even narcotics trafficking. The lack of a prototype of an organized criminal gang most likely participating in trafficking or illicit trade nowadays is due to the fact that any circumstance is feasible as long as the illicit activity generates the biggest possible revenue.

### **Transnational organized crime**

The increasing trends of Globalization, Industrialization and Urbanisation have been helping organized crime groups develop transnational linkages. There are several factors that contribute to transnational organized crime, including poor governance, corruption, poverty, inequality, and social mobility.

The extension of free trade zones, the liberalization of international marketplace to commerce, and the emergence of globalization have all contributed to the growth of international commerce and the global economic system. The world is like a small town where several elements of international law interact, resulting in the disappearance of boundaries between states and the globalization of crime, which began in the state's domestic domain and spread to a significant multinational scale. A primary reason for the restriction of people's educational and economic opportunities, international crime can degrade people's standard of living and endanger their security and stability. There are never going to be sufficient resources to do all of those things, but cross-border cooperation in investigation and also in primary prevention against corruption and fraud minimize the criminal justice costs – both financial and in social credibility and legitimacy, which is a cost that nations will have to pay in order to stop the long-term repercussions of Organized crime.

### **Social impact**

Organized crime has now become a menace to domestic and foreign peace and stability as a result of its acts, which weaken the country's economic, social, and civic institutions, and the loss of trust in the free and fair process as a result of its impact on those with authority. Because of its illicit actions that transcend national boundaries, its influence is not restricted to the national and regional level. As a result of its monopolization and increased flexibility between countries, as well as globalization and trade freedom, organized crime poses a significant threat to all nations around the globe.

Economic and social costs of different kinds are only part of thinking about the broader social impacts of organized crime. Attending to cost directs our focus to fairly specific and material consequences of such activities, but there are other less tangible concerns.

Organized crime thrives in societies that are vulnerable, underprivileged, and fragmented, according to search. Primary areas where these organizations operate are feeding grounds for organized crime and violence, not power structures. Mental illness, substance abuse, bankruptcy, family turmoil, and traumatic home environments are all exploitable weaknesses.

Every year, organized crime claims the lives of countless people. Drug-related health issues, violence, firearm related deaths, and human traffickers' and migrant smugglers' unethical techniques and intentions are only a couple of small causes.

### **Violence**

One of several reasons why so much attention is placed into combating organised criminal groups is the fear that their actions would be linked to major violence, either explicitly or implicitly. Criminal organizations frequently use violent behavior or threaten to use extremism, which usually entails killing or abduction people. They may use violent action against common citizens to subjugate them or against members of the organization who disobey orders, whether it be by alerting government entities or acquiring personal gain. The narrative of the organization's members, as well as new competitors from other criminal organizations who penetrate the gang's areas of specialization or authority, and the brutality of these groups is not confined to people, but also extends to their members of the family and possessions. Taking the England & Wales figure of 6% of homicides being linked to organized crime as an average rate for Europe, and using EU homicide data for 2010, this would imply some 500 organized crime related homicides annually in the EU.

### **Economy**

In some research and studies conducted on a national or regional level, it is evident that there are adverse economic consequences of Organized crime. Due to the prevalent corruption in the areas where such organizations operate and a sense of loyalty towards members of the Organized crime syndicate or gang, the probability of embezzlement of public funds is extremely high. This implies that funds that would otherwise be used for the development of the country and wellbeing of the citizens are now diverted for illegitimate purposes. The revenue that is produced using these funds is usually extremely high and the profits are reaped by the members of the Organized crime group and

not the deserving citizens. This counts as a disruption in the development of the society which could potentially mean access to better education, shelter and basic necessities. In continuation, populations from poverty-stricken nations tend to move towards a profession in these institutions as the advantages here outweigh their normal life, living in the country. The advantages being power, money and monopoly over factions that probably monopolized them in the past. As far as the presence of crime is stronger in poorer, targeted regions, as is likely to be the case, funding policies should take into account the risk that at least part of the money feeds into organized crime. The results of this study suggest that policies based on monetary incentives should be at least accompanied by actions aimed at combating organized crime.

### **Drug trade**

The social and economic costs of illicit drugs include the drug-related costs of acquisitive crime, drug deaths, health costs, drug treatment, and the cost of enforcing drugs offenses, such as possession, production and supply. Drug-related health costs include hospital admissions, neonatal care, and the cost of treating drug-related HIV. These costs need to be treated carefully as they are not all truly 'costs of organized crime'. Estimates of the EU cannabis market suggest a range of approximately €7 billion to €10 billion annually, of which about 10-12% percent goes towards organized crime. Over-all, 11 countries in the European Union accounted for a total amount of drug related expenditure of EUR 15.4 billion in 2005. Drug abuse affects the social dynamics of human and familial relations, usually affecting the women and children in the family setting. The relationship between drugs and poverty has also been observed as excessive drug use can result in depletion of funds, which can lead to problems. Poorer backgrounds also miss out on access to good healthcare, education, thus creating an endless cycle of economic slump for a certain section of the population.

### **Human trafficking and smuggling of migrants**

According to the UNODC "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs", whereas "Smuggling of migrants" shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident." Given their similarities, the contrasts between the two illegal enterprises are critical when developing appropriate national, metropolitan, and global responses. To begin with, migrant smuggling involves migrants who have given their assent to the illicit trade, which is often done in perilous or inhumane situations. Victims of human trafficking, on the other hand,

have either never consented or have had their consent rendered worthless by the traffickers' forceful, manipulative, or abusive conduct. Second, smuggling ceases when the migrants arrive at their destination, whereas trafficking involves the continued mistreatment of the captives in some way in order for the traffickers to make illicit gains. The estimated cost of physical violence from traffickers averages 218,684 euros.

In the past, responses to trafficking and smuggling have focused mainly on the perceived involvement of organized criminal groups. In the context of human trafficking and illegal immigration, resorting to the detestable subjugation of people suffering from economic hardship and human misery, putting them to hard labor, and putting their physical and mental wellbeing as well as lives in jeopardy, is a breach of human rights and human values, as well as a contravention of the moral standards that uphold basic humanity. This is to be constituted as a crime against humanity.

### **Human Resources**

There is an immense amount of wastage in terms of human resources when associated with organized crime. These include educational and monetary losses that could have potentially contributed to the profitability of a nation, consequently the global socioeconomic status. The first instance of wasted human resource potential is when individuals between the 12-18 abandon education due to reasons such as poverty or lack of familial support and enter the world of organized crime. This is lost potential as an educated individual would contribute to the legitimate economy of the county and subsequently the growth of the same, which would lead to development, hence improving the social dynamic of the country and the communities as well. The second instance of wasted resources is when law enforcement is engaged in pursuit of these offenders. Once caught, organized crime and mafia members and leaders are usually sentenced to longer prison sentences, which implies a waste of resources of the government. Another derivative aspect is the embezzlement of funds that is frequently done by Organized crime syndicates which leads to a lack of governmental funds for the development of the regions, leading to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, the people who belong to these areas and communities joining the crime syndicates and continuing this vicious cycle by helping in the performance of such activities.

Despite law enforcement agencies' and others' predominantly negative views on organized crime, the existence of organized crime is obvious. "Organized crime is a social and economic gain, not a complete evil." The drug trade brings in a lot of money. Otherwise, disadvantaged neighborhoods and organized crime would be the norm. Groups can be an integral part of a community. Many Latin American communities have poor governance, with several studies, most notably in, have looked into this. Brazil. 23 Social scientists who are working on organized crime, such as Daniel Bell, decades ago, noticed how illegal activity might be used as a substitute to climb the social and economic mobility ladder. However, in the same areas were organized crime has beneficial outcomes, it also exacerbates poverty and marginalization. Hence, there is a complex relationship between community development and organized crime in poorer areas.

### **Sociological theories and their connection to organized crime**

Sociological theory is a supposition that intends to consider, analyze, and explain objects of social reality from a sociological perspective, drawing connections between individual concepts in order to organize and substantiate sociological knowledge. These theories range in scope, from concise, yet thorough, descriptions of a single social process to broad, inconclusive paradigms for analysis and interpretation.

Theories of criminological theory and criminality have come and gone, with some being completely abandoned and others being amended to better explain relatively recent phenomena. The aforementioned theories are some which are applicable, and explain the social reasonings related to Organized crime syndicates:

#### **Structural functionalism and deviance**

Structural functionalism is a sociological framework that is used to understand the world. The fundamental idea of this theory is that society is a complex system with interrelated elements. This idea is used by sociologists who study sociocultural form and composition. Deviance, according to functionalism, contributes to societal cohesion by providing reasons for non-normative and normative behavior. The presence of crime, according to structural functionalism, is due to the structure of society rather than to the actions of individuals. It also asserts that deviance has a positive impact on society on the whole. The various structural functionalism theories include

- STRAIN THEORY
- STATUS FRUSTRATION THEORY
- OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE THEORY
- SOCIAL BONDS THEORY

#### **Conflict theory**

The conflict perspective sees the law as a tool adopted by different dominant groups to retain their social, governmental, and financial influence over inferior groups. The white race, the affluent, and the rich and powerful are all dominant groups. Minority races, the destitute, and the politically marginalized are examples of subordinate groups. These subordinate factions are a threat, and the dominant groups use the legal system to prevent them from expropriating power. In American society, inferior group members' acts are frequently criminalized, while dominant group members' behaviors are typically unprosecuted. Conflict theory opposes the consensus approach, arguing that multicultural teams do not always share the same values, agree on what acts should be criminalized, or believe in the same punishment system. Subordinate groups, frequently composed of minorities and the poor, are arbitrarily targeted, jailed, and punished by dominant groups who select what principles should be promoted, which legislation should be implemented, and what consequences should be applied. The disparity hypothesis, which is distinct from the disproportionality hypothesis, is best explained and supported by conflict theory. Nonetheless, in the fields of sociology and criminology, these approaches are utilized to explain why particular races are overrepresented in police reports and the judiciary. In the scenario of Organized crime, the vast amounts of money that criminals amass unlawfully as an outcome of their quick and easy operations, revealing an affluent class in

society and increasing its profits at the expense of ordinary citizens' disgruntlement, widening the gap between the rich and the poor, as well as the maldistribution of economic output all facilitate the spread of misappropriation of funds and misconduct in societal structure. This sense of unbelonging and continuous alienation from the society leads individuals to adopt unlawful paths in order to achieve what they believe they have been devoid of. The power, prestige and monetary advantages that come with joining an institution like this are bonus, winning factors for individuals from communities that have been disadvantaged. Thus, this theory can also explain why individuals continue joining such Syndicates despite the legal severities associated with several activities that such organizations undertake.

#### **Control theory**

According to social control theory, people may reap the importance of crime and can develop and execute all types of criminal acts right now, without any specific reason or basic experiences. It is considered that the motivation to commit violent crimes is hampered by the associated costs. It also means that the disapproval of people who matter to the potential perpetrator is among the most significant consequences of crime. When a person's specific link to society is weak or shattered, offenses occur. As the strength of social relationships grows, so do the consequences of crime to individuals. The following list of bond elements—attachment, responsibility, engagement, and belief—has been useful in explaining the logic of the relationship. The following list of elements of the bond have proved useful in explaining the logic of the theory and in summarizing relevant research. These are: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. This is evident in the space of Organized crime as delinquents who join such organizations usually belong to broken families or have no family. This leads to them adapting the criminal syndicate as their family and only sense of communal connection. This perpetually leads to them forming a strong sense of thankfulness, leading to unnerving loyalty towards the organization.

#### **Social disorganisation theory**

According to the social disorganization theory, people's behavior is more heavily impacted by the quality of their social interactions and their environmental characteristics than by rational reasoning. The premise that people commit criminal acts as a result of free-willed and logical judgment is also challenged by social disorganization theory. Instead, it contends that a society's lack of social links is highly linked to higher criminal inclinations, explaining why crime is not fairly distributed throughout communities. Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, the researchers who brought forward this theory, determined three factors that were consistently present in high crime neighborhoods that made them socially disorganized. These were:

- High resident turnover rates, which means constant moving in and out of an area of residence which leads to strong social bonds not being formed and loss of sense of an established community.
- Poverty, which leads to a lack of basic necessities and thus, social exclusion or fighting to survive in a community which leads to societal pressure and thus, a lack of communal bonds.

- Heterogeneous communities, where diverse cultures and communities with huge differences in values and morals try and coexist in a community. This leads to a lack of interaction between the communities due to the diversity of the lack of bonding points, which leads to differences and the lack of community-based living aspect.

### Conclusion

Today's societal standards have been fundamentally changed, and general societal socio-cultural structures have generated many intricate circumstances, with society unable to maintain abreast with shifting behavioral patterns of groups and individuals. The research paper has studied and analyzed the information from various sources and with the aim to understand the social dynamics concerning Organized crime and the extent of its impact on the various aspects of society including health, development and violence on the various stakeholders of the society which includes members of the society, governmental organizations and the future generations. The pervasive glamourization of organized crime and gangs, either in the media or in literature, bolsters these criminals' clout and capacity to coerce secrecy and cooperation. The analysis of reports, research papers and articles reveal that the impact of Organized crime organizations on societal aspects is much more widespread and deeper than previously presumed. Its relation to sociological theories helps one understand the underlying sociological factors involved in the organized crime space and why any individual would want to join such organizations or indulge in activities related to the same despite the legal and humanitarian implications of the same. Thus, it is crucial to manage and hamper organized crime and gang violence at their source, because if left unchecked, they tend to rip apart social solidarity, divide communities and people, corrupt corporations, and destabilize the social and economic fabric of our civilizations, resulting in the destruction of democratic structure and function and constitutional frameworks.

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