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THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZED CRIME ON GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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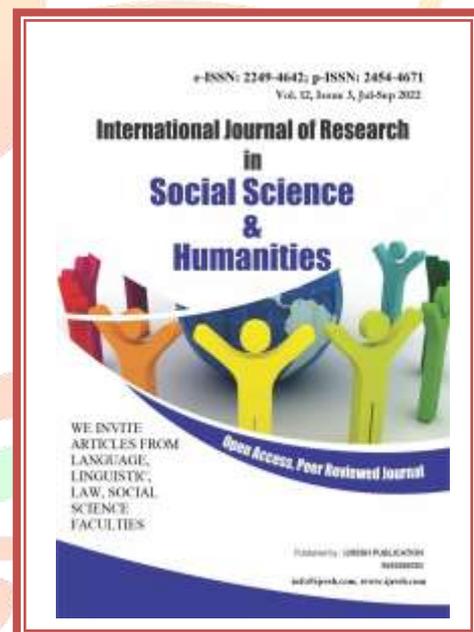
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ABSTRACT

The security, economic, social and political disruptions of the state induced by the activities of organized crime has weakened the state's authority to carry out its expected functions of good governance. In Nigeria, the illegal activities of criminal cartel groups affect government's resources and its ability to enhance the welfare, basic human needs and living standard of its citizens. The criminal cartels who in their corrupt practices penetrate political offices to wax their influence, strengthened by the integration of security agencies and judicial organs of the state to shield their illegal activities carried out by violence or threat of violence have become a course for national concern. This is why urgent attention needs to be taken to address the menace. It is against this background that the paper examined the impact of organized crime on good governance and also to proffer ways the menace can be reduced to the barest minimum. The paper adopted the bureaucracy model of organized crime since it is organized like a conventional bureaucracy pyramid shape with members in hierarchical leadership through which its activities are carried out. The paper utilized secondary sources of data and was historically analyzed. The findings of the paper revealed that the ill activities of organized crime undercut government's transparency, accountability, popular political participation and ability to harness resources for the well-being of the citizens. It is also observe that the infiltration of organized criminals in public affairs subverts government's welfare policies of its citizens, due to gross corruption all over public office, among others. The recommendations include inter alia: That political and economic agencies should beef up their administrative tentacles and arsenals to stem the tide of organized criminal cartels, leaders should muster the political will to restrict people from lifestyles that encourages organized crime, the government should ensure that welfare dimension of human needs is provided to attract citizens' patriotism to shun criminal groups and their activities, among others.

Keywords: *Organized, Crime, Corruption, Governance, Threat, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, organized crime has endangered an endemic threat to good governance in Nigeria. Its impact has attracted well-meaning individuals and government agencies to examine ways in which drug trafficking, money laundering, oil theft, piracy, human trafficking, and arms trafficking, among others could be contained. Organized crime emanated from the structure of Mafia organizations with the hierarchy of structure and strata of

positions and powers. (Finckenauer, & Voronin, 2001:13). According to Abadinsky (1990:6), organized crime is a non-ideological organizational structure of persons in knit social interaction on a hierarchical basis, to secure profit and power by involving in both illegal and legal activities. Positions and their functional specialization are assigned according to skill, family relationship or friendship. Also, activeness in pursuit of the goals of organized crime places the members on permanency as they strive to

keep the enterprise's integral objective. The organization strives for monopoly as there is goodwill and willingness to use violence, and bribery, among others as means to achieve their result. Membership is restricted, but non-members could be co-opted during a contingency period with explicit rules, enforced by sanctions that include maiming and killing in cold blood. According to the UN Office for Drug Control (UNODC) 'noted that:

over the past decade, transnational criminal networks have infiltrated West African polities up to the highest circles. By means of coercion and corruption, criminal elements are realising enormous profits while gaining influence over bodies politic on both the local and national levels. The sheer value of illicit goods and services is consistently crowding out legitimate businesses. Politicians' and parties' need for campaign financing and votes make them dependent on the cartels, as does the need of businesses for venture capital. Those behaving with integrity are intimidated into collusion. As a result, societies, which had been no strangers to corruption before, are becoming ever more dependent on funding from criminal sources.

The face of activities does not advocate any easy responses. In spite of several organisations' efforts to bring about more transparency, the data available remains limited. Realistic evidence at least suggests that the areas of political and economic governance may be a starting point for policy development. In the area of law enforcement, co-operation through the frameworks of governments has been initiated various institutions, notably Nigerian Police Force, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), ICPC among others.

Organized crime cuts across transnational to national groupings of highly centralized illegal enterprises for political and profit motives. These activities include drug trafficking, advanced fee and internet fraud, human trafficking, diamond smuggling, forgery, cigarette smuggling, money-laundering, arms manufacture, arms trafficking, and armed robbery as well as oil bunkering. Transnational organised criminal activities often involve collaboration among domestic and foreign criminal groups (Alemika, 2013). Organised criminal groups infiltrate governments, businesses, political and economic systems. They undermine the effectiveness of these systems, sometimes through corruption and violence. It is imperative that enough effort is given to the understanding of the impact of

organised crime on governance in Nigeria (Alemika, 2013). Organised crime within and across borders constitutes a serious threat to national and global development and stability. Consequently, governments, organisations, scholars and citizens across the world have over the past three decades shown interest and concern about the growth and impact of organised crime in different parts of the world. This study intends to draw attention to the gap and to create awareness about the need to address the problem of organised crime in Nigeria by embracing a wider governance approach. It is against this context the study was carried out to examine the impact of organized crime on good governance in Nigeria and possibly make policy recommendations on how organized crime can be reduced to barest minimum in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES:

Good governance and organized crime.

Governance is the constructive interaction between the citizens and state agents through which citizens express and enjoy their needs, and rights and in turn exercise their obligations in response to the public goods and services provided by the state. Good governance creates a conducive environment for the individual to enjoy goods and services such as public roads, schools, security, hospitals, and abatement

of infectious diseases, among others that they cannot afford for themselves. Furthermore, for the state to be able to provide goods and services for its teeming population, the government must be emboldened with empowerment and popular participation by the people. Also there must be accountability, leadership selflessness in public service, sufficient allocation and use of resources optimally for the benefit of all, to ensure transparency and effectiveness in the management of state's affairs (Aisedion & Osimen, 2021, Pp.3-4). In the same vein, governance also includes the process of decision-making and implementation influenced by both state and non-state actors. Organized crime syndicates belong to the group of non-state actors, influencing decision-making which results in corrupt practices to affect good governance. The features of good governance abound which include popular participation, accountability and transparency, collective and consensus-oriented, responsiveness, equitable and inclusive rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making to respond to the present and future needs of society (ESCAP, 2009,p.1). Good governance also connotes the process of how the state's

public institutions conduct and manage public affairs and resources. Mainly with due regard for the rule of law to ensure the actualization of human rights in a manner free of corruption and abuse (Agere, 2000,p.12). Similarly, good governance can easily be eroded when a group of people commissioned to take charge of the running of the state are involved in illegal commerce and transaction of illicit drugs, trafficking in persons, smuggling, oil bunkering, arms sales, kidnapping, and money laundering, among others.

Organized crime is inimical to the state and the needs of the masses but only beneficial to the groups that belong to the crime in society. According to Khan (2004, p.23), the concept of good governance evolves as a framework to examine the similarities and differences of a state's economy with other viable economies. Therefore, good governance is fundamentally a sound economic policy serving as a gateway to creating and sustaining an environment that fosters strong and equitable development. A state proliferated with activities of an organized crime such as money laundering, counterfeiting of currency and pharmaceutical drugs, drug trafficking, poaching, illegal migration, corruption, armed robbery, human trafficking, cyber-crimes, prostitution, document forgery,

among others will always battle for survival. Furthermore, another definition, according to IIT Research Institute/Chicago Crime Commission (1971,p.264) enumerated the following features of organized crime:

- (i) Engagement of organized groups of people either officially or unofficially in business deals characterized by:
- (ii) Drive to commit, or the actual commission of crimes;
- (iii) A plot to carry out crimes;
- (iv) A continuous behaviour of conspiracy through a period of time at least one year
- (v) The attainment of capable power or money, and the pursuit of political or economic security, as their main motivations.

From the above assertions, there are clear conditions that are conducive to the development of organized crime in Nigeria. They include ineffective economic management, weak regulation of economic activities, wide socio-economic inequality and widespread deprivations. Others are: weak state regulatory capability over economic activities, lack of citizens' support for the laws and policies of the government, and widespread political corruption (Alemika, 2013, p.20). This is because the ill activities serve as

conduit pipes of diverting state's resources to coffers of the group cartel.

Theoretical Framework:

The study employs the bureaucracy model of organized crime, given the attributes of organized crime to include continuity, meaning the criminal group can outlive individual members and membership is structured in a hierarchy to survive changes in leadership with teamwork and adequate planning. The bureaucracy model of organized crime fits the theoretical base of this study as widely unveiled by Mafia defectors such as Joe Valachi, during U.S. Senate committees' interrogations in the 1960s, and Cressey's scientific work of Federal Task Force on organized crime. Cressey (1969, p.34) describes organized crime as a more or less conventional bureaucracy: pyramid-shaped, with a strict hierarchy, a clearly outlined division of tasks and responsibilities, codes of conduct and behaviour, and internal and external sanctions. Essentially, organized crime is a distinct organization compare to formal organizations. The criminal justice circles have made the bureaucracy model of organized crime very popular. It regularly appears in the media and also in public debate, with frequent allusions to godfathers being in charge and deputies controlling certain specific divisions (Klemans, 2014, Pp.32-52). From the corollary of the above, the paper uses

secondary materials such as textbooks, newspapers, journals, Internet, among others. The data gathered were analyzed historically as a way of reflecting on what happened in the past and to be able to compare with the present to predict the future for recommendations.

The Existential Impacts of Organized Crime on Good Governance in Nigeria

Organized crime conducts acts that threaten the quality of life of the people in a state. It also narrows the government's policy choices of deploying available resources for the benefit of its citizens. Hence good governance is the ability of a government to foster national security, enduring viable political systems and popular participation, social stability, and economic viability important to the wellbeing of the state (Yeung, 2016,p.6). Nigeria has a population of about 160 million with nearly four hundred (400) ethnic groups dominated by Christianity and Islam religions. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and also the centre of economic activities in the Gulf of Guinea. In 1960 Nigeria gained her independence from Britain, sharing land borders that extend up to 1,500 with the Republic of Niger to the north, 1,700 kilometres with Cameroun in the east, 770 kilometres in the west with the Republic of Benin, to 90 kilometres with Chad to the north-east, and 850 kilometres of the

maritime border with the Atlantic Ocean to the south. However, the adequate policing of these numerous borders has been severally of great concern to the Nigerian government. Simply because of the porous nature of the borders. Apart from the porous nature of the land borders, the lagoons, creeks and rivers are heavily and advantageously used by criminals to facilitate cross-border crimes, such as Firearms trafficking, human trafficking, narcotics/drugs trafficking, oil bunkering, money laundering, armed robbery, among others (Ikoh, 2013,p.35).

The use of the porous creeks for illicit business is an expression of citizens alienation from the process of governance. But for livelihoods and safety have to search for economic and political security through cross-border crime across Nigeria and other African countries. Cross-border crime has received monumental hard feelings at its growing impact on good governance, particularly the nature of aggression connected with drug markets. According to UNDP cited in Odeh (2015,p.297), good governance ranges from the exercise of legal, judicial, social, political, and economic to administrative authority to meet the needs of the citizens. It also includes strengthening institutions, civil society organizations and making the government respond to the citizens. The

reason why good governance is adversely affected is that organized criminals have infiltrators into politics. They view governance mainly as their survival and enrichment to the alienation of the citizenry from the political systems rather than national development. They have disregarded the rule of law and perverted bureaucratic procedures to cause socio-economic stagnation. Organized criminal groups in their inordinate ambition to control the government entrench corruption to entice public officials to enrich themselves or close friends unlawfully through the misuse of public power. Their illicit arms trade exacerbates wars as arms proliferation goes into the hands of terrorists to cause mayhem and deplete human capital. Arms trade has also be observed to serve as a source of diversion of government's scarce resources from human needs to weapons procurement for internal security.

Organized criminal usually destroyed state institutions, ingrain corruption to weaken the rule of law and other government institutions. This is because some of the law enforcement agents and security institutions are co-opted into organized crime and become violent agents of an equally imperious status and prosecute criminals selectively to protect their cherished establishment. They are so

organized that among them are some political groups who control the state and resources from foreign donors, to provide security and development for themselves. The existence of organized crime, in Nigeria, affects good governance as perpetrators infiltrate politics to undermine effective government policies and efficient business to protect their interests. Corrupt public officials in the executive, law enforcement, and judicial institution are sought by organized crime groups so that their criminal activities on the black market can be protected against being investigated and prosecuted. With this situation, nepotism, poverty, and corruption become a growing phenomenon as civil service bureaucracies and law enforcement agents are politicized (Shaw & Reitano, 2016,p.1).

Organized crime has increasingly become the source of funds by terrorists and insurgents to generate money for acquiring logistical support to carry out their violent acts. The ability of the groups to fund terrorist activities is connected to the miniaturization of information and communication technology, particularly electronic banking. The communication system also makes it easy for terrorist organizations who engage in criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, human smuggling and illicit finance, and

their links to terrorism to be successfully discharged (Campball, 2014, p.34).

The expansion of drug trafficking increases local crime and corruption particularly the trade in cocaine and cannabis. The availability of illicit drugs has overwhelmingly posed a serious threat to the health, safety, security, and financial well-being of Nigerians. Human smuggling is also a great challenge to good governance as criminals, fugitives, terrorists, and trafficking victims, as well as economic migrants can be moved into a country without Immigration enabling documents. This act undermines the sovereignty of nations and often endangers the lives of those being smuggled. Baran (1978,Pp.32-33), aptly buttressed that actual economic surpluses and potential economic surpluses are indices of development. This implies that when those who are already involved in the production and those that are yet to be involved in production become victims of human trafficking and drug addictions, the generating capacity of the country and its accumulation or savings is reduced, thereby affecting national development and good governance negatively. In the same vein, the ultimate wealth of a nation is predicated on available human resources. Therefore a country burdened with human trafficking, human smuggling

and other organized crime activities is engendered with insecurity. Other related health issues include pelvic inflammatory diseases, HIV/AIDS and child's vulnerability to mental and psychological imbalance, thereby distorting the government's planning processes (Aisedion & Omoregie, 2021, Pp.218-219). More also, weapon trafficking entails criminal networks and illicit arms dealers in the black markets from which terrorists and drug traffickers availed themselves of weapons. The unending spate of human killings and destruction of materials affect government efforts in rendering services that impact human lives (National Security Council, na,p.1).

Cyber warfare is politically conducted warfare information to sabotage and undermine a country's confidential, sensitive, classified information using illegal exploitation methods on the internet, networks, software and computers to breach national security. Cybercrime is a big challenge and a significant threat to sensitive government computer networks and financial systems such as banking, credit card services, stock markets, and e-currency. Organized crime groups negatively affect good governance and represent a significant threat to economic growth and democratic institutions through activities such as drug trafficking, arms

smuggling, extortion, theft, and financial crime. Money laundering affects domestic trade, banking reputations and rule of law. organized crime penetration of states. The counterfeiting of money includes illegally producing money that is then used to pay for anything desired. Counterfeiting equally includes manufacturing or distributing goods under already established and assumed names. This makes consumers believe they are buying goods from companies that they trust, without knowing they are buying low quality and harmful goods. For instance, counterfeit products include electrical components, food, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, household cleaning products, electrical appliances, software and fashion. A large increase in fake goods is dangerous to health and safety thereby affecting government regulatory ability and good governance. The economic effects of organized crime and smuggling syndicates evade importation taxes, thereby affecting government's internal generating revenue budgeted for national development. The same process also gives organized criminals the ability to operate fraudulent financial accounts, utilize illicit offshore bank accounts, access tax havens or tax shelters (National Security Council, na. p.1).

Organized crime groups often engage in illegal services, goods and victimization of businesses by using extortion and fraudulent activities like bankruptcy fraud, hijacking cargo trucks and ships, robbing goods, insurance fraud among others. In the same manner, they also victimize individuals by bank robbery, burglary, credit card fraud, jewellery theft, computer hacking, economic espionage, embezzlement, and securities fraud. Furthermore, national, state, or local governments cannot be exempted from the activities of organized crime groups because they are also proficient in defrauding these three levels of government by counterfeiting money, bid-rigging public projects, smuggling untaxed goods such as alcohol or cigarettes, and shielding of immigrant workers to evade taxes (Daouda, 2013,p.46). More often than not, organized crime groups often link with high levels of executive and legislative arms of government to influence laws and policies and court decisions on cases in which transnational criminal organizations have an interest. There are several cases where officials of public institutions have been accused of having connections with transnational criminal syndicates.

However, some incidents have proven that there is collusion between some officials

of political institutions and transnational criminal organizations. There is also an increasing number of evidence from EFCC that member of organized crime syndicates infiltrating into politics and economies in Nigeria. A lot of indictments have been made by EFCC on some high profile politicians or members of their families, top security personnel, and other public officials for involvement in organized crime over the past years. In Nigeria, organized crime grows vigorously as the state loses its ability and adequate control of the use of force. As a result, Nigeria is saddled with herders and farmers' conflicts, Boko Haram insurgents, ethnic militias, separatist movements, and criminal gangs, among others. The proliferations of small arms and light weapons used by insurgents and criminals have made the crimes hard to crush. The capacities to combat organized crime have been severely deflated by organized criminals to enable them to control political and economic power to loot public treasury and launder the proceeds to a foreign account (Alemika, 2013, Pp.12-13).

Policy Implementations in Curbing Organized Crime in Nigeria

The government's exclusive militarization response toward organized crime is bound to be counter-productive with long-term costs. The style and response will further

set ablaze the problems intended to be addressed, making development a mirage. Nigeria as nation-states should look inwards, to restrict the free flow of trade that defined organized crime and also seal up its borders against illicit trade, by beefing up security agencies at the borders and incorruptible officers should form the backbone of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and other Related Offences (ICPC). The legislative and judicial institutions should be strengthened to enforce the law to deal with official corruption. The resources of the state should be used to serve peoples' welfare because where governance is compromised and weak, will form the pedestal of crime. To reduce the cost effects of organized crime, government institutions should enshrine the rule of law, promote inclusive democracies, and ensure fair development. This will require exemplary leadership and political will to form a positive alliance with all stakeholders to counter illicit networks and their intersection points across the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Organized criminal activities have devastating effects on the economy and political systems of a country. For

instance, the influx of narcotics threatens democracy as drug cartels in protecting their businesses influence top political offices with a devastating impact on the public, private sector and community institutions. There is emerging evidence of the involvement of security agencies and politicians in drug trafficking with an unprecedented threat to good governance as political parties are infiltrated by criminal organizations to put into office close associates to protect their interests. It is also a source of attraction to politicians seeking funds for their electoral campaigns since an enormous sum of money is needed to fund electioneering processes at this point organized crime cartels would be of good assistance. These criminal groups assume a significant and growing threat to good governance as they corrupt governmental institutions, drags the morals of the state into the mud, undermines public confidence and destabilizes the state.

The indirect impact of organized crime on the economic and judicial reliability of a state, affects good governance, with desperate implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability across the states in Nigeria. Some examples of organized crime include nuclear weapons smuggling, passport fraud, providing illegal

immigration and cheap labour, kidnapping, prostitution, smuggling, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, oil smuggling, people smuggling, trading in endangered species, and military equipment smuggling, and trafficking in human beings. Others are: loansharking of money at very high-interest rates, assassination, blackmailing, bombings, bookmaking and illegal gambling, confidence tricks, copyright infringement, smuggling, organ trafficking, contract killing, identity document forgery, money laundering, bribery, seduction, electoral fraud, insurance fraud, point shaving, price-fixing, illegal taxicab operation, illegal dumping of toxic waste, counterfeiting of intellectual property, and illegal trading of nuclear materials. Finally as stated above government has to be responsive to the needs of the people and ensure that corrupt officials with the obvious character of sabotaging political and economic measures are flushed out of the system.

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