Organized Crime, Transnational Criminal Networks and Environmental Crime

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Focus

- What do we know about organized crime, criminal networks, and ecocrime?

- How do we build knowledge base to support evidence-based practice for prevention, prosecution, and mitigation of harm?
Organized Crime & Ecocrime

- Early studies found organized crime involvement in waste and hazardous waste disposal.
- Later studies found more likely involvement of “crime groups” and criminal networks (though may vary by region).
- Williams (2001) documents significant involvement of organized crime groups and networks in variety of ecocrimes.
- Also variation in level of organization by crime type and region (e.g., trafficking in birds vs. other wildlife).
## Levels of organization within the illegal wildlife trade (Cook, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increasing level of organization</th>
<th>Organized illegal wildlife trade, broad categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illegal timber trade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Caviar trafficking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Activities linked to illegal drug trade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skins, furs, fleeces, TAMS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist collecting of specimens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Offense</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade in Endangered Species, Poaching</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illegal logging</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous waste, trash disposal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal fishing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozone Depleting Substances</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel/Sand Removal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please be cautious in interpretation. Every continent except Antarctica mentioned. Source: UNEP Environmental Crime Media Update, 2010-March 2012
Wildlife Crime

- Trade in Endangered Species
Key Enforcement Operations

• Operation Baba (2008)
• Operation Costa (2009)
• Operation Ramp (2010)
• Singapore Seizure (2012)
  - “well established syndicate”

Zambia    Malawi    Mozambique    South Africa
Japan    Singapore
Types – Wildlife Crime (IUU Fishing)

- Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

Black market trade, $1 billion annually with 100 million sharks killed annually (example)
Wildlife Crime (IUU Fishing)

- ORGANISED crime groups, including outlaw motorcycle gangs and Chinese underworld networks, are developing a growing taste for Australian black market seafood and the massive profits being made from the illegal trade (UN Newsletter)

- Rock lobsters, abalone, shark fins, mud crabs and prawns. (examples of prized species)

- One abalone operation $1 million per year
Wildlife Crime

- Illegal trade estimated at $8-10 billion per year (WWF 2012)

In sum, Enforcement operations, government and NGO reports:

  Suggest organized crime groups and criminal networks both operating at transnational levels
Pollution Crime

- Black market in Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS)
- Transboundary Dumping of Toxic & Hazardous Waste
Pollution Crime

- Black market in Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS)
- Transboundary Dumping of Toxic & Hazardous Waste
- Global trade in Electronic Waste

www.ewastesolutions.net
E-Waste

Circuit Boards Treated with Acid and Burned Along River. Guiyu, China (www.ban.org)
Pollution Crime

E-Waste – INTERPOL Pollution Crimes Studies

• Series case studies in Europe found evidence of organized crime involvement

• Second study in US found evidence of criminal networks but unclear on level of organized crime groups (although volume and $ suggest opportunities)
Illegal Logging & Timber Smuggling

Nature of Harm

• Developing countries lose $15 billion in lost revenue and taxes (EIA, 2008)
• Loss biodiversity; leads to flooding & forest fires
• 20% carbon gas emissions due to deforestation (driver of climate change)
Papua, Indonesia - Illegal logging of merbau wood (example)

- 2001 Logging Export Ban

- 15 cargo vessels per month to China; estimated $600 million worth per month

- PROCEEDS OF PAPUA’S LOGGING CRIMES
  - Payment made to local community in Papua: US$ 11.00 / M3
  - Price of log at point of export in Papua: US$ 120.00 / M3
  - Price of log on arrival in China: US$ 240.00 / M3
  - Flooring price in China:* US$ 468.00
  - Retail price in UK or USA:* US$ 2288.00

(EIA, 2008)
Illegal Logging

UNEP – INTERPOL Study

• Illegal logging valued at $30-$100 billion (US)
• Evidence of increased sophistication suggesting organized crime

Source: Green Carbon, Black Trade (2012)
Emerging Ecocrimes

Carbon Trading Markets
- Emissions Fraud
- Tax Fraud
- Forest Fraud

Renewable Energy Markets
- Fraudulent Renewable Fuel Credits
Fraudulent Renewable Fuel Credits

- Texas case = $41.7 million on the sale of more than 48 million fuel credits
- Maryland case = $9 million on the sale of 32 million fuel credits
Common Themes

- Large profits
- Low risk
  - Limited enforcement resources
  - Light penalties
- Organized crime & criminal networks
- Transboundary
- Corruption
- Exploit most disadvantaged
Summary of Findings

Organized Crime & Transnational Criminal Networks

- Limited Research
- $ (Transborder Supply Chains)

Need for Deeper Research & Analysis
Having Said This …

• Limited empirical research on
  - Nature of criminal organizations & networks
  - Risks and harms to human health, environment, economy
  - Evidence-based practice (prevention, prosecution, mitigation)
Law Enforcement – Researcher Partnerships

- Emerging response to variety of crime types (examples)
  - U.K. Home Office (e.g., repeat victimization; market reduction strategies)
  - U.S. DOJ (Project Safe Neighborhoods; Smart Policing)
Mutual Benefit

- Deeper understanding of dynamics behind particular crime types
- Strategic and tactical intelligence about organized crime, transnational criminal networks
- Assessment of capacity & gaps of global enforcement networks
- Development of performance indicators/metrics
- Ongoing assessment & evaluation
Understanding Ecocrime

Offender: Organizations, networks

Victim: Human, ecosystem, economy

Location: Local to global

Crime Triangle
Research & Enforcement Implications

• What do we know about these groups and networks?
  - Level of organization
  - Variation by type of Ecocrime & region
  - Cooperation with other criminal networks
  - Overlap with other illicit & licit markets
  - Prior records and serious of offending
  - Use of violence
  - Financial resources
  - Ability to influence enforcement/governments
Research & Enforcement Implications

- How do we influence potential offenders?
  - Gain voluntary compliance
    - Education/cooperative models
    - Procedural justice
  - Increase risk detection
  - Increase costs
Research & Enforcement
Implications

- How do we decrease vulnerability of victims?
  - Legal protections
  - Increase likelihood detection/guardianship
    - Citizen reporting (e.g., community based management)
    - Electronic records (harvests, vessel monitoring, timber tracking)
    - Remote sensing and observation
    - Forensics & DNA testing
    - Customs, Food inspector training
    - Fight corruption
Research & Enforcement

Implications

• What do we know about context?
  - How do we think about offending globally?
  - What is role of global illicit networks? Overlap with licit markets?

• Implications for
  - Risk-based surveillance & enforcement
  - Increase guardianship
  - Global enforcement networks to combat global criminal networks
Ecocrime = “Wicked Problem”

Not susceptible to technological and single discipline solutions
Need multidisciplinary teams (examples)
- Criminology & Law
- Environmental Science & Policy
- Natural Resource Management
- Supply Chain
- Forensic Science
- Risk Perception & Decision-making

Working with Law Enforcement, Customs, NGOs, Policymakers
Opportunities for Research Partnerships (examples)

- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance & Trade
- Global Forest & Trade Network
- Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking
- Wildlife Enforcement Network
- Operation Sky-hole Patching
- Trace Network
- INTERPOL E Crimes Committee
- World Customs Organization’s
  - Regional Intelligence Liaison Office
  - Green Customs Initiative