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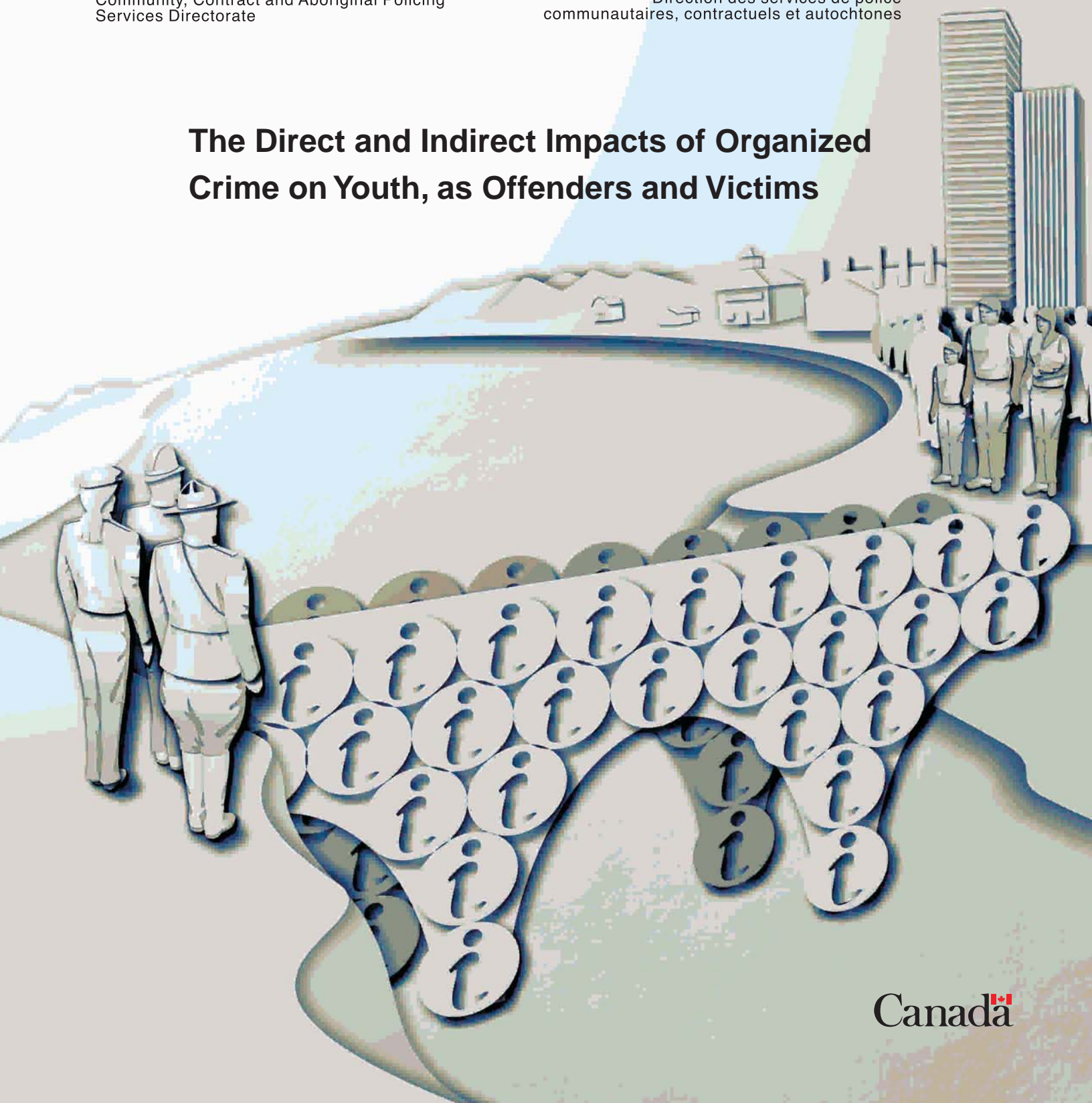
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# The Direct and Indirect Impacts of Organized Crime on Youth, as Offenders and Victims



**The Direct and Indirect Impacts of Organized Crime  
on Youth, as Offenders and Victims**

by

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## **Executive Summary**

The impact of organized crime on children and youth is both broad and direct, and yet often indirect. One of the major impacts organized crime has on youth is their recruitment into criminal activity. This is, however, only one part of the broader impact on youth. There are other areas that can directly or indirectly impact youth, many of which are felt at the local community level. These impacts will be discussed throughout this paper.

The issues explored in this report for their possible impact on youth include drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vehicle theft, terrorism, human smuggling and child sexual exploitation, youth gangs, gambling, fraud, corporate organized crime, money laundering, the Internet, computers and software, corporate organized crime, perception of organized crime, police resource allocation, and vulnerable youth populations.

Research pertaining to organized crime though is hampered by several factors. The first is the lack of a universally accepted definition of organized crime. Secondly, due to the nature of organized crime, data is generally gathered through non-scientific methods including police reports and interviews, details learned through informants, and interviews with justice and corrections personnel and so on. Secondary information is used to help form government and policy decisions in the absence of available academic data.

Future research on organized crime's impacts on youth could include various perception issues, and a focus on data collection. Ethnography could also help illuminate some of the impacts. New policy is also needed for the internal and external communication of the local impacts of organized crime, data entry and police resources related to business lines and supply and demand reduction.

## **Introduction**

In 1998, Samuel Porteus completed the most recent assessment of the impact of organized criminal activity in Canada. His study, for the Solicitor General of Canada, outlined a variety of possible impacts organized crime can have on society as a whole. It did not, however, focus on specific segments of the population which may be affected. The impacts of this criminal activity on youth specifically have not yet been assessed in Canada. Presently, much rhetoric links organized criminal groups to youth as offenders, and not necessarily as victims.

The purpose of this report was to demonstrate a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the impact of organized crime on youth, both as offenders and victims. However, this task is currently impossible, given the limited studies available on this topic.

Instead, the majority of this paper will focus on the existing literature that examines the direct and indirect impacts of organized crime on youth, both locally and internationally. It will also discuss the difficulties in examining organized crime, including the lack of a consensus on its definition. Many of the traditional activities of organized crime will be highlighted, since each is unique and often has a shared impact on youth. While all youth are a vulnerable segment of our population, some segments of the youth population may be more vulnerable to organized crime than others. Therefore, this paper will focus on young children, Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, and differences according to gender.

This review will not only examine circumstances as they relate to Canada. September 11 taught us to think beyond the local or national experience in order to capture a complete picture of the realities that may eventually affect us. Working for a police organization has not limited the perspective reflected in this paper. In fact, this particular organization has listed organized crime, terrorism and youth among its priorities, demonstrating that a link is required between the priorities.

Finally, this report will examine public and police perceptions of organized crime. Understanding pressures on police agencies, their structures, and various trends in enforcement will help to understand where police focus their energies and allocate resources.

### **The Current State of Research on Organized Crime and Youth**

The overall difficulties in researching and defining organized crime

Organized crime has been an element of civilization for hundreds, if not thousands of years. According to historian and the author; Michael Woodiwiss (2001),

Organized crime...is as old as the first systems of law and government and as international as trade. Piracy, banditry, forgery, fraud, and trading in stolen or illegal goods and services are all ancient preoccupations that often involved the active participation of landowners, merchants and government officials.

Organized crime is hardly a new phenomenon, but people have a distorted impression of it, due in part to vague definitions of its activities. We experienced this with the pre-1945 conceptions of Nazi Germany. Some of that same rhetoric has helped to shape the current public perception and support for vigorous political efforts to counter terrorism.

In shaping a definition, Woodiwiss states that “organized crime is systematic criminal activity for money or power,” and says that the American idea of organized crime is limited to a definition of activities that relate to gangsterism, Mafia and Mafia-type organizations (Woodiwiss, 2001).

This narrow US-led definition has influenced the perception of organized crime as being mafioso-type, a product of “ . . . some directing genius in human form” (Porteus, 1998). In fact, a recent study demonstrates this point well. It shows that only 350 of the more than 5,000 criminal groups

in Russia meet the US and Western understanding of organized crime. Between 12 to 20 of these were major cartels (Luneev, 2000).

This doesn't mean that we should not define organized crime, and thus limit its meaning. Without a universally accepted definition, policy makers, politicians, the media and the public alike have been left to define organized crime. A realistic definition will help to quell misunderstandings and bring renewed interest back to its study. A resurgence of attention is already apparent as many definitions of organized crime now include terrorism.

Margaret Beare, in her book, Organized Crime in Canada aptly defines organized crime as a process or method of committing crimes, and further states that,

.... is an ongoing criminal conspiracy, with a structure greater than any single member, and the potential for corruption and/or violence to facilitate the criminal process... criminal organizations operate secretly to avoid arrest and conviction, they insulate their leadership from direct involvement in illegal activities and they pursue financial rewards as their main objective (1998).

Porteus (1998) states that any definition of organized crime should include its impacts, including that from a social, economic, health, and environmental perspective.

In Towards a Common Definition of Organized Crime, Adamoli et al, claim that organized criminal activity services the need for profit and/or power. They add that power may be the intended goal or the indirect impact of financial reward (1998).

Williams' (1999) research places organized crime in the context of market forces by stating that "supply chains come into being in order to meet demand", and he offers insight into the connection between licit businesses and criminal activities. He also states that criminal organizations move from the licit to illicit and back again as circumstances and opportunities dictate.

Finally, Albanese's view (2000) is that an organized crime group can consist of two or more

participants who are not necessarily culturally driven, and exist to respond to the demands of the local market forces. He sums up the current scope of the definition by stating that,

...definitions of organized crime are numerous but vague, but there is merging consensus on four primary elements: a continuing organization; an organization that operates rationally for profit; the use of force or threats; and the need for corruption to maintain immunity from law enforcement. There is less consensus about public demand for service, monopoly control, restrictions on membership, ideology, specialization, secrecy and the extent of planning.

There are two types of criminal opportunities. The first provides easy access to illicit funds without incurring high risks. These funds usually come from illicit goods and services that are in high demand such as, gambling, pornography, and narcotics. Social or technological change makes new criminal opportunities possible, including abuse of the Internet and cell phones, and the creation of money laundering businesses.

The second type of criminal opportunity is created by motivated offenders. It includes bribery, extortion, protection rackets and schemes to defraud within an otherwise legitimate business enterprise (Albanese, 2000). Merton's social theory (1963), which is found in examples throughout this paper, suggests that criminality is a response to circumstances where legitimate means to affluence, power and esteem are severely limited. Cloward and Ohlin present a more modest theory (1960). It states that culturally deprived population segments don't have equally available illegitimate means ("Theory Overview", 2002).

Organized criminal groups vary substantially in size, which can also impact how organized crime is defined. Groups can range from two to three person teams operating a baby-food racket, to high level drug trafficking operations. Numbers can range from 10 members or individuals in a criminal gang, to hundreds of bikers or cartel members.

Difficulties in researching organized crime and youth

The power and influence of the baby boomers, aged 38 to 56 has been given much focus in the Western world. However, the youth population aged 5-24, is almost as large, and able to both influence and be influenced by crime (Wolln et al, 2001). Yet, as previously mentioned, the lack of academic data on organized crime and its connection with youth makes research on this subject difficult. Secondary methods such as law enforcement reports and other government literature offer some useful insight. However, enforcement reports usually do not consider societal impact, let alone the impacts on youths involved. In addition, some of this information may be influenced by media and political rhetoric. Also, publicly accessible information from some enforcement groups cite only newspaper or media reports as references.

The secretive nature of organized crime also makes it difficult to conduct empirical studies on this subject. Using detailed case studies is one way to learn how past organized criminal activity reflects elements of any proposed model. Detailed analysis may be needed because criminal involvement, special skills and opportunities will vary according to the type of activity undertaken. Narcotics distribution, human smuggling, money laundering, and car theft all require unique elements (Albanese, 2000). Researchers must be resourceful in finding ways to test models and hypotheses, including using ethnographers.

Another difficulty in gathering information is the fact that police reports detailing organized crime-related issues often do not document when youth are involved. National and provincial data systems do have the potential to document the direct or indirect impacts of organized crime on youth. But there is limited time spent inputting this type of data. In some cases, the idea of inputting data related to youth's participation in areas such as drug operations or loitering was never even considered, because it was determined to be unimportant or irrelevant.

## **The Direct and Indirect Impacts of Organized Crime on Youth - Commodities and Activities**

Youth are affected by many more people and factors than those they directly encounter. Parents, friends, school and the larger community strongly influence the learning and development environment of youth. If organized crimes in general or any of its related activities affects anyone in this environment, through collusion, addiction or perception, it is also likely to affect the youth as well. This paper will attempt to observe the impacts on youth where behavioural modeling, and influence from peers or the larger community has occurred, or is likely.

There is a noticeable difference between the direct and indirect impacts on youth. Direct impacts are usually obvious when revealed, but they do not always take into account the specific impacts on youth. The indirect impacts as found in recent academia, while sometimes creatively constructed, are the most damaging and need future consideration.

The need to make a distinction between direct and indirect impacts is demonstrated through the results of a 1996 Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse study of the economic and social costs of substance abuse on Canadian society (Single et al, 1996). This study found that the indirect costs of the use/abuse of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs outweighed the direct costs, sometimes by substantial amounts. For example, direct health care costs related to tobacco use were estimated at \$ 2.68 million, while productivity losses related to tobacco consumption (indirect costs) were estimated at \$ 6.82 million. All direct costs for alcohol use, including law enforcement, prevention, and traffic accidents, were estimated at \$3.39 million. This is less than the indirect costs estimated at \$ 4.14 million. Law enforcement costs far outweighed all other direct costs associated with illicit drugs. However, it still only amounted to half of the total estimated indirect costs related to illicit drugs. Prior to the release of this study, legislative and policy decisions relied on direct costs alone. Now, with the new understanding of the scope of indirect costs and impacts, substance abuse policy may be developed more comprehensively.

For the purpose of this paper, direct impacts result from the direct involvement in a specific activity of organized crime. One example could be luring or selling drugs to children or youth through the Internet. Another may be the effect of an activity on children or youth in the local community where the organized criminals operate. The direct impacts are the increased use and demand for illicit goods, and the modeling of criminal behaviour.

Indirect impacts are unintended or not known to be a goal of organized crime groups, but are a

result of the activity. These impacts may contain more creative conjecture at times. For example, as a result of government anti-smuggling policies, contraband tobacco activity by organized crime groups increased considerably. This on the other hand led to increased cigarette consumption by youth as a result of the lower tobacco prices. Another example is the public's growing fear of youth gangs, based on US media reports. The perception is that the extent of violence and the organization of criminal activity is as prolific in Canada.

## Drugs

Activities involving drugs are linked most often to organized crime, but other criminal activities also have to be recognized for their negative effects on youth.

There are obvious direct impacts that organized crime has on youth as it relates to the illicit drug trade. Youth can be and are directly involved in the production, exportation, trafficking and the purchase of drugs. Organized crime's involvement in drugs provides for easy availability of illicit substances and the increased use of certain drugs by youth<sup>1</sup> (Adlaf et al, 1995). Youth under 12 are brought into the drug world by adult or older youth offenders. Neighbourhood youth are perceived as potential resources that can generate additional income for low wages and full or partial immunity from the law<sup>2</sup> (Haberfeld, 1992). This can directly promote the use of children/youth as mules for exportation or as drug runners. It also promotes the idea of deliberating using drugs to sustain youth as prostitutes (Dimmock, 2002; Estes et al, 2001). The behaviour of local drug traffickers is quickly learned and modelled by community youth, including the children of drug traffickers.

Using drugs can have many consequences for youth and for society. Organized crime groups supply drugs to feed existing demand and to create new demand. Naive and unsuspecting youth can quickly become addicted to drugs. Property and theft crimes are also committed by those under the influence of drugs for the purpose of obtaining more drugs (Pernanen et al, 2002). The use of drugs have other physical, social and emotional impacts as well. These include serious life threatening diseases acquired by sharing needles, or the chronic health effects of drugs such as MDMA/MDA (Mathias et al, 2001). In addition, when organized crime groups promote drugs to youth at raves, it could lead to sexual assaults and unintended accidents, such as car accidents and

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<sup>1</sup> In this study referenced, a source of drug using influence among the youth was found to be increased availability, especially for the use of cannabis.

<sup>2</sup> In this study of drug crime groups and non-drug crime groups, over 80 per cent of the drug group were specifically asked by older individuals to sell drugs for them, and were made more vulnerable to criminality because they had started this behaviour at such an early age.

teenage pregnancy (Addictive Drug Information Council, 2001).

The involvement of organized crime in marijuana grow operations can also have negative impacts for communities. For instance, the use of rental properties for the purpose of marijuana grow-operations may inhibit poorer families from finding adequate rental accommodations in communities where rental housing is either limited or prices are inflated by the large payments organized criminals pay landlords. Safety also becomes an issue given that the location of grow operations near community parks are chosen by organized criminals for tactical reasons; primarily to be able to see and defend against intruders (Tyakoff, 1998). The children of parents who grow marijuana may be exposed to dangerous electrical wiring and ‘booby traps’. If their parents are apprehended, the children may be turned over to child welfare (“28 Children caught up in Homegrown Seizure Raids”, 2002).

If young traffickers at the lower end of the supply are used to traffic drugs to other youth, they may also be exposed to turf issues or to weapons (Gordon, 2000). There are longer term ramifications too. By being introduced to the drug trafficking network by adult drug dealers, youth are faced with troubling issues around socialization, trust and value. As a result, they may hold on to their views of criminality for a longer period of time than those who commit non-drug crimes. However, only a minority of youth who sell drugs become regular dealers<sup>3</sup> (Haberfeld, 1992).

Documented evidence indicates that more police enforcement is directed toward organized crime’s involvement in supply, as opposed to efforts to reduce demand. Certain illicit drugs receive higher priority than others. Some economic models suggest that one drug can impact the future consumption of other drugs. When prices rise for one drug (caused by a multitude of factors including drug seizures), it could lead youth to other substances. For example, a lower supply of marijuana as a result of police seizures could result in increased ecstasy use. Contraband alcohol seizures may result in additional use of marijuana or tobacco. With demand reduction, a focus on other “gateway” commodities such as tobacco and alcohol, could contribute to reduced demand and

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<sup>3</sup> In this study, 70 per cent of the drug group were never told to quit using drugs by their parents or legal guardian. Also, 82 per cent of the non-drug group felt that they could change their criminal way of life and look for non-criminal alternatives, while 59 per cent from drug group felt this way.

supply for all three substances -- illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco (Kenkel et al, 2001).

Three drug-related issues warrant attention at this point. First, the US government has recently begun advertising or 'educating' on the role of American youth in subsidizing terrorism through drug consumption. Information linking Canadian consumption to terrorist groups is speculated in reports from available facts, however, it is not substantiated through proof (Criminal Intelligence Directorate, Drug Analysis Section, RCMP, 2002). There is also no documented evidence by Canadian police that members or associates of terrorists groups are resorting to drug trafficking in Canada to finance terrorist activities (Vaillant, 2002).

Another issue is police perception of organized crime in drug trafficking. Research in several countries, including Canada, has shown that mid to high level drug traffickers are most likely not career criminals, but formerly law-abiding business people (ie. small business) drawn to high profit margins (Woodiwiss, 2001; Desroches, 2002; Williams, 1999). It could be difficult as well as dangerous for police to infiltrate this size of criminal group. This may explain why it receives less acknowledgement by law enforcement agencies.

Finally, in reference to the latest CCSA-sponsored study on drugs and crime (2002), there is a perceived fear from crimes linked to drug consumption. This perception may be more deserving for crimes involving alcohol. Such research findings may cause police and other service providers to revisit their policies (Pernanen et al, 2002).

## Alcohol

Depending on the province or country, alcohol is legally available to those between the ages of 18 to 21. Price-sensitive youth, however, may resort to using contraband alcohol. Contraband alcohol and tobacco are both viewed as 'easy crimes' for organized criminal groups. This is because some organized crime groups can use existing drug trafficking networks to switch between commodities including alcohol and tobacco (Williams, 1999; Adamoli et al, 1998; E.J. Dickson-Gilmore, 2002).

There are direct impacts of contraband alcohol use on youth, including the associated health risks related to consuming a product that can be dangerous or of poor quality. The increased availability

of alcohol to youth, and the subsequent increase in alcohol use by youth, is also significant (Criminal Intelligence Directorate, RCMP, 2001). In addition, youth are subjected to danger because organized criminal groups will sometimes use them, particularly Aboriginal youth, as ‘runners’ to move contraband alcohol across national or provincial borders (Dimmock, 2002).

Organized crime’s involvement in contraband alcohol can also have indirect impacts on youth. With low prices and easy access, youth or their parents might use contraband alcohol more frequently. This can lead to addiction problems. Linked to this is higher associated rates of death, accidents, and violent crime caused by increased alcohol use. An increase in violent crimes is only speculated with youth, but it is documented with adults (Pernanen et al, 2002).

Increased illicit alcohol use may also impact government social programs. Government funding may be diverted from family, school and/or youth-related programs in order to cover the additional health care costs associated to consuming untaxed alcohol. Finally, there exists some confusion over the illegalities of contraband and inter-provincial smuggling versus government-endorsed duty-free. Parents’ attitude toward contraband products and deception of taxation could impact youth actions (Customs and Excise Branch presentation, RCMP, 2001).

## Tobacco

Organized crime’s involvement in the sale of contraband tobacco is taken less seriously by parents, communities and even police than that of other activities. This may be because they don’t fully understand how this impacts pricing or the different levels of organized crime that are involved, including corporations. Much needed attention, however, has been brought to the issue as a result of the 1994 Canadian government taxation increase on tobacco and its subsequent implications.

Organized crime’s involvement in the area of tobacco may have several direct impacts on youth. One obvious impact is the sale of tobacco to youth under the legal age. Cheaper prices may lead to increased tobacco use among price-sensitive consumers. Unregulated production and repackaging also leads to inconsistent product quality. This may have adverse health effects on youth and adults alike.

Organized criminal groups are not the only players involved. They may use youth, especially Aboriginal youth, as transporters or “runners”. In some instances, there has been alleged involvement from tobacco corporations in Canada, the US and Italy (Dimmock, 2002; Center for Public Integrity, 2002). Finally, organized crime’s expansion in tobacco led government(s) to fight increasing contraband activity by decreasing taxation and thus government revenues (Customs and Excise Branch, RCMP, 2001).

Organized crime’s interest in tobacco has indirect impacts as well. For example, when contraband tobacco activity was curtailed by the government, organized criminals were able to use their established networks to substitute tobacco with other commodities, such as alcohol and drugs. This paved the way for the decreased taxation of licit tobacco in 1994 (Dickson-Gilmore, 2002). Since that time, Canada has experienced increased inter-provincial smuggling due to quick, yet un-coordinated provincial reaction to contraband activity (Customs and Excise Branch, RCMP, 2001). The emphasis on enforcement and supply reduction also caused the proliferation of contraband tobacco markets in Columbia and Europe.

Organized crime’s response to decreased taxation has contributed to projected increases in adult mortality rates. As youth, they became addicted or regularly consumed cigarettes, because they were cheaper due to anti-contraband measures, such as those enacted in 1994 (Villeneuve et al, 1994). As with alcohol, government funding could be diverted from community-related programs to incur the health care burden of consuming untaxed tobacco, made possible by the involvement of organized crime.

Finally, Canadians seem to have a similar attitude about tobacco and alcohol. With both, there is possible confusion over the illegalities of smuggling, even inter-provincially to make a profit, when the government endorses duty-free products. With tobacco, however, there is disrespect for the law stemming from traffickers and consumers of smuggled products. There is also a significant public view which holds that the purchase of contraband tobacco is acceptable<sup>4</sup> (Customs and Excise Branch, RCMP, 2001).

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<sup>4</sup> Approximately 35 per cent of Canadians said that contraband activity is acceptable.

## Vehicle theft

Auto theft costs Canadians \$1 billion per year, while organized criminals globally profit \$15 to \$30 billion annually. The collapse of the Soviet Union created a demand for luxury and other vehicles. To meet this demand, organized crime established theft rings within countries including Canada. Communities today are affected by the growing rate of unretrieved cars, which now stands at 24 per cent compared to five per cent in the 1960s (Insurance Bureau of Canada, 2002).

Little documentation exists on how vehicle theft committed by organized crime impacts youth. This can be attributed to the fact that five or so years ago, “North America’s now booming ‘vehicle theft for export’ business barely existed” (Insurance Bureau of Canada, 2002).

Youth are mainly implicated in joy-riding offences, as a result of car theft. These cars are retrieved and usually returned to their owner. In 1998, 42 per cent of persons charged with vehicle theft were between the ages of 12 and 17. Organized criminals use youth individually or as gangs to steal cars. They can earn between \$150 and \$500 on delivery of the stolen vehicle (Insurance Bureau of Canada, 2002).

Youth are also impacted indirectly by organized crime, because they are the most vulnerable group for car insurance rate increases. The insurance industry has claimed that rate increases are due to higher instances of unretrieved cars, usually attributed to organized crime theft. This rate increase may also apply to the fact that car manufacturers are installing auto theft deterrents as standard items.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, only 12 per cent of vehicle thieves are identified. This increases the chances that many youth perpetrating these crimes will be able to more fully enter a life of crime before they can be stopped. Youth are also at risk during high speed chases by police. These can occur during the commission of an auto theft for an organized crime group.

## Terrorism / Narco-terrorism

September 11 has awakened the western world to organized criminal activity in the form of

terrorism. Only a short period of time has elapsed since the events of that day, so there is little information on youths' involvement in this area. Terrorism, in terms of loss of life, has never before come near to the 2001 figure of over 3,000 dead. Since 1977, the highest recorded casualties of terrorism were 311 dead and 2,652 wounded in any given year (Williams, 1999).

There is a debate surrounding the use of terrorist groups who act as drug traffickers to supply funds for terrorist activities within countries such as Canada (Vaillant, 2002). This is referred to as narco-terrorism. However, both the RCMP and US government claim that Canadian and American youth drug consumption is likely linked to the financial support of terrorism abroad. This is because terrorist organizations are both directly and indirectly involved in drug production in areas such as South America, the Middle East, and Asia (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2002; Criminal Intelligence Directorate, Drug Analysis Section, RCMP, 2002).

Terrorism/narco-terrorism directly impacts youth by physically, socially and emotionally destroying communities here and abroad. There is evidence that terrorist organizations use drugs as a political weapon to purposely target consumer countries and the children of their enemies (Lyman et al, 1998). Youth are also modelling deviant behaviour ( ie. suicide bombings; militaristic training for joining terrorist cells) in proximity to terrorist organizations or host countries.

There are more broad and substantial indirect impacts of terrorism/narco-terrorism on youth. They include the post-September 11 retribution against countries such as Afghanistan. This has profoundly negative consequences on Afghan childrens' physical safety, nutrition and emotional well-being.

The post-September 11 'follow the money' policy by Western governments may severely restrict the ability of legitimate Western charities from acquiring funding to help vulnerable women and children in the Middle East. This may allow nations such as Afghanistan to become a more formidable incubator of terrorist activities in the near future (Naylor, 2001).

September 11 is the impetus for the U.N.'s push for long term change in regards to reduction of corruption and economic and social despair. These are believed to be key ingredients for breeding terrorist groups. It is the children of developing nations, however, that will suffer in the short-term from reduced economic and social aid (Blustein, 2002).

Closer to home, there are also long-term emotional effects of witnessing events such as September 11. These include fear, anxiety (in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder), lack of trust among children and parents, and the resulting use of alcohol or drugs to ease the stress which is already documented (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2002).

The new heightened state of alert after major terrorist events benefits the safety of all children, but civil rights may be violated because Canada may not tolerate actions such as protesting, normally viewed as a 'right of passage' for youth (Ellard et al, 2002). In addition, a new standard of violence was set after September 11. Subsequent attacks may more readily involve vulnerable populations such as children (Brynen, 2002).

Some decisions are more easily rationalized by nations after September 11. The global environmental concerns addressed by the Kyoto Protocol were cited by numerous governments as a key aspect of the future of children.

#### Human Smuggling and Child Sexual Exploitation (Prostitution and Pornography)

It is believed that organized criminal groups are involved to varying degrees in child sexual exploitation and human smuggling activities. Child prostitution, pornography and human smuggling are often committed in tandem. After men, women and/or youth are smuggled into a country, the women and children are forced to endure various forms of sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation is a lucrative business offered by organized crime and is another service in their 'portfolio'.

The use/abuse of children and youth have obvious impacts on the lives of those who are directly involved in human smuggling and sexual exploitation. In Canada, the average age of youth prostitutes is 14 (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2001). Organized criminal groups use ploys to recruit and keep youth. They offer financial and drug incentives to get same-sex peers to recruit other youth. Sexually exploited youth are given drugs to feed their addiction and to sustain their activity (Estes et al, 2001).

Organized crime groups maintain street children by having them exchange various forms of

exploitation for basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and money (Estes et al, 2001; Rodriguez, 1999). Smuggled adults and children must work off incurred debts as indentured servants and prostitutes. Sometimes they are involved in other types of criminal activity, such as being mules for drugs (Estes et al, 2001). Human smuggling is risky as people may die in transit, or face severe consequences if caught and returned to their homeland.

Adults are implicated in the demand for goods and services. Organized criminal groups facilitate the continuing supply of child/youth pornographic material directly to adults. This may precipitate committing further crimes against children or others. While organized crime is involved in the supply of goods and services related to child sexual exploitation, other players are necessary, including villagers who sell their children, members of the tourism industry that provide sex tours, foreign aid workers and domestic and international police/peacekeepers<sup>5</sup>. (Williams, 1999; Limonowska, 2002)

Homeless or runaway children 12 and over are prime targets for sexual exploitation by organized crime. Some evidence suggests that organized criminal groups also take the infants of youth prostitutes. This enables the crime rings to exert greater control over these youth (Estes et al, 2001). The emotional, physical and social toll of being exploited sexually as a child, and the resulting adolescent/adult delinquent or maladjusted behaviours including drug use, domestic violence or suicide must also be considered (Zickler, 2002). Another indirect impact is the distribution of goods, such as pornography, through the Internet to unsuspecting and vulnerable youth.

Smuggled humans often find that their chances of earning income through employment or welfare assistance in their new country are diminished. They are then preyed upon by the smuggling group or other criminal organizations as a result. In Europe, more so than in North America, illegal immigrants, mainly women and children, may be forced into labour to survive.

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<sup>5</sup> In Kosovo, members of the international community (mostly KFOR soldiers) constitute 40 per cent of the clientele of prostitutes. Throughout Southeastern Europe, there is documented evidence that domestic border guards, and suspicion that UNMIK international police, may be involved in human trafficking. According to the report, "stories about local and international police frequenting bars, using the services of women and being on good terms with the owners and traffickers are legion."

Closer to home, migrant trafficking can also lead to xenophobic sentiments from the larger community and fuel racial prejudices. This could then contribute to feelings of ‘second class citizenry’ and reduced funds for immigrant integration. Recent immigrants could then lack understanding of that society’s norms, resulting in deviant behaviour (Adamoli et al, 1998; Estes et al, 2001; Wolln et al, 2001). The real or publicly perceived increase in crimes committed by illegal immigrants compared to the native population creates fear, and misperceptions about the good intentions and character of smuggled peoples.

Finally, the supply of smuggled humans can serve to increase the Western world’s demand for foreign prostitutes and child prostitutes, often promoted as ‘safer’ in terms of sexual disease transmission (Adamoli et al, 1998).

## Youth Gangs

Youth congregating in gangs seems to be one of the most misunderstood, and negatively interpreted phenomena of youth. Membership in a youth gang does not necessarily guarantee a negative short or long-term outcome for a youth and/or society, or the direct passage into organized criminal groups as many media sources have purported. Instead, gangs often provide an immediate wage and/or a direct sense of community and identity for youth whose economic and social opportunities are limited (Venkatesh, 1996).

According to Gordon (2000), analysts and policy makers should be thinking of gangs along a continuum, ranging from groups of friends who spend time together and occasionally get into trouble, to more serious organized criminal groups or gangs. His study further illuminated the fact that nearly half of youth gang members had a history of family and school problems. Gang membership was an attractive option because the youth lacked legitimate choices for other social venues.

In some instances, organized criminal groups are directly involved with youth gangs. The impacts of this involvement include the supply of illicit substances to drug gangs or other youth gangs acting as retail/ street level traffickers.

The link between criminal behaviour and drug addiction was promoted after the 1985 crack cocaine

epidemic in the US, where some youth gangs became exclusively drug gangs (Howell et al, Dec. 1999; Starbuck et al, Dec. 2001). There is no obvious or automatic move from youth gang to criminal business, because gang members lack opportunities to ‘move up’ in linked criminal business organizations. However, good wages are offered to youth who are in gangs affiliated with a criminal business organization. This is not the case for non-affiliated youth gangs where profit is most likely not a motive since wages are so low (Gordon, 2000; Venkatesh, 1996).

In Vancouver, organized criminal groups use youth gangs for such things as extralegal dispute resolution (enforcement), distribution of goods and services, hitting pre-determined and directed break and enter targets, and eliminating rivalries with other criminal business organizations through beatings, stabbings, and drive-by shootings<sup>6</sup> (Gordon, 2000).

There are a few indirect impacts of organized criminal groups on youth gangs. First, gang members who are returning from prison, and who were influenced by organized crime members in prison, will have a negative influence on youth gangs in terms of trafficking, violence, and access to weapons (Glaser, 2000; Howell et al, Jan. 1999). Second, in the public mind, the association of organized crime with youth leads to the misperception, fed by media and hearsay, that gang violence is an epidemic. In fact, police do not view youth gangs as a major issue of concern in the overall crime debate (Warren et al, 1998). Finally, negative media messages which focus on the ‘organized’ and ‘crime’ angle of youth gangs encourage short-term responses instead of long-term solutions.

## Gambling

Gambling is a traditional organized crime activity. Since the 1970s, it has been gaining popularity throughout Canada, albeit legally. Net revenue from legal gambling rose substantially in the 1990s from \$2.7 billion in 1992 to \$9 billion in 2000. As of 1999, lotteries still accounted for the most revenue, but casinos were gaining at 33 per cent and video lottery terminals (VLTs) at 27 per cent (Wood, 2002). At the same time, however, only one per cent of provincial revenues are spent on

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<sup>6</sup> The beatings and stabbings have been committed in restaurants, bars and some high schools.

problem gambling treatment, education or prevention programs. This is despite the fact that three to five per cent of legal age gamblers are problem gamblers (National Council of Welfare, 1996).

A review of studies show that youth are more likely than adults to have gambling disorders<sup>7</sup> (National Council of Welfare, 1996). Youth tend to participate in gambling activities that are mostly competitive in nature, such as card-playing, sports betting and lotteries (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, July 2000). In four provincial studies completed in the 1990s, gambling disorders surfaced in adolescents before age 14. Other issues confirmed by one or more provincial studies was that criminal involvement was higher among problem gambling adolescents, and that youth modelled their own behaviours on parental views on gambling, which were those of acceptance and support (National Council of Welfare, 1996).

The impact on youth of organized crime's involvement in illegal gambling is not well documented in police reports or academic studies. Provinces have not yet assess the impact of illegal gambling on the public in general. Research may not be able to help in the near future, as studies on legal gambling are only now beginning to emerge.

When organized crime is involved in illegal gambling, it can increase youths' opportunity to gamble themselves, since legal gambling is only reserved for those 18 and over. Youth under this age could use illegally operated machines or participate in arranged competitive gambling. Reports also exist that say organized crime has allegedly fronted Akwesasne businessmen with money from Las Vegas for the purposes of placing gambling products on the reserve. This creates further gambling opportunities for vulnerable Aboriginal youth<sup>8</sup> (Dickson-Gilmore, 2002).

Organized crime's involvement in gambling may have numerous indirect impacts. It could contribute to an increased availability of gambling, which will affect frequency and rates of problem gamblers, especially among youth (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, July 2000). Gambling problems acquired at an earlier age have a greater chance of being solidified prior to adulthood. Problem gambling is associated with criminal activity and absences at school or work

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<sup>7</sup> The ratio of youth problem gamblers to adult problem gamblers is shown to be 4:1.

<sup>8</sup> See section on "Vulnerable Youth Populations" for further explanation.

(National Council of Welfare, 1996). There is also a risk of violence involved in illicit gambling, when it comes time to collect debts. Illicit gambling could also mean that less funding is collected provincially to cover the costs associated with the treatment of gambling addiction. Finally, many parents' liberal or encouraging attitudes on gambling, results in youth believing it is acceptable to gamble illegally, just as it is to evade alcohol and tobacco taxation.

## Fraud

Fraud is perhaps one of the most underestimated aspects of organized criminal activity, although reported acts of fraud in Canada have declined in recent years according to Statistics Canada's 2001 figures. Money-making schemes targeting vulnerable population groups such as seniors and tax and health care evasion are examples of lucrative fraudulent activity undertaken by organized criminal groups. However, the true scope of fraud is somewhat suppressed. It is not always reported, because its victims often feel shame, or it may be that the activity in question is simply not recognized as a type of fraud.

Through fraudulent activity, linked to organized crime, medical institutions have received goods or services that are of poor quality. This directly impacts on health services for parents and children/youth (Pilkerton, 1999). As new naive consumers, counterfeit credit cards may also affect youth and eventually, their credit rating.

Indirectly, organized crime's involvement could affect certain industries, such as health services. These industries may have to take money out of their regular budgets to recover the debt they incurred from investing in faulty goods or services. This could affect other services such as pediatric care. Families' may also deplete their savings by using fraudulent schemes which operate using the mail service, telephone systems, facsimile, and Internet ("Economic Crime Prevention Objective", RCMP, 2002).

## Corporate Organized Crime

Defining corporate organized crime as 'organized crime' takes its depiction into a different sphere

of understanding. But in many respects, it is just as criminal and can cause as much harm to youth and society as other crimes such as drug trafficking or human smuggling.

According to Michael Woodiwiss (2000), a discussion about the scope of organized crime has to include the criminal behaviour of three elements -- governments, corporations and professionals.

Corporations and banks have been caught laundering money for some crime groups. By thinking of corporate crime as organized crime, it could generate some reflection on the current political emphasis of 'corporate social responsibility'. Introspection of corporations was popular in the 1960s but has yet to be revived, in terms of research interest. Also, police resourcing is comparatively low to meet the projected needs of this type of crime. It could be just as difficult to acquire evidence of corruption or collusion from corporations as it is from biker gangs.

It's not just corporations that are involved in this type of corporate organized crime. All levels of government are susceptible too. Recently the RCMP was alerted to alleged corruption within government by the Auditor General of Canada. It has since launched a criminal investigation into various federal government contracts.

Within Canada, Porteus (1998) alleges that organized criminal groups are involved in transporting and illegally dumping toxic wastes. Corporations have also participated in the long-term contamination of environments. There are impacts on children and youth to such acts as knowingly polluting waterways. Waterway pollution has pronounced effects on communities that subsist on nature.

When mercury was dumped into the riverway by the Reed Co. Pulp and Paper Mill in Dryden, Ontario, Minimata disease spread through the Aboriginal community of Whitedog and Grassy Narrows. By 1970, the Aboriginal people refused to believe that the water was contaminated. They continued to live on fish and drink water until survivors of Minimata, Japan came to tell their stories of mercury poisoning. Thirty years later, the entire community has changed. The residents suffered from much socio-cultural damage attributed to the destruction of employment and quality of life. To this day, severe fishing restrictions remain in place. All of this had an impact on the

livelihood and future hopes of the children of this reserve <sup>9</sup> (Elmy, 2000; “Mercury and Lake Superior: The WhiteDog First Nation and Mercury Poisoning on Northwestern Ontario”, 2002).

In Nova Scotia, the Sydney Tar Ponds accumulated 700,000 tonnes of contaminated sediment of benzene, kerosene, and other chemicals, including PCBs. It was the result of 100 years of dumping by the Sydney Steel Company. The provincial government bought the company in 1967 to reduce the impacts of job cuts to Sydney, but was forced to close it when the extensive pollution became known. People who reside near by complain of headaches, nosebleeds and serious breathing problems. For Sydney, even more than 30 years after the plant’s closure, the rate of environmental harm on children -- through cancer, miscarriage and birth defects -- is one of the highest in Canada (Selinger, 2001).

There are many other examples of the direct impacts of corporate organized crime on youth. RJR and Northern Brands International, for instance were successfully sued by the Canadian government in 1999 for racketeering fraud, and helping to bring smuggled cigarettes into the marketplace. In turn, these products are purchased by the more economically disadvantaged and price-sensitive, such as youth (Center for Public Integrity, 2002).

More recently, it was confirmed that eight corporate vitamin producers were price fixing vitamins, such as folic acid, beta carotene and B6 – needed during pregnancy and by children and youth (“Vitamins Price Fixing Lawsuits”, 2002). There are also allegations that top corporations producing baby formula have engaged in immoral and aggressive marketing practices. These go against existing standards signed by governments of the Western world. It’s been determined that baby formula is an unwise and dangerous choice for infants in developing countries because of unmet standards on use and storage (World Health Organization, 2001).

There are certain indirect impacts of corporate organized crime on youth. For instance, vitamins are found in most food products such as cereals and drinks. As a result, corporations that purchase vitamins at inflated prices may choose not to include those needed for healthy human development in their products. Those most affected are prenatal and young children, especially from

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<sup>9</sup> There is now 80 per cent unemployment where it was once a thriving tourist-based community.

economically disadvantaged areas (“European Union in the US: Eurocom”, 2001). Although standards do exist prohibiting the assertive marketing of baby formula, this type of marketing may create a perception that this is the only choice for women. Formula-fed infants may be less able to resist disease and severe complications or deaths can occur in poorer developing areas where the formula cannot be properly made, stored or sustained (International Baby Food Network, 2002).

## Money Laundering

Money laundering is a peculiar organized crime activity to address in terms of direct and indirect impacts. The activity itself is an indirect impact of other organized criminal activities. The laundering of criminal assets has to be completed in order to realize profit and power. An overview of the impacts of money laundering can not be considered without also addressing the more recent provincial, national and international policies enacted to curb the activity.

There are direct impacts of money laundering and its accompanying policies on youth. There is an increased presence, for instance of organized criminal groups in countries where money laundering policies are more lax. This brings safety and security implications for these communities.

Organized crime groups use legitimate companies to launder money, especially those which service the typical needs of young children to older (college-age) youth. These include video arcades, entertainment, bars, clubs and casinos (Lyman et al., 1998). On a more positive note, the renewed ‘follow the money’ enforcement policies in North America and Europe may have limited organized criminal groups’ financial incentives and the scope of their operations ( Beare, “Organized Crime and Money Laundering”, 2000; Naylor, 2001).

The indirect impacts of money laundering and related policies towards youth are broad in scope. One such impact is the increased political and/or social influence by organized crime. Organized criminals will gain societal respect, when due to large sums of money, they are able to extend their activities in to legitimate businesses and other influential decision-making spheres in the future (Adamoli, 1998). It is also encouraged in some severely disadvantaged crime areas such as Russia, to use laundered money from organized crime to invest in legitimate businesses to service the

increasing needs of Russian families<sup>10</sup> (Solomon Jr. et al, 2000).

The 'follow the money' policy to address financial activities by terrorists devotes resources to crimes committed 'after-the-fact', as opposed to prevention and education of youth, parents and communities. Due to the low estimated costs of the operation, this policy may not be useful in stopping large scale criminal acts against civilians, such as that which occurred on September 11. Since 1998, many terrorist accounts were frozen by US investigators, but this did not stop subsequent attacks<sup>11</sup> (Brynen, 2002; Naylor, 2001).

As previously stated, due to existing stringent money laundering policies, there is increasing need for organized crime to become involved in tobacco smuggling networks in Columbia and Europe to launder other crime (drug) money (Center for Public Integrity, 2002).

#### Internet, Computers and Software

In April 1999, Canada had 8.8 million Internet users. In 2002, that number was expected to almost double to 15.8 million users (Commercenet, 2002). Of the 82 per cent of Canadian families that have used the Internet, 73 per cent have Internet access at home (Media Awareness Network, 2002).

The proliferation of the home computer and access to the Internet has been especially expedient. However, the Internet is mostly unregulated, and considered to be a breeding ground for organized criminal activities. It is interesting to note that this technology is mainly understood and mastered by youth, who remain largely unsupervised as they 'surf the web'. The Internet is a relatively new way for organized criminals to realize profit, but its potential has not been fully exploited by those interested in expanding traditional crimes and further developing motivated crimes.

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<sup>10</sup> This would, of course, enable them to launder even more money through their new business.

<sup>11</sup> It is estimated that the cost of terrorist attacks on September 11 was equivalent to the cost of a middle-class Ottawa, Ontario home.

One direct impact of organized crime on youth, as it relates to technology, is the increased supply of counterfeit software. In addition, the Internet is used as an information-delivery and exchange medium. This permits activities such as luring children and youth to chat groups, and the dissemination of information on illegal activities including how to grow or consume drugs. Child pornography is sold to adults who subsequently post the material, which is then accessible to other adults or youth through chat groups. IT-trained and other skilled youth, usually under 30, are also recruited for their technology skills. This enables organized crime to infiltrate new markets, and ensures secure record keeping designed to thwart police investigations (Adamoli et al, 1998; Albanese, 2000). Youth can also inflict great damage when they operate in groups to ‘hack’ or destroy files and create viruses (Criminal Analysis Branch, RCMP, 2001).

An indirect impact of organized crime’s involvement in the Internet, computers and software includes higher prices for legal software resulting from increases in counterfeit software. The subsequent illegal use of software in many households both stems from, and leads to, a lack of knowledge about software rights and respect for the law. Also, there is the grave issue of exposure of youth to unwanted materials on the Internet, such as child pornography (Estes et al, 2001). Finally, some youth may become scapegoats for organized hacking groups, such as the infamous “Mafiaboy”, and be left to face prosecution (Criminal Analysis Branch, RCMP, 2001).

### **The Direct and Indirect Impacts of Organized Crime on Youth - Perception and Police Resource Allocation**

#### Direct Perception of Organized Crime

A discussion about the impacts of organized crime on youth would not be complete without examining how youth, their parents and their communities perceive organized crime. This discussion is further divided into those who are exposed to these types of criminals directly, and those who perceive it indirectly, usually through what they see on television.

This particular chapter has been expanded to report on past and present occurrences contributing to misperceptions about organized crime and resulting government and police policy, and resource allocation. As stated at the beginning of this paper, the topic of organized crime is filled with secrecy, and there is little academic data to corroborate both police reports and secondary media

sources.

In other countries, such as parts of Russia, youths' lives are impacted directly by organized crime. This was illuminated in a study of 12 to 18 year olds, that aimed to determine the extent to which the *obshchak* – the organized long-standing criminal community -- influences school youth in East Russia (Tatidinova, 2001). This study also existed to verify the ideas of certain Russian specialists. They noted that organized crime was invading the youth environment to control and exercise power, legitimize itself and establish public approval. This is in fact evidenced by Tatidinova's survey of school youth where almost 15 per cent of the youth thought that the *obshchak* was focussed on positive motives. Seven per cent thought the organization was 'good', while 44 per cent did not know what the *obshchak* did, reflecting the fact that schools and families did not teach their youth about the *obshchak*. Approximately 13 per cent of the students were approached by *the obshchak* through peers or older persons. Few youth felt that they could count on police or teachers to help them out during conflicts with members of the organization. Almost 25 per cent believed that they could count on friends.

Other areas of the former Soviet Union have their own problems with organized criminal groups. In the last decade since the collapse of the USSR, part of the Ukraine population experienced great poverty. This was accompanied by extremes of social differentiation, and lack of access on how to legally obtain wealth. According to Solomon and Foglesong (2000), and in keeping with Merton's social theory (1963), there is a new small class of entrepreneurs engaged in illegal activity. They supply a role model to young males who aspire to elude the impoverishment felt by most of the population.

More locally, in Akwesasne, youth can be paid thousands of dollars for a few minutes work smuggling. Young smugglers are alleged middlemen for an international network supplying gun, drugs and untaxed goods. It is alleged that they have even resorted to firing guns at police (Dimmock, 2002). There is also a direct impact of the contraband industry on children who, for example, might have accompanied their parents to look at cars or similar big purchase items. According to Dickson-Gilmore,

when external perceptions of criminality is intertwined with the lack of legitimate opportunities within the community and the lure of rather spectacular wealth

offered by smuggling, it is not difficult to understand why some impoverished, marginalised Mohawk youth might seize illicit opportunities (2002).

The mere presence of illicit commodities may make Mohawk children and youth as much, if not more, susceptible to substance use or abuse than the outsiders who are largely the customers buying such commodities.

Smuggling has created another sort of victim. They are the children who came from wealthy smuggling families before the legal enactments caused a significant downturn in contraband activity in 1994. These children only knew of comparatively easy prosperity which accompanies illegal activities, and they were neither aware nor motivated toward legitimate opportunities (Dickson-Gilmore, 2002).

A similar fate is met by children of high level drug dealers who are eventually caught committing their crimes. A recent Canadian overview of incarcerated high level drug traffickers demonstrates that most of these men operate in small groups and not cartels. They are not career criminals and don't use drugs. Instead, they have families, live in upscale neighbourhoods and present themselves as successful businessmen (Desroches, 2002). They also don't believe that their activities constitute "organized crime".

Perhaps for security purposes, and to lessen any shame felt by committing these acts, the children of these dealers may be kept unaware of the nature of their parent's wealth, until they are apprehended or the youth realizes what the business is all about. Nevertheless, the children's parents may have modelled certain behaviours. This further strengthens a belief that there is a 'fine line' between criminality and good societal contribution. In larger drug importation and trafficking operations, there are examples of the leader's children taking over the business when their fathers were unable to continue due to death or imprisonment (Woodiwiss, 2001). This may also apply to smaller criminal groups, although there is no direct evidence.

Some youth gangs resort to cutting and pasting media images of popular 'big' gangs and lore into their local versions of nationally-known gangs, with which they falsely claim affiliation (Starbuck et al, 2001). However, this association with known national gangs causes a misperception of increased violence, and thus promotes fear among the local community. It also results in police

using tactics which aim to eliminate national gangs, but mistakenly targets only local gangs (Howell, 1998; Starbuck et al, 2001).

### Indirect Perception of Organized Crime

There are numerous ways in which youth's perceptions of organized crime are shaped. Most youth and parents' only knowledge of organized crime comes from films and/or television. During adolescence, the typical child will have witnessed upwards of 30,000 violent acts and 8,000 murders on television. Studies demonstrate that portrayals of crime and violence through television lead to increased fears and perceptions of danger among television viewers (Mastro et al, 2000). In turn, this perception may influence public and political decision-making about police resources, both in terms of numbers and type of deployment.

Film and television has traditionally targeted its messages to adults, but a new children's film called *Sharkslayer* is slated to arrive soon in theatres. It's being developed by influential Dreamworks studio, which also made the successful film, *Shrek*, that was popular among youth. *Sharkslayer* is billed as an "underwater mob film", that will perhaps create misperceptions about organized crime for kids like *The Sopranos* did for youth and adults ( *Sharkslayer*, 2002). However, this film intends to use more satire and parody, and has famous actors doing voice-overs, for the purpose of engaging more children and youth to buy movie tickets and purchase related merchandise.

Some popular movies viewed by youth and adults have focussed exclusively on mafioso-type organized crime, namely the *Godfather* series, *Goodfellas*, *Scarface*, *Analyze This*, *Donnie Brasco*, *Casino*, and *Bugsy*. As well, the present generation of youth and adults are currently glued to the television drama, *The Sopranos*. Woodiwiss (2001) remarked on the accuracy of the portrayal of organized crime when he discussed the book version of *The Godfather*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list for 67 weeks. This book is perhaps a good indication of how much the media, law enforcement and politics influence writers and script writers' research. Readers assumed that the novel was a real-life depiction of organized crime even though its author, Mario Puzo admitted that he had never met "a real honest-to-God-gangster."

Perception and portrayal of organized crime varies according to commodity. In 1983, Peter Reuter

completed an exhaustive study of gambling and loan sharking industries in New York City. It determined that La Cosa Nostra domination did not exist. Reuter concluded that if the Mafia existed at all, it was a “paper tiger” living off its popular reputation which was fuelled by journalistic and law enforcement speculation (Reuter, 1983).

For a variety of reasons, some organized crime activities tend to go unnoticed by the public, such as corporate crime, environmental crime, and contraband activity. In December 1993, 35 per cent of Canadians said it was acceptable to buy contraband (Customs and Excise Branch, RCMP, 2001). Smuggling is also viewed as being less anti-social compared to other crimes such as drug production and trafficking. The public does not tend to condemn those selling smuggled cigarettes, in fact they may appreciate them. The more lenient penalties in this area, compared to other areas of organized crimes reflects this (Center for Public Integrity, 2002).

Gang membership is one of the most misperceived issues related to youth. Research confirms that not all gangs are involved in criminal activity to the degree of being ‘organized’ or violent. In addition, many gangs are transient and relatively unstable (Gordon, 2000; Starbuck et al, 2001; Wolln et al, 2001). An intensive study of gangs and public perception demonstrated that there was a high level of public fear related to gang violence. However, the sources for the information on gang violence were almost exclusively secondary sources comprising mainly hearsay and the media. As Warren has aptly stated, “underlying the issue of media reportage is the power vested in media organizations to shape community perceptions over social issues through selective discursive interpretation and presentation of such information as ‘news’” (1998).

Warren’s notes that media reports about instances of gang crime made-up words and phrases, had changing definitions of gangs, and gave a tremendous influence to so-called experts on gangs. They also primarily presented the US perspective. There were many aspects about youth gangs that were clearly missing from media reports that could have helped the public to better understand youth. They included the socialization aspects of congregating, the cultural impetus for social gathering, the need to maintain and express masculinity in the face of unemployment, as well as disadvantage.

Interestingly, youth in gangs were portrayed as offenders. The resulting calls for greater parental control rarely recognized that young people could be hanging out to escape an abusive home

environment. Public views of this sort may also indicate that there is little consultation from police about the crime realities in that community. In most communities, police do not place youth gangs high on their list of crime priorities. Another study shows that it is adults who rely on the media for information about gangs and violence, as opposed to youth who are less likely to view gangs as a severe threat (Mastro et al, 2000).

Within Canada, Gordon found that media reports on youth gangs were over-represented in Western Canada and under-represented in Atlantic Region (2000). Across Canada, ethnic components were stressed almost everywhere. However, ethnicity and immigrant status are important components to understanding the existence of criminal business organizations, more so than youth street gangs. But media labelling on youth gang ethnicity may feed into immigrant and ethnic stereotyping, causing reverberations in immigrant policy and self-image<sup>12</sup> (Waters, 1999).

The police have played equivocal roles in the public's perception of organized crime. On one hand, for example, police rhetoric on drug issues has been responsible for major policy decisions taken by governments. In Canada, police have consistently maintained that 80 to 90 per cent of crimes are caused by using illicit substances. Calls have been made for more police resources, mainly for drug enforcement. Some people demand reduction initiatives and increased attention to the drug issue. Yet, an important RCMP co-sponsored study, released recently, shows that 40 to 50 per cent of crime is causally related to substances. This is a much lower figure than that purported by police. The substances consumed by offenders before they commit their crime(s) are, in descending order, alcohol alone, alcohol and drugs combined, and then drugs alone (Pernanen et al, 2002).

On the other hand, police have also been characterized as disguising all organized crime discussions in "unnecessary and counter-productive secrecy" (Beare, "Facts from Fiction: Tactics and Strategies of Addressing Organized Crime and Organized Criminals", 2000). As Beare points out, the impacts of organized crime are serious enough to warrant even greater action than rhetoric, in order to 'understand' what are, and what are not, real threats to our local and national community. Organized crime enforcement is focussed on the big seizure or the dramatic sting operation, and ensuring that this is reflected through the media. This focus in turn creates the public perception

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<sup>12</sup> Similar reasoning about the impact on the immigrant community is found in the subsection above entitled, "Human Smuggling and Child Sexual Exploitation."

that organized crime groups are national in scope and that they are involved only in large scale operations. As a result, police may create opposite public reactions than that which they seek. They can run the risk of unduly creating increased fear within the communities and/or public indifference to national-level operations, while neglecting local impacts.

Police operations are also popular fodder for the media. “Biker wars” and other “visibly violent” groups are “sexier” and far easier for the public and politicians to understand than criminal deal-making and massive financial frauds. In turn, police actions and priorities depend on a media-dependent public and political policy making (Mastro et al, 2000; Beare, “Facts from Fiction: Tactics and Strategies of Addressing Organized Crime and Organized Criminals”, 2000).

#### Police Resource Allocation

It is assumed that police are independent organizations free from public or political interference. However, the public and political perceptions of crime have an impact on how police resources are deployed. Beare has pointed out that funding for police comes from government and in turn police “must meet certain expectations” that are held by the public, media and politicians<sup>13</sup> ( Beare, “Facts from Fiction: Tactics and Strategies of Addressing Organized Crime and Organized Criminals.”, 2000).

Public fear, sometimes created by police themselves, dictates municipal, provincial, national and international deployment of police resources. When crime is widely misperceived in communities, such as in the case of organized crime activities, police resources may be deployed inappropriately. But the solution to how resources are allocated, should not rest entirely on police. Many community service providers, especially in the area of demand reduction and treatment, are implicated in reducing the direct and indirect societal impacts of organized crime.

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<sup>13</sup> Provinces in Canada, along with police who receive their funding from provinces, have a legal financial stake in many of the vices that organized criminal groups also attempt to supply, such as tobacco, alcohol and gambling.

## Unintended Effects on Youth Resulting from Police Resource Allocation

According to the recent US Congress Report on Crime Prevention, police effects on crime are complex and often surprising. Findings demonstrate that arrests can sometimes increase crime, and that regular traffic patrol may reduce robbery, gun crime, and contraband activity (Sherman et al, 1997). Along the same lines, enforcement strategies can directly contribute to unanticipated or unaddressed consequences. This was demonstrated in the sections of this report on drugs, tobacco and money laundering policies. According to Dickson-Gilmore, the intrusive attempts at transnational governance of the local community in Akwesasne, caused the defiantly-motivated establishment of local practices such as trading and the development of gambling casinos (2002). This, however, was not the result of policing alone.

An example of the unanticipated effects of police resourcing appears in a Florida study. It showed that limited resources in a police department led to an increase in drug enforcement. This resulted in police devoting less time to property crime enforcement, which increased property crime rates (Benson et al, 2001).

In Canada, the crime for which youth are most frequently convicted is property crime. Property crime can have a profound impact on communities, leaving residents feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Ultimately, the allocation of resources toward ‘specialized’ organized crime activities could lead to ‘missed crimes’, such as property crimes and auto theft. These may implicate organized crime groups at the local level, resulting in the possibility that youth may not be caught on first offences. This could result in youth becoming more deviant, since they were able to commit repeat offences before police could intervene.

Unequal distribution of police resources toward organized criminal activities may end up de-emphasizing one problem to focus more on another (Woodiwiss, 2001). In many nations, including Canada, police have more resources for drug enforcement than for organized business crime or environmental crime. Over the years, police have been consistent in maintaining that drug trafficking is the principal source of revenue for most organized crime groups, given the existing limited definition of organized crime by law enforcement (Criminal Intelligence Directorate, Drug Analysis Section, RCMP, 2002). This leads to more knowledge, seizures, and charges for drug offences. This may subsequently lead to the right or wrong impression, through media and police-

heralded statistics, that drug crimes are more numerous and significant than other crimes.

### Police Resource Culture and Tools

The police culture itself perceives federal crimes as exclusive to the national environment. It maintains a career path which is oriented towards promotion into federal enforcement services. The fact too that the business lines of Canada's national police force are separated into contract and federal policing creates the perception that the crimes being investigated are different, and affect a different level of clientele -- national for federal services, and local for contract policing.

A recent study of RCMP members performing contract policing duties demonstrates consistent findings from its relatively small database. This includes the fact that there are gaps in knowledge on most issues related to organized crime (Loree, 2001). An exception is the perception of police that they have sound knowledge about organized crime's efforts in traditional drug activity. Approximately 90 per cent of RCMP members said that in order to provide quality services to their community, it was somewhat or very necessary, to have knowledge about this dimension of organized crime. On the other hand, only a small number of respondents said they actually knew how to address the social and financial impact of organized crime on communities.

Several respondents mentioned that they rely on media for much of their information about organized crime. They also indicated that they may then regurgitate this information back to the public and the media. In this manner, a media either informed or not by the police may assume power to influence police resource allocation, despite lacking knowledge about the issue.

Contract policing members have noted that specialized units need to better understand the wealth of information on organized crime that emanates from the detachment level. The lack of communication and the division between contract and federal policing would seem to be a potential impediment. It leads to the misperception by contract policing officers that specialized units will look after all issues related to organized crime.

Due to the existence of numerous high level criminal groups, tools have been created to better focus the police effort. Within the RCMP, a computerized ranking system exists to prioritize

investigations at the national level. When applied regionally and locally to smaller, but powerful crime groups, the system may eliminate certain types of groups whose negative impact on local communities is significant. This has direct impacts on local funding and police resource allocation. However, the Operations Model, once designated only for organized crime operations, is now promoted for use with organization-wide issues.

If police focus remains on the national or transnational aspect of organized crime, the local aspect will remain hidden. What might appear to be lower level crimes which feed the transnational crime process could also be overlooked (Beare, "Facts from Fiction: Tactics and Strategies of Addressing Organized Crime and Organized Criminals.", 2000). Focussing on this level of investigations has meant that the larger, monolithic and rigidly hierarchical structures have been relatively easy targets for law enforcement. However, the current trend seems to be towards the creation of smaller organized crime organizations based on mutual understandings and agreements with relatively few operating procedures. These are harder for law enforcement to infiltrate using current tools of analysis (Adamoli et al, 1998).

### Police Resources and Demand Reduction

A discussion of police resources dedicated to organized crime would not be complete without addressing demand reduction. Research consistently demonstrates that supply [of goods and services by organized crime groups] exists to meet the demand, but police and other service provider's resources are not organized to meet this reality (Lyman et al, 1998; Williams, 1999; Woodiwiss, 2001). Prevention is not consistently advanced to the media by police, or found in published media reports, and so the public is left unaware of its importance, especially related to organized crime.

Often, police attention is consistently deflected from crime prevention and property (youth) crimes for 'higher profile' customs, drugs and proceeds enforcement, and intelligence gathering. This is evident through the sheer number of employees dedicated to enforcement tasks versus those dedicated to demand reduction activities. The only exception seems to be that of drug demand reduction. In the RCMP for example, only five per cent of all full-time federal drug employees perform drug awareness duties. In RCMP contract policing, however, there are many more

employees who discuss drug prevention with their communities. They lack training though on effective prevention methods as well as significant knowledge about the methods and impacts of organized crime (Loree, 2001).

In terms of demand reduction, specific local factors which contribute to juvenile delinquency are perhaps being overlooked by the agencies involved in crime prevention. Police seem to understand explanations of crime causation on a more general level, largely related to situations that provide the opportunity for crime. Focussing on the root causes of criminal behaviour is necessary for reducing demand, but police knowledge may not encompass all ideas. These include the understanding of parental behavioural modelling, gender differences in choosing certain commodities supplied by organized crime, or the methods of socialization of adolescents in criminal behaviour, including the adult's influence on the entry into organized drug distribution (Haberfeld, 1992).

September 11 caused great turmoil for police resource allocation (National Post, 2001). Police attention was deflected towards terrorism, at the expense of other organized crime investigations such as youth-oriented crimes and crime prevention activities. With enforcement resources directed toward terrorism, the demand for human smuggling remains stable. Border crossings and the methods used to smuggle men, women and children may even become more dangerous to avoid the increased possibility of detection (National Post, 2002).

### Vulnerable Youth Populations

All youth are vulnerable to influence from their larger community, family and peers. Young children are perhaps the most vulnerable both in terms of their direct and indirect victimization. Special mention is also made in this section of direct and indirect impacts of organized crime on minority populations of youth, such as aboriginal peoples and other visible minorities.

#### Young Children

The use of vulnerable young children by those participating in organized criminal activity, shows

the true extent of their manipulation and drive for profit and power. Some aspects have already been discussed such as the use of young children as drug transporters, the selling of children into the sex tourism industry, and the impacts of aggressive baby formula marketing and vitamin price fixing on children.

Young children are impacted directly by organized crime. It's been reported in the media or through police reports, that children as young as five have been used to transport drugs. Recently, a 12 year old child was found with 87 condoms in his stomach filled with heroin (BBC News, 2002). Police reports have also revealed that young children were 'rented' by an organized group of 35 criminals for the purpose of providing cover as 'families' so that they would not be suspected of transporting drugs (Ruiters, 2002). Another example is criminal groups throughout the US, who stole and repackaged baby formula for resale, but used incorrect labels with no regard for food sensitive infants (Green et al, 1997).

Indirectly, young children are affected by organized crime through the repackaging and marketing of stolen products such as diapers and best-selling childrens books sold to independently owned stores (Toronto Star, 2001). Organized crime groups have also taken to manipulating items such as strollers, which have drugs injected in to them to avoid detection (Ruiters, 2002). Finally, there may be the resulting emotional trauma of "used" children when illicit substances are detected by law enforcement.

### Aboriginal Youth and Visible Minority Youth

Aboriginal youth, from birth to age 24, comprise 55 per cent of the Aboriginal population. By comparison, non-Aboriginal youth comprise 33 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. "Aboriginal People in Canada", 2001).

Rates of gambling and drug, tobacco and alcohol abuses are higher among Aboriginal youth than any other youth group (Scott, 1997). Aboriginal youth are implicated or used in a number of criminal activities, including as runners in the trafficking of contraband products, tobacco, alcohol and drugs. The abuse of contraband alcohol, however, may not be a factor in many northern Aboriginal communities because while illegal alcohol is made, organized contraband products are

not usually bought by Aboriginal peoples (Mallard et al, 2002). Aboriginal youth gangs are increasing in numbers and influence in Western Canada (Courtois, 2002). As for gambling, it has a unique inter-generational impact on Aboriginal youth. A recent Alberta study showed that almost half of aboriginal youth were at risk or problem gamblers (National Council on Welfare, 1996).

Although not quite as large as the Aboriginal youth population in Canada, visible minority youth comprise 40 per cent of the total visible minority population.(Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. “Visible Minorities in Canada.”, 2001). Visible minority children and youth are often victims of human smuggling and sexual exploitation, as well as drug smuggling, both within Canada and internationally. Visible minorities are often perceived, and subsequently feared, as members of homogeneous ethnic gangs, but this is media-led misperception as gangs are often not organized along ethnic lines (Warren et al, 1998; Gordon, 2000). The speedy enforcement efforts against terrorism by the Western world, including police, may impact negatively on visible minorities, especially those of West Asian or Arab descent, both in Canada and abroad.

#### Gender Differences: Male Youth and Female Youth

Gender is a significant influence on human life. There is a considerable amount of research surfacing in this area. This research may lead many community service providers to redirected programs in terms of demand reduction and prevention messaging towards select youth audiences.

Special attention should be given to young males in relation to a number of organized criminal activities and their impacts. In terms of progression into illicit drug use, alcohol is a more important substance for males (Kenkel et al, 2001). Recent US research shows that once given the supply of, or opportunity to use drugs, males and females are equally likely to use drugs. Males, however, have better access to drugs at younger ages and suffer from higher rates of drug abuse (Zickler, 2000). According to Brynen (2002), terrorists are predominantly male and are psychologically vulnerable people who are looking for a purpose in life. They join networks, but do not have a strong political agenda at the time. They share many of the same indicators as males who join youth gangs.

Males are also implicated in more vehicle thefts, computer crimes, and as drug or contraband

runners. They greatly outnumber females in youth gang participation (Fagan, 1999). Youth in general acquire more problems with gambling than adults, but according to two provincial studies, male youth were two to three times more likely than females to be problem and pathological gamblers (National Council on Welfare, 1996). Males enjoy the more competitive type of gambling, such as sports betting, cards, and VLTs, which can be activities run illegally by organized criminal groups.

For females, tobacco use is a more critical substance in the possible progression into illicit drug use (Kenkel et al, 2001). Today, there is also the existence of female gangs and female membership in youth gangs which were previously all-male (Fagan, 1999). The gap is beginning to narrow between male and female youth rates of problem gambling according to one provincial study. Studies of women gamblers are also showing progression into problem gambling at a much higher rate than what was expected (National Council on Welfare, 1996). Female youth are exploited more sexually, in terms of pornography and prostitution, more so than male youth.

### **Future Research and Policy Implications**

The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate, from existing literature, the scope of the impacts of organized crime on youth. Provocation of thought on these topics may then lead to empirical studies and data collection. There are many areas which are recommended for future research and policy. As stated previously, researchers will have to be resourceful in obtaining means to test models and hypothesis, including considering the utility of ethnographers and case studies.

Police data should be reviewed for its utility in offering research-source information about the impact of organized crime on youth. Some data is accessible now, but new models may need to be developed to assess the local impacts of organized crime. Data systems could be used to greater potential for documenting organized crimes or impacts where youth are directly or indirectly implicated, including children of high level drug traffickers, youth in gangs, youth contraband consumers or money laundering in businesses frequented by youth.

Also, illegal adolescent gambling should be further assessed. Ethnographic means of studying organized crime's involvement in youth gangs or child sexual exploitation should be explored. A

review of the media and the influence on public perception and resulting policies should be undertaken. The Internet's growing popularity should give rise to further academic study on its utility and progress to expand the scope of traditional organized crime in Canada. With regards to terrorism, a study of Canada's visible minority population may help to highlight fears and events since September 11, and offer ideas for successful terrorism reduction. A final suggestion would be to determine the perception of organized crime on youth by surveying youth and parents directly, as well as include the local perception of organized crime and its impact on police resource allocation.

This impact assessment has demonstrated that policy improvements can be made to reduce the effects of organized crime on youth, parents and their community. First, the focus should be on improving police communication (internally, first) and subsequent public communication on organized crime research, and issues such as local impacts. The communication of information internally is key for further police policy development related to organized crime, including resource allocation. There should be greater importance attached to ensuring the competency levels of the resources required for policy making on this issue. As well, learning modules should be developed for contract and federal police to fully understand the scope of organized crime. Public communication of organized crime's local impacts on youth would improve government understanding of the scope of the issue and the utility in having other service providers share common interest in this type of pervasive crime.

The impacts have demonstrated a clear need for improvements by the police and other service providers on profiles of alcohol, tobacco and corporate crime. Policy for police data entry needs to be improved relating to youth issues (i.e., child sexual exploitation and human smuggling link, drug seizures at homes where children are present, youth as victims of fraud) so that it can be accessed for research and auditing purposes. The convergence of federal and contract policing on organized crime is necessary given that all levels of policing deal with organized crime, and the impacts are felt especially at the local community level. Finally, the police role in demand reduction as a key component of organized crime reduction should be promoted through policy and dedicated resources.

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