

# Areas of Youth Involvement in Smuggling and Supporting Social Systems: A Sociological Exploration of Badagry-Seme and Owode-Idiroko in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study critically examined the areas of youth involvement in smuggling and the supporting networks. It utilized survey design and qualitative method was used. Fifty (50) youth smugglers were sampled, using snowballing sampling method. In-depth Interview was conducted to gather data and information from the youths studied. The data and information were content analyzed. Actor-Network Theory was used to anchor the study. The study identified eleven (11) principal areas of youth involvement in smuggling as discussed in this paper and wives, parents, community people and corrupt customs officers were signified as supporting networks. It is concluded that smuggling in Nigeria has become more sophisticated, specialized and well departmentalized. Furthermore, the supporting networks received by the youth smugglers from the family members, community people and corrupt customs officers were ones making the control of smuggling difficult in Nigeria. The study's recommendations were discussed as ways out of the problem of smuggling in Nigeria.

## Keywords

Youths, Smuggling, Areas, Networks and Government

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## 1. Introduction

Young people account for a large percentage of Nigeria's population figure, representing an important and dynamic force in the Nigerian Society. However, young people face many challenges in the Nigerian Society, such as high rate of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of access to information, and essential welfare services. This manifest in the young people's diminished hopes for future.

The commonest challenge which youths are facing in Nigeria is unemployment. Unemployment causes crime and more specifically, youth unemployment is a key factor in juvenile crime and delinquency. Bessant (1995) argued that as local youth unemployment escalates, crime becomes a simple, more effective life alternative. Some have suggested that if

unemployment did not automatically switch youth on to criminality, it did impel those already showing delinquent tendencies to move into crime (Bessant, 1995). Unemployment, therefore, shapes the options and opportunities available to youth in economic structures (White and Cunene, 2006). Gategi (2008) argued that crime in Kenya has been on the increase due to the presence of a large number of unemployed youths who engage in crime to acquire basic needs.

Some of the highest rates of violence, crime and high risk sexual behaviors of any age group are seen in the youth population, leading youths to a source of society's problems rather than its potentials (Olaleye, 2010). Youth involvement in crime has become the order of the day in Nigeria. The young people are seriously taking part in crime as a survival

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strategy, especially the economic crime like smuggling. This is very common among the youths living very close to the Nigerian borders with Republic of Benin. In an attempt to understand the youth involved, this study investigated the areas of youth involvement in smuggling, with emphasis on youths living along Badagry-Seme and Owode-Iroko transportation corridors.

### 1.1. Research Questions

What are the areas where youths are involved in smuggling?

What are the social systems which support and encourage youth smugglers?

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

To investigate the areas where youths are involved in smuggling.

To find out the social systems which support and encourage youth smugglers.

### 1.3. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

#### 1.3.1. Brief History of Smuggling

In North America, smuggling, in colonial times, was a reaction to the heavy taxes and regulations imposed by mercantile trade policies. After American independence in 1783, smuggling developed at the edges of the United States at places like Passamaquoddy Bay, St Mary's in Georgia, Lake Champlain, and Louisiana. During Jefferson's embargo of 1807-1809, the same places became the primary places where goods were smuggled out of the nation in defiance of law (GNU Documentation, 2008). Smuggling may be counted among the oldest forms of deviance (Deflem and Henry-Turner, 2001). Smuggling has a long controversial history, probably back to the first time at which duties were imposed in any form, or any attempt was made to prohibit a form of traffic (Wikipedia, 2010).

In England, smuggling first became a recognized social problem in the 13th century, following the creation of national customs collection system by Edward in 1275. During this period, medieval smuggling tended to focus on the export of highly taxed export goods-notably wool and hides. Merchants also, however, sometimes smuggled other goods to circumvent prohibitions or embargoes on particular trades (Law Encyclopedia, 2010).

In Britain, smuggling became economically significant at the end of the eighteenth century. The high rates of duty levied on wine, tea and spirits, and other luxury goods coming from mainland Europe at this time made the clandestine import of such goods and the evasion of the duty a highly profitable venture for impoverished fishermen and seafarers. The

principal reason for the high duty was the need for the government to finance a number of extremely expensive wars with France and the United States (New World Encyclopedia, 2008).

Wikipedia (2010) argues that, following the England losing Gascony to the French in 1453, imports of wine were also embargoed during wars to try and deprive the French of the revenues that could be earned from their main export and grain, because of fears that grain exports would raise the price of food in England and thus cause food shortages and/or civil unrest. However, Deflem and Henry-Turner (2001) observe that as remarkable as the historical development and expansion of smuggling legislation is, smuggling has always been practiced. It is estimated, for instance, that in the 18th century, one-third of all tea consumed in the British Isles was illegally imported. Jones (2001) argued that in Bristol during 1530s and 1540s, the illicit trade (smuggling) was conducted and controlled by a merchant elite who ruled Bristol and controlled its commerce. Such was the scale of their illicit activities that in many years the amount of crown money lost to smuggling would have exceeded the customs revenue actually collected in the port. Jones (2001) was, therefore of the opinion that smuggling in Bristol in 1530s and 1540s was not a sidelined or peripheral activity; it was an integral component of the city's international commerce.

In most recent years there has been a renewed interest in smuggling as an important issue of crime and deviance. Smuggling has undergone important transformations, especially in terms of qualitative changes in the goods that are smuggled or diversification of products subject to smuggling (Deflem and Henry-Turner, 2001).

#### 1.3.2. Smuggling Tunnels

Smuggling tunnels are secret tunnels, usually hidden underground, used for smuggling of goods and people (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). Examples of smuggling tunnels are in Sarajevo, Bosnia, where guns were smuggled into the city and people were smuggled out. Another good example is the Rafah which is located at border line of the Gaza strip of Egypt. As a result of this geographical location it accommodated tunnels and as a history of smuggling, these tunnels have been used to smuggle militants, and wide variety of items including: food, clothes, cigarette, alcohol and vehicle parts (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). Lichtenwald and Perri (2011) were of the opinion that tunnels in the Middle East are the result of the Gaza strip blockade and that tunnels are an economic necessity because they are frequently the only link in a supply chain for commercial goods. Lichtenwald and Perri (2011) argued further that given economic and political dynamics of the Gaza strip, it is common for some individuals involved in smuggling

activities to engage in criminal acts. In one moment, they engage in terrorist acts and then shift back to criminal acts in the next moment. Shifting of smuggling tunnel activities from criminal to terrorist and terrorist to criminal is exactly the type of phenomenon that transnational analysts of tunnels would analyze. The contention is that nexus point where criminal and terrorist intents and actions blur are where hybrid smuggling tunnels exist.

Furthermore, Lichtenwald and Perri (2011) argued that some tunnels in Rafah between Israel and Egypt had been reportedly used to smuggle goods of no threat to Israel's national security, whereas others are used to smuggle goods that pose a high threat to Israel's national security; and some tunnels used for smuggling goods of no threat to Israel are also used to smuggle goods of threat to Israel. People in the town of Rafah maintain that not every tunnel is used for smuggling weapons and that tunnels that are used to smuggle weapons are usually owned by or shared among militant groups (Lichtenwald and Perri, 2011).

The example of tunnels in North America is found along the long land border of the United States of America. The development and use of these tunnels is fuelled by the large demand for illegal drugs within the United States, and in early January 2006, the largest smuggling tunnel to date was found on the U.S – Mexico border. The 2400 foot-long tunnel run from a ware house near TIJUANA airport to a ware house in San Diego. (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). According to Bjelopera and Finklea (2012), Mexican drug smugglers rely on the use of underground, cross-border tunnels to smuggle drugs from Mexico into the United States. Tunnel, which is not in and of itself a new tool-haven, has been used for hundreds of years during conflicts and for escapes and has increased not only in prevalence but in sophistication. Early tunnels were rudimentary but more advance tunnels began to rely on existing infrastructure, which may be shared by neighboring border cities i.e. Nogales, AZ, in the United States and Nogales, Sonora, in Mexico. The most sophisticated tunnels can have rail, ventilation electrical systems and ground water drainage systems.

Lichtenwald and Perri (2011) argued that between 1990 and 2008, there had been at least 75 tunnels discovered along America's border with Mexico and in another calculation, the United States border patrol found a minimum of 109 tunnels along the California and Arizona sections of the United States – Mexico border between 1990 and fall 2009.

### **1.3.3. Customs Services as Agent of Anti-Smuggling**

It is the functions of the customs throughout the world to control the cross border movement of goods, detect the smuggling of goods and combat commercial fraud where

traders attempt to evade or minimize the payment of duties and taxes (Kieck,2010 ). According to Mannisto et al (2011), the high volumes of trade, complicated structures of global supply chains, advance in criminal activities, and fear of terrorism, amongst other factors and trends, set challenges for customs administration worldwide, while aiming for high compliance rates and high degree of trade facilitation in their respective territories. Very unfortunately, smuggling and customs corruption are rife in many developing countries of the world (Yang, 2003).

Hors (2001) identified three types of corruption among the customs officials. They are:

1. Routine corruption: Private Operators pay bribes to obtain a normal or hastened completion of customs operations.
2. Fraudulent corruption: Operators try to pay less tax than due or no tax at all; by not accomplishing properly the customs clearance process. They pay bribes to buy customs officers blind eye or their active co-operation.
3. Criminal corruption: Operators pay bribes to permit a totally illegal, lucrative operation (drug trafficking, abuse of export or import promotion scheme etc). However, routine and fraudulent corruption practices are the commonest forms of corruption.

The institution, Nigerian Customs Service, whose responsibility is to ensure full collection and rendition, is much criticized for alleged corruption and inefficiency and its upper echelon is often with intrigue and in fighting (Adegbie, 2011). In Nigeria Customs Service, there is problem of sharp practice that collectively deprived the government of revenue and enriched some corrupt customs men and their collaborators. There is under –assessment of payable duties, unauthorized transfer of funds, abuse of waivers, concession and exemptions as well as non-remittance of government revenues (Adegbie, 2011). All the efforts by the government to reform and bring up the Nigeria Customs Service up to the task have not yielded fruitful results. Hence, smuggling has, sadly, been increase by the corruption in Nigeria Customs Services and in the Nigerian society at large.

### **1.4. Theoretical Framework (Actor Network Theory)**

Actor Network theory was used in this study. Actor Network theory which is also called enrolment theory or the sociology of translation emerged during the mid-1980s, primarily with the work of Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law. It is a conceptual frame work for exploring collective socio-technical processes (A – Ritzer Encyclopedia, 2004). Actor – Network theory is a disparate family of material –semiotic tool, sensibilities and methods of analysis that look at everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously

generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. Nothing has reality or form outside the creation of those relations (Law, 2007).

According to Couldry (2004), Actor Network Theory is a highly influential account within the sociology of science that seeks to analyze social order, not through an essentialised notion of the social but through the networks of connections between human agents, technologies and objects. The entities, whether human or non-human within those networks, get power through the number, extensiveness and stability of the connections routed through them and through nothing else.

Bruce and Yearley (2006) argued that the innovations created by the actors in the network succeed because other actors' interests are translated into the new enterprise. The innovations typically work out because their proponents are skilled at building alliances (actor-networks) between many heterogeneous agents; such alliance can include human actors and non-human ones. Hence, in actor – network webs, the distinction between human and non-humans is of little analytical importance. People are relational effects that include both the human and the non-human (Law, 2007).

Actor network theory, therefore, distinguishes itself from other socio-technical approaches by considering human and non – human elements as actors within a network. It is a nod to semiotics, which posits that signs have meaning only in relation to other signs and that Actor Network Theory argues that both humans and non-humans actors be understood within a network wherein their identity is defined through their interaction with other actors (Cressman, 2009).

Actor Network Theory directs our attention to the significance of nonhumans in social life. It advises that social relations should not be seen in isolation but as always existing in relations with all kinds of extra-social networks between humans and non-humans, which need to be recognized and made visible (Nimmo, 20011). It quickly became clear; therefore, that any attempt to separate the social factors from the non-social or natural factors would have been an irrelevant and misleading exercise, since the process themselves dismayed no such separation (Nimmo, 2011). In summary, Actor Network Theory aims at accounting for the very essence of societies and natures. It does not wish to add social networks to social theory but to rebuild social theory out of networks (Latour, 1990).

In Actor Network theory, there is a heterogeneous amalgamation of textual, conceptual, social and technical actors termed “actants “. Actant is any agent collective or individual, that can associate or disassociate with others agents. Actants enter into networked association, which in turn define them, name them, and provide the substance, action, intention and subjects. In other words, actants are

considered foundationally indeterminate with no prior substance or essence, and it is via the networks in which they associate that actants derive their nature (A –Ritzer Encyclopedia, 2004).

Apart from actants, networks are also very important. Networks are “Processual built activities, performed by the actants out of which they are composed”. Each node and link is semiotically derived making networks local, variable and contingent (A –Ritzer Encyclopedia, 2004). Time is inseparable from the coordination of sequences of action in networks. Time also features in explanation terms of how networks come to be established as normal, regular and gradually as ‘natural’. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Action Network Theory neglects time (Couldry, 2004).

According to Law (2007), there are some ingredients in Actor Network Theory: there is semiotic relationality (it is a network whose elements define and shape one another; heterogeneity (there are different kinds of actors, human and non-human materiality (stuff is there aplenty, not just the social”), insistence on process and its precariousness (all element need to play their part moment by moment or it all comes unstuck); there is power as an effect (it is a function of network configuration and in particular the creation of immutable mobiles to space (how networks extend themselves and translate distant actors).

In summary, one may ask what things the Actor Network Theory is interested in. Actor Network Theory is interested in: the way in which networks overcome resistance and strengthen internally gaining coherence and consistence; how they organize and convert network elements; how they prevent actors from following their own proclivity; how they enlist others to invest in or follow the program; how they bestow qualities and motivations to actors; how they become increasingly transportable and useful, and how they become functionally indispensable (A –Ritzer Encyclopedia, 2004). The central issue in Actor Network Theory is how material objects acquired meaning in network of relationship to other objects. It is understood as a “semiotics of materiality” (Ritzer, 2008).

Finally, in Actor Network Theory, the actors do the sociology for the sociologist and sociologists learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations (Latour, 2005).

However, Actor Network Theory is now a popular theory in Geography, Management and organization studies, Economics, Anthropology and Philosophy (Cressman, 2009).

Actor Network Theory was used in this research work because smuggling activities involved the principal actors both humans and non-humans (material objects which interrelated with one another in a web of networks. There

was a strong building of alliances in smuggling between heterogenous agents which include human actors and non-human ones. There were connections between human agents' technologies and objects in the smuggling process.

Actor Network Theory examines, critically, everything both in the social and natural worlds, as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are found. The Actor Network Theory establishes networks of connection between human agents, the technological world and the objects world (Couldry, 2004). Both the human and non-human elements as actors within a network were actively taken into consideration (Cressman, 2009). The importance of non-humans in the social life is the attention which the Actor Network Theory wanted us to have. The innovations established by the actors in a particular network would succeed because the other actors in the system have their interests translated into the new enterprise. Those innovations succeeded because the actors are very skilled at building up alliance (Actor Networks) among themselves and other non-human actors (Bruce and Yearley, 2006).

There was the necessity to incorporate Actor network Theory into the Theoretical frame work of this work because smuggling activities involve different human actors and non-human actors that created different forms of innovations which worked out well because the actors interests are translated into enterprise through the skillfully built alliance among the heterogeneous agents, both human and non-human. Actor Network Theory assisted us to understand and to explain how the actors in the established smuggling Networks did the following:

1. The ways through which the smugglers and other supporting actors overcome the resistance during operation.
2. How the network elements were organized
3. How the actors were prevented from following their own bad ways that can hinder the networks
4. How other actors were enlisted into the networks.
5. How the actors in the smuggling networks were motivated
6. How the actors became increasingly useful
7. How the actor became functionally indispensable

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1. Research Design

In this study, survey design was adopted because all the individuals cannot be contacted. It involved the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions related to themselves and the research issues (Schutt, 2004). Qualitative technique was employed in

the study.

### 2.2. The Study Areas

This research work cut across two states in Nigeria. The study area was Badagry/Seme in Lagos State of Nigeria. The transportation corridor that was examined in this area, was Badagry/Seme transportation corridor. Secondly, Idiroko area of Ogun State of Nigeria was another study area. The transportation corridor for this area was Owode- Idi-Iroko which links to Sango-Otta. Sango Otta is a town where the smuggled goods are distributed to Lagos State, Ogun State and other parts of the country (Offoaro, 2008). The two transportation corridors under this research work linked to Cotonou, a commercial centre and a central economic nerve of Republic of Benin. Therefore, the neighboring communities in Benin Republic which share borders with Nigeria both at Seme and Idi-Iroko transportation corridors were incorporated under the study areas.

### 2.3. The Study Population

These were the youth smugglers, both male and female, from 15 years to 40 years, educated and uneducated, who come from various ethnic groups in Nigeria and Benin Republic. They were youths who carry out illegal business around the border transport corridors of Badagry-Seme and Owode – Idiroko in Lagos and Ogun State respectively.

### 2.4. Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

Sampling was necessary because studying every single instance was beyond our means. Sampling served to improve the quality of the data (Adler and Clarks 1999). Multi stage sampling was used in this study. The procedure began with the purposive sampling selection of Seme and Idi-Iroko borders (In Lagos State and Ogun State respectively).

#### 2.4.1. Seme and Idiroko Borders

Seme and Idi-Iroko borders are the most popular borders in Nigeria where trans-border criminal activities are being carried out en-mass. They are borders where huge revenues are generated for Federal Government and at the same time pose the highest challenges for the Law Enforcement Agencies e.g. porous borders which are difficult to monitor, inadequate personnel and equipment for the Law Enforcement Agencies and non-assistance from the community people in combating the activities of the smugglers. Both were purposely selected because they served the interest of this research work.

#### 2.4.2. Youth Smugglers

Being a hidden population, snowball sampling was used in selecting the smugglers. Snowball sampling involved using



some members of the groups of interest to identify other members (Adler and Clark, 1999). Snowball sampling was a method for identifying and sampling the cases in a network. It was based on an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled on wet snow and picks up additional snow. It begins with one or few people or cases and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases (Adler and Clark, 1999). Snowball sampling was used in selecting the smugglers because smuggling is an organized crime which involves networks of relationship. Snowballing is used when studying upper world or underworld criminals, gay couples, prostitutes and so forth (Neuman, 2003). Fifty (50) youth smugglers were sampled at Badagry/Seme border and Owode/Idiroko border in Lagos State and Ogun State respectively.

### 2.5. Methods of Data Collection

Primary data were collected and collated for this research work. The primary data were collected with the use of In-depth interview. In-depth interviews (IDIS) were conducted among fifty (50) youth smugglers at Badagry-Seme border transportation corridor and Owode -Idi-Iroko border transportation corridor.

### 2.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The qualitative data which emerged from in depth-interviews were translated and transcribed. The qualitative data were subjected to manual content analysis.

## 3. Results and Discussion of Findings

### 3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Youth Smugglers

The study considered the variables such as respondents' sex, age, level of education, marital status, income from present job and finally, the perceived economic status of the respondents.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Youth Smugglers. N=50

	Socio – Demographic Characteristics	N	%
1	Sex		96.00
	Male	48	4.00
	Female	2	
	Total	50	100.00
2	Age (years)		
	15 - 20	34	68.00
	21 -25	4	8.00
	26 - 30	4	8.00
	31 - 35	4	8.00
	36 - 40	4	8.00
	Total	50	100.00
3	Educational Status		
	No formal Education	4	8.00

	Socio – Demographic Characteristics	N	%
4	Primary School	7	14.00
	SSCE	38	76.00
	Bachelor	1	2.00
	Total	50	100.00
5	Marital Status		
	Married	18	36.00
	Single	32	64.00
	Total	50	100.00
6	Monthly Income From Smuggling		
	Undecided	2	4.00
	Below ₦10,000	2	4.00
	₦10,000 – ₦50,000	32	64.00
	₦51,000 – ₦100,000	2	4.00
	₦101,000 – ₦150,000	8	16.00
	₦151,000 – ₦200,000	2	4.00
	₦200,000 Above	2	4.00
	Total	50	100.00
	Married	18	36.00
6	Single	32	64.00
	Total	50	100.00
	Socio –Economic Status(Cash Control)		
	High	Nil	Nil
	Average	44	88.0
	Low	6	12.0
	Total	50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

The sample size of the respondents (youth smugglers) studied was fifty (50)

The sex distribution of the respondents shows that 96 percent were male, while 4 percent were female. The result shows that majority of the youth smugglers were male. It implies that smuggling was dominated by the masculine world. It has been argued that, virtually in every society for which crime records exists, the prevalence of crime and violence is greater among males compared to female offenders (Ashford, 2007). Smuggling is an energetic and violent crime which is known to be dominated by males. Smuggling activities, therefore, were carried out majorly by males.

The age distribution of the respondents shows that those within the age range of 15 years to 20 years were 68 percent. Those between 21 years and 25 years, 26 years and 30 years, 31 years and 35 years and 36 years and 40 years were 8 percent each. A cursory look at the table of frequency shows that majority of the youth smugglers were within the age bracket of 15 years and 20 years. Age is an important factor to be considered in the study of crime, carried out by the young people in the society. Hence, a crime like smuggling demands energy and most of the time violent actions or displays, and can only be carried out successfully by the young people who still have the vibrant and strong energy bubbling up in their bodies.

Educational qualification of the youth smugglers was another variable considered in this study. The results of the analyses show that 8 percent had no education, 14 percent had primary school certificate, 76 percent had senior school certificate in

education and 2 percent had a bachelor degree. The results of the analyses imply that the majority of the youth smugglers were not educated to the tertiary educational level. Youths who are well educated are expected to be committed to conformity in the society because they have invested much in education and there is promising future of holding good jobs. Individuals who have not invested much in the conventional types of activity like education may not be committed to conformity in the society, because they may not have much to lose when they are apprehended and sentenced for committing crime in the society.

The marital status of the youth smugglers was probed in the study. The results show that 36 percent of the youth smugglers were married, while 64 percent of them were single. It was considered imperative to investigate the monthly income (i.e. Profit from the trade) of the youth smugglers interviewed in this study. The monthly income distributions show that 4 percent were unable to decide or have accurate figure of their monthly income from smuggling. 4 percent earned below N10, 000 every month, 64 percent (the highest) earned between N10,000 and N50,000 every month, 4 percent earned between N51,000 and N100,000, 16 percent earned between N101,000 and N150,000, 4 percent earned between N151,000 and N200,000 and finally another 4 percent earned above N200,000. Virtually all the youth smugglers interviewed were of the opinion that the present incomes made every month were, at least averagely good enough for them. Those that were doing one job or the other prior the time they started smuggling claimed that the present incomes from smuggling were better than the past incomes they made.

When requested from the respondents to say what they perceived of their socio-economic status, none of the respondents signified himself / herself to be high in socio-economic status. 88 percent (the majority of the respondents) were of the opinion that they were on average socio-economic status and 12 percent perceived their socio-economic status to be low. A critical observation made during the in-depth interviews shows that profits made from smuggling were used to cater for the exigent needs of the youth smugglers and none was able to show the accumulation of wealth which may possibly place them on high socio-economic status in the society.

### **3.2. Areas of Youth Involvement in Smuggling**

Areas of the youth involvement in smuggling activities were also given priority by this study.

This was one of the objectives of the study from the outset. Smuggling is an organized crime with various aspects of operations involved. Smuggling is an underground economy

which means people engaging in economic activities that are not sanctioned by the government. It is also known as the 'grey economy' (Wans, 2013). Youth's involvement in smuggling was a group phenomenon. Youth crime has been found to be largely a group phenomenon. The majority of youths who commit criminal offences do so in groups, and those youths who commit a large number of offences often associate with criminal peers (Pettersen, 2003). Youth's participation in smuggling was also an organized crime apart from being group oriented crime. Organized crime is a conspiracies activity which involves the coordination of a considerable number of people in the planning and execution of illegal acts or sometimes in the pursuit of a legitimate business by unlawful means. Organized crime also requires serious commitment by its primary members, and finally organized crime builds upon a hierarchical structure (Shaw, 2008). Organized crime, according to Shaw (2008), thrives because a single individual, no matter how ambitious, adventurous, smart or strong, cannot carry out certain complex criminal tasks all on his or her own.

Smuggling across the international border is an organized crime with various areas of involvement. The survey carried out for this study clearly showed that youth's involvement in smuggling entailed many areas of involvement and was well departmentalized. The areas of the youths' involvement in smuggling are explained below:

1. Crossing: Crossing was discovered to be the major area of youth's involvement in smuggling. Crossers were the actual youths, who ensured that smuggled goods were carried from the points of purchase in Republic of Benin, smuggled the goods across the border and finally delivered them to the owners of the goods who were their clients. There were three ways of crossing goods across the borders in Seme and Idi-Iroko. The first way was those who walked across the borders with the head loads of the smuggled goods. Most of the people in this category were young ladies who engaged in crossing goods by walking across the borders. The information gathered showed that these people when caught usually gave excuse of visitations to their extended family members living at the other sides of the borders within the territory of Benin Republic (Aluko et al, 2011). Most of the young ladies involved in crossing goods did so as a result of economic marginalization and the attempt to cope with poverty. Girls and young women participation in crime was caused by their place in society.

Offending women are marginalized and poor, having had little opportunity for formal education or development of job skills (Liddell and Martinovic, 2013). The second category of crossers was those who used motor cycles and tri-cycles to cross (smuggle) goods across the border. Majority of the people in this category were boys or young men at their

prime ages. Finally, we have third category of crossers who used vehicles, buses, trucks etc to smuggle goods from Republic of Benin to Nigeria and vice-versa. In a casual interview had with a respondent during the survey conducted for this study, the respondent commented on the women crossers thus:

“We have load carriers too, especially among the women. These were the women who walked across the borders with smuggled goods on their heads along some smuggling routes. The Kelebes used to collect money from them. I think N20 per each crosser. Some people may refuse to pay and this usually led to serious confrontation between the crossers and the Kelebes”.

IDI/Sito Gbethromen/26/03/2014

2. Re-Packaging/Tying: Another area of youth involvement in smuggling is packaging and tying. The responsibilities of the youths involved in this area were to re-package and tie the goods in ways that would ensure that the qualities of the goods were preserved and easy to carry for the crossers. The information gathered showed that the repackaging of goods was very important especially for the frozen foods like turkey and chicken, otherwise these foods items may defreeze and lose their qualities. Other goods that were usually re-packaged were new clothes and some imported food items.

A youth respondent explained this area of involvement thus:

“Some people were packers or ‘tiers’. These were the people who repackaged the goods like turkey and chicken for us. They would put them in melting nylon and tie them well to prevent the turkey and chicken from defreezing”.

IDI/Sito Gbethromen/26/03/2014

3. Inventory Taking: Another area of youth’s involvement in smuggling was inventory taking. Some youths acted as inventory takers. The work of an inventory taker was to take the inventories of the goods to be smuggled at the points of purchase in Seme or Cotonou and to take the inventories again when such smuggled goods were eventually delivered to the goods’ owners. Inventory takers must ensure that the inventories taken at the points of purchase tally with the inventories at the points of good delivery. The inventory takers were usually employed by the goods owners and they paid them accordingly.

A testimony from the youth smuggler below describes the area of inventory taking:

“My own was to take the inventories of the goods to be smuggled at Seme or Cotonou and re-take the inventories again when the goods were delivered to the owners in Lagos. The inventories taken at the points of departure must be the same at the points of arrival in Lagos. The owners of the

goods would pay me for this service”.

IDI/Badagry/29/03/2014

4. Escorting: Escorting was another important area of involvement. There were some youths who acted as escorts for the goods being smuggled across the border. Escorts ensured that they give proper protection for the goods under their surveillances. Escorts must ensure that the smuggling trips are successful ones. All the vehicles or motorcycles and the smuggled goods were under their cares and they make sure that the smuggling trips are free of itches. The escorts arranged for ‘bookings’ with the corrupt Customs Officers and ensure that they are properly ‘settled’. Finally, escorts ensure that the vehicles and the smuggled goods are eventually delivered without being seized or confiscated by the customs authority.

A youth smuggler interviewed explained his involvement in escorting thus:

“I started as an escort. It was through escorting I got the money to buy my own car that I am currently using for smuggling”.

IDI/Badagry/25/03/2014

Another youth smuggler corroborated the work of escorts thus:

“Escorts were the people (youths) who accompanied both the goods and vehicles used in smuggling. They were to ‘settle’ the Customs Officers along the roads. They may be in the vehicles being used for smuggling or follow such vehicles with motor cycles or personal cars”.

IDI/Badagry/27/03/2014

5. Warehousing/Store Keeping: Warehousing or store keeping was another area of youths’ involvement in smuggling, discovered in the study. Warehouse or store keepers’ responsibility was to ensure that the smuggled goods were kept safely. In some occasions, the youth smugglers may not be able to cross their goods across the borders. Such goods would be delivered to the care of the warehouse or store keepers in Cotonou or Seme or along some smuggling routes, pending the time the passage of the goods would be easy to carry out. The youth smuggler normally paid for this service on behalf of the owners of the goods.

A youth smuggler expatiated further on the responsibility of the warehouse keepers or store keepers as follows:

“Apart from crossers, we have store keepers. Store keepers kept goods for the smugglers when the check points were tough or the keepers may be instructed by the goods owners to deliver the goods to the crossers who will cross (smuggle) the goods for their owners”.



IDI/Badagry/16/03/2014

In another response, a youth explained further in this area of involvement thus:

“We have the store keepers or warehouse people as we often called them. These were the people who kept our goods for us. We would write the names of the owners of the goods we were crossing on each of the goods to prevent mix up. The numbers of the goods in warehouses depend on the inflow of goods from Benin Republic”.

IDI/Badagry/20/03/2014

6. Spying or Acting as an Informant: Spying or acting as Informant was another area of youth's involvement in smuggling. Spies and informants gave helpful information and details to the youth smugglers who were smuggling goods across the borders and through the hidden smuggling routes in the bushes, waterways or along beaches. Some members of the smuggling group may be selected to carry out these functions, or some villagers or camp boys (Kelebes) may perform these responsibilities. The modern mobile telecommunication technology has simplified the functions of spies or informants in smuggling undertakings.

A youth smuggler interviewed testified to support this:

“I had worked in the past as a spy, and an informant. I would be on a motor cycle with my mobile phone in my hand, telling others when to stop, where to stop, where to hide and when to move on and which route(s) to take in order to beat the Custom officers on duty”. IDI/Badagry/29/03/2014

We have informant among the community people too. Villagers along the hidden smuggling routes often spied and informed the youth smugglers of the locations of the patrolling vehicles of the Customs Officers. Such village accomplices were usually paid, for such vital information which protected the youth smugglers from being nabbed by Customs Officers.

A youth interviewed offered the following comments regarding the villagers acting as spies and informants:

“We have informants among the villagers. Most of the time we do not know them. We used to ‘tip’ them for their vital information”.

IDI/Kankon/25/03/2014

Finally, camp boys (Kelebes) were often used as spies or informants by the smugglers. Camp boys were the young boys ‘employed’ by the Customs Officers to perform some duties for such officers. The following were the functions of the camp boys:

1. Camp boys run errands for the Customs Officers i.e. washing of the officers' uniforms, buying them food, cleaning

of the sheds being used by the officers for sleeping, etc.

2. Camp boys were used in off-loading of seized smuggled goods.

3. Camp boys assisted in checking for smuggled goods inside the passing vehicles.

They were good at doing this because they interacted with the community people and, from experience, knew where they normally hid smuggled goods in vehicles.

Camps boys were the name given to these boys by the Customs Officers but the community people called them ‘Kelebes’. Although, they were unofficially employed by the Customs

Officers to assist in checking smuggling, by detecting smuggled goods, they were known to be handsomely rewarded for this. However, camp boys (Kelebes) were sometimes used by youth smugglers in getting information that would assist them in passing through the border unhindered. Hence, Camp boys (Kelebes) served the interests of Customs Officers and at the same time, serve the interest of youth smugglers.

A youth smuggler gave a complimentary comment on this thus:

“We have some camp boys who work for the Customs Officers; we normally use them to get information. We often pay them between N500 and N1, 000 for this”.

IDI/Kankon/26/03/2014

Finally, as explained earlier on, the mobile phone telecommunication technology made the work of spying very easy among the accomplices in smuggling. Mobile phone therefore was counted as non-human actant in networking in smuggling activities.

7. Community Based Negotiation: Community based negotiation was another area where youths got themselves involved in smuggling. The information gathered from the field revealed that some youths acted as community negotiators between youth smugglers and the Customs Officers to facilitate easy passage of such youth smugglers across the border. The information gathered showed that some youth smugglers were not educated and therefore cannot communicate with Customs Officers, (most of Customs Officers were not Yoruba) and those that were educated and can speak in English language with Customs Officers may not have the boldness to confront them for negotiation. Hence, it was the responsibility of the community based youth negotiators to negotiate on behalf of the youth smugglers with the Customs Officers.

A respondent explained this in the response given during the survey:

“We have some youths in our communities here that were go-between or intermediaries between the youth smugglers and Customs Offices. Some youth smugglers were illiterates and cannot communicate with customs officers in English language. Some smugglers were not illiterates but have no boldness to negotiate with the Customs Offices directly. These youths who stand as intermediaries or go-between would collect money from such youth smugglers and negotiate with the customs officers on their behalf. For instance, a negotiator may collect N100, 000 from a youth smuggler and negotiate with a Custom Officer on his behalf with N70, 000. The balance of N30, 000 belonged to the negotiator. These negotiators were members of the communities who knew the Customs Officers posted around the border communities very well. They were very familiar with the officers and knew them intimately. Through this negotiation work, many youths in the community have become very rich and I can cite some of them”.

IDI/Idi-Iroko/25/04/2014

8. Driving/Spare Driving: Driving and spare driving was another revealed area of youths’ involvement in smuggling. Some youths were specially employed to drive the vehicles used in smuggling goods. Others may act as spare drivers too. Spare drivers took over driving when the other drivers were arrested or shot by the Customs Officers.

9. In-Boys: In boys were special thugs employed by smugglers to distract the attentions of the Customs Officers. At times, they may engage in fight with Customs Officers. They also acted as body guards to the head of the smugglers. In-boys performed the functions that ‘guide-women’ perform in Turkish smuggling route. These women were called ‘vodacukas’. Their function was to secure the smuggling logistics, ensure easy crossing of the border with illegal cargo and give protection service.

10. Personal Assistants: Some youths acted as personal assistants to the heads of smuggling units. Personal assistants performed, virtually all the functions that personal assistants would perform in the real world. The functions of the drivers/spare drivers, in boys and Personal Assistants, were summarized in the response of a youth smuggler, interviewed during the study:

“There were smugglers who run smuggling like a big enterprise. Smuggling business

is divided into various departments: The In- boys, the drivers, the spare drivers, Personal Assistants, etc. In-boys were the thugs used to confront the Customs Officers and occasionally employed to fight them, so that their attentions can be diverted away from the vehicles loaded with smuggled goods. The spare drivers were the drivers that did drive the seized

vehicles and goods away when the actual drivers were arrested by Customs Officers. The Personal Assistants, of course, assisted the bosses of the smuggling groups. Smuggling is an organized ‘business’ and a ‘business’ which is highly departmentalized”.

IDI/Badagry/24/04/2014

11. Goods Owners: Finally, we have the goods owners. Goods owners were the business men and women who bought goods from Benin Republic and engaged the services of the young people who smuggled those goods, and eventually delivered them to these business men and women. The information heard from the field showed that most of these business men and women were based in Lagos. Some of them were youths who had money to undertake business across the borders. From the information gathered, many of them came from the eastern part of Nigeria, while some were from the western part and some were foreigners from other West-African countries.

### 3.3. Supporting Social Systems

One of the main objectives of this study was to discover the social networks and the social system which supported and encouraged youths which engaged in smuggling activities. Some of the youth smugglers interviewed responded that their wives were sources of support and encouragement to them in their smuggling undertakings. A youth interviewed explained that her wife normally encouraged him through various words of encouragements and caution over the phone. He explained this thus:

“My wife used to encourage me. She used to monitor my movement whenever I was on the road, through her mobile phone. She normally spoke words of caution and encouragement to me. Those were the ways she normally supported and encouraged me”.

IDI/Badagry/25/06/2014

Another youth smuggler had this to say:

“My wife did encourage me. She did monitor my movement whenever I went out to cross goods. She used to exercise anxiety before, but now she is used to it. She did call me over the mobile phone to know how things were going on with me on the road”.

IDI/Badagry/25/06/2014

Finally, another youth smuggler also testified to the encouragement of his wife as follows:

“My wife used to be fearful before. But now, she is used to it and did give me words of encouragement”.

IDI/Badagry/27/03/2014

Further investigations conducted in this study showed that the majority of the youth smugglers received their unfaded supports and encouragements from the parents. Many testimonies given during the in-depth interviews conducted revealed that most of the youth smugglers were strongly supported and unduly encouraged by their parents.

A youth gave a testimonial statement that he received a strong encouragement and support from his mother in his response as explained below:

“My mother was happy on my involvement in smuggling. I used to give her money and assisted her in other ways from the money I normally realize from smuggling. Hence, she used to encourage me”.

IDI/Idi-Iroko/29/03/2014

Majority of the respondents interviewed, as said earlier on testified to the supports and encouragements from their parents. The responses from them which testified to this are examined one after the other. Youth smuggler interviewed gave a response below to testify that his parents really supported and encouraged him:

“My parents were quite aware that I normally smuggled petroleum products. They gave me support because there were no any other jobs available that I can do to assist myself and my family”.

IDI/Kankon/28/04/2014

Another smuggler gave a comment on parental supports and encouragement thus:

“My parents did encourage me, but always warned me to be always careful. They normally warned me not to carry overloading and that I should always take official routes.”

IDI/ Sito Gbethromen/29/03/2014

Another youth smuggler concurred to such parental supports and encouragement as follows:

“My parents supported me because they knew I would be getting money from smuggling of goods to take care of myself and some family expenses. Although, they did advise me to always be very careful in the process of crossing goods. My father is not currently engaged in any work .The entire family depended on the money I normally got from the crossing of goods for their living”.

IDI/Badagry/29/03/2014

A youth smuggler also offered the following statement to show that he received parental support and encouragement:

“My parents normally advised me not to take the bush paths but to take a main road. My father did tell me not to steal from the goods the customers gave me to cross for them,

because such customers may not give me goods to cross for them again if I steal from their goods”.

IDI/Kankon/28/03/2014

Another youth smuggler gave the following response to justify such parental support and encouragement:

“My parents were aware that I am a crosser. They would not discourage me to abandon it because I used to give them money to take care of their needs from the money I realized from crossing”.

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/26/03/2014

Finally, a youth smuggler also confirmed that he received parental support and encouragement in his comment below:

“My parents do not rebuke me for doing it. They knew we do not have any other thing to do around this place. But occasionally, they did advise me to be very careful and be mindful of the fact that goods smuggling is not a job that would continue forever”.

IDI/ Sito-Gbethromen/29/03/2014

Although, many youth smugglers enjoyed the supports and encouragements of their parent, there were some who said that their parents did not approve their involvement in smuggling. Such youth smugglers complained that their parents were not happy with them because smuggling is a risky undertaking and a ‘business that cannot be done till old age. A youth smuggler gave this response to show his parental disapproval of his involvement in smuggling thus:

“My father and mother did not approve my involvement in smuggling. They usually complained bitterly that smuggling is very risky and one which exposes people to untimely death. But I did tell them that it is going to be done for a short time and that I will stop when I get enough money to set up my barbing saloon”.

IDI/Idi-Iroko/20/04/2014

Another youth gave a similar response thus:

“My father and my mother did not give their support to my involvement in smuggling. They were very reluctant in allowing me doing it”.

IDI/Idi-Iroko/20/04/2014

Finally, a youth smuggler gave a response in line with such disapproval from the evidential comments from his uncle:

“My uncle used to discourage and stop his children from crossing goods across borders. He always told them that smuggling is a deadly mission to embark on”.

IDI/Kankon/20/02/2014

It can be inferred, therefore, that some parents did not

approve their children's involvement in smuggling. But the majority of the youth smugglers testified that their parents approved their involvement in smuggling, and that those parents gave supports and encouragement. This indicated that some parents were accomplices in their children's or wards' criminal activities. This was so, because many of them benefited from the money their children or wards got from such criminal involvement.

Community people around the borders and along the smuggling routes were also sources of support to these youth smugglers. From the interviews granted by these youths, they testified that community people assisted them in various ways. One of the principal ways such assistance was received was by fighting the Customs Officers. The villagers or community people often collected back the goods already seized by the Customs Officers from the smugglers and such goods were returned to the smugglers.

A respondent in an interview conducted testified to this:

"The Customs Officers have informants who often inform them of smugglers who wanted to pass through bushes. When Customs Officers received such information, they would lay in ambush, waiting for such smugglers to pass. However, if the drivers of the vehicles used by the smugglers were smart enough, they may maneuver their ways and pack within the communities around. The community people always protect such smugglers and would not allow the Customs Officers to seize the smuggled goods or the vehicles used for smuggling. They would never allow Customs Officers to take away such smugglers".

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/23/03/2014

In another interview, a youth smuggler gave a response thus:

"Villagers normally protected us from the Customs Officers. No Customs Officer was so daring as to come into the communities to effect arrest of smugglers".

IDI/Badagry/25/03/2014

Another youth smuggler also testified to such assistance they received from the community people:

"The community people did help to protect us (smugglers). We may pack and keep our goods with the community people if the crossing is very difficult. No Customs Officer is permitted to come into the communities to seize goods or challenge the community people on this, especially at Gbaji. Any officer that tries this would put himself in a great danger. Other tough places are Sito and Azangbhome".

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/29/03/2014

It was discovered in the survey conducted for this study, that there were some stores or warehouses privately owned by some community people, where smugglers normally kept

their goods when smuggled goods cannot be successfully pushed through.

A youth smuggler explained this when being interviewed:

"There are stores or warehouses around the borders' communities, where goods can be kept when the 'road is very tough'. The owners of those stores or warehouses did collect money from us for the services".

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/29/03/2014

Another area of assistance rendered by the community to the smugglers, when such smugglers were being pursued by the Customs Officers was through invocation of Oro cult. Oro cult is a powerful cult strongly feared, especially by the Customs Officers from other ethnic groups.

A youth smuggler gave a testimony to confirm this:

"Community people normally ensured our safety. They usually fought for us against Customs Officers. The villagers often brought out Oro cult or sometimes other deities to scare the Customs Officers away so that we can have our way through the bushes".

IDI/Badagry/25/03/2014

Information received showed that the youth smugglers normally gave money to the community people for the assistance rendered one way or the other. Hence, there were strong connections between the smugglers and these community people.

A youth smuggler gave this response when being interviewed to corroborate this:

"There were strong connections between us and these community people. We normally gave them money to assist us in passing goods through the bushes in the communities. The Aigbanos (the son of the soil) have checkpoints they created in the bushes and they collected money from us. Any stubborn person who refused to pay money stood the risk of losing his goods in the future to Customs Officers if arrested by them. The Aigbanos would not come to the aid of such smuggler".

IDI/ Sito-Gbethromen/21/03/2014

Finally, we discovered that some community leaders were accomplices to the crime of smuggling, by protecting the smugglers' interests.

A youth smuggler gave a testimony to justify this:

"Some community heads (Baales) were also involved in helping us. They always shielded us from being arrested by Customs Officers. We did 'settle' these community leaders. We took good care of them".

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/23/03/2014

The study also probed whether some corrupt customs officers normally assisted the youth smuggler one way or the other or not. The study wanted to know the forms of assistance those who received assistances from the Customs Officers normally enjoyed. Most of the youth smugglers pinpointed 'booking' which was a kind of bribe given to some corrupt Customs Officers to facilitate their movements across borders.

A smuggler gave this comment to substantiate this:

"The only way through which they (Customs Officers) assisted us was through 'booking'. The 'booking' would facilitate our passage on the road without any problem. It was a way we got assurance that our goods would not be seized".

IDI/Badagry/20/03/2014

Another youth smuggler offered a similar statement when interviewed:

"The 'booking' was the assistance we received from the Customs Officers. Booking was a form of assistance that facilitated our crossing, across the border".

IDI/Badagry/20/03/2014

Another also corroborated the statement:

"The only way they (Customs Officers) assisted us was through 'booking'. When we paid for booking, we were rest assured that there would be no problem. This was only the assistance we received".

IDI/Kankon/29/04/2014

A youth smuggler expanded our knowledge on how much they usually paid for 'booking'.

He gave a comment below to show this:

"Yes, they normally assisted us. In as much as we had paid them they usually allowed us to pass with the goods. A full load of vehicle with goods cost us N3, 000 or N4, 000, depending on the types of goods and the numbers of vehicles involved."

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/20/03/2014

In other areas of support and assistance received, a youth smuggler confirmed that at times,

Customs Officers did engage in community road repair along the smuggling routes for easy passage of youth smugglers on the road. A youth offered a statement below to support this form of assistance:

"Yes, there were some ways through which they helped us. For instance, the route we normally took at Barbed wire was very bad before. It was very slippery and many accidents normally occurred. But now the Customs Officers have helped us to repair the route for easy passage. Now two

motor cycles can pass at the same time without any hindrance. The route was rehabilitated by them because without doing this, it would affect the money they normally collected from us".

IDI/ Idi-Iroko/20/03/2014

Finally, some customs officers normally gave concession to secondary school students who engaged in smuggling to pay their school fees and other expenses. A youth smuggler interviewed gave a comment in respect of this:

"Yes, they normally assisted me. Whenever I showed them my ID card and told them that I am a secondary school student, they normally allowed me to pass through the road. This is a way I normally enjoyed their assistance".

IDI/Idi-Iroko/12/04/2014

The study wanted to confirm whether there were some customs officers who took bribe from the youth smugglers or not. The study took cognizance of the perceptions of youth smugglers on 'booking'. Some agreed vehemently that 'booking' was a form of bribe, taken by some Corrupt Customs Officers. A youth smuggler in his comment below shows that they were aware that 'booking' was a form of bribe taken by some corrupt Customs Officers:

"Some Customs Officers took bribe. But we do not call it bribe but 'booking'. At times, the Customs Officers may refuse to take the money. If this happens, the escort may take the goods across by force, which may cause the Customs Officers to chase such vehicles. This may lead to shoot out between the Customs Officers and the escorts".

IDI/Sito-Gbethromen/05/03/2014

Another youth smuggler gave a comment below to support this:

"Booking was a bribe. The Customs Officers have no official backing for the money they collected through booking".

IDI/Idi-Iroko/23/04/2014

Finally, another youth smuggler offered a comment below to substantiate this:

"We normally gave them money and the money was not for government, so the

'booking' we gave them was a bribe because the money was not remitted to government purse".

IDI/Kankon/11/03/2014

It is so important to clarify that some youth smugglers mistook 'booking' for duties and levies on goods. Such youth smugglers were not aware that such money was not remitted to government purse. A youth smuggler said a statement below when being interviewed to support this:



“To me personally, the booking was not a bribe. The customs are working for government and the money they collected through ‘booking’ cannot be considered as bribe”.

IDII/Owode-Apa/02/03/2014

## 4. Summaries of the Findings

We had a pre-knowledge that smuggling is a highly organized crime. The experience from the literature showed that the crime of smuggling is highly organized and departmentalized throughout the world. In Nigeria, the people who bought goods and smuggled them through the hidden routes and those who hide them at the checkpoints were usually considered as smugglers. However, the experiences in this study showed that smuggling in Nigeria has become more sophisticated and more organized than the past. The smuggling phenomenon nowadays is also becoming specialized with different areas and stages of smuggling.

From this study conducted, we were able to identify eleven categories of youths involved in smuggling. There were crossers, who were considered the real smugglers, people who re –packaged goods meant for smuggling; inventory takers who took the inventory at the points where goods were loaded and off – loaded; escorts who ensured the goods were delivered safely to the owners; warehouse / store keepers who usually kept the smuggled goods for smugglers when such goods could not be smuggled across the borders; spies and informants who fed smugglers with information that assisted them to beat the customs checking and arrest; community based negotiators who negotiated with Customs Officers on behalf of the smugglers, drivers and spare drivers who took care of expert driving; In-boys who were special thugs employed to fight and distract the attention of the Customs Officers and who acted as body guards to the head smugglers; personal assistants who performed all the functions of personal assistant performed in the real world, and finally goods owners who were the real owners of goods who sold the smuggled goods for huge commercial profits. All these areas or departments involved youths.

The study also discovered findings in areas of social networks and supporting mechanisms of smuggling. We discovered in the study that social networks and supporting mechanisms of smuggling started right from the family level. We discovered in the study that majority of the parents supported their youth children who ventured into smuggling. There were different ways of encouraging them as enunciated in this study. Many of the parents supported their youth children because those children supported them monetarily and materially from the proceeds they got from smuggling.

Hence, there was no way such parents would disapprove the involvement of their youth children in smuggling. From the study, a woman even bought a motor cycle for her son to use for smuggling. Moreover, we discovered that some parents were smugglers themselves and being smugglers they were not in any position to dissuade their children from taking part in smuggling. Such behavior of those parents encouraged their children to be smugglers too. The parents who engaged in smuggling can be linked to a proverbial mother cow whose calves watched her mouth when she is chewing curd.

The study also discovered that married youth smugglers also received supports and encouragements from their wives one way or the other.

Apart from the family level, youth smugglers also received social networks and supporting mechanisms from the community people. The community people, most of the time, were found in the habit of protecting both the goods smuggled and the smugglers who smuggled them. The community people were known to be in the habit of attacking Customs Officers when trying to arrest smugglers and seize their smuggled goods, which was their official duty. Many Customs Officers had been attacked in the past and many killed in the process of effecting the arrest of smugglers and seizure of their goods. Matchets, guns and charms were the frequent weapons normally used to attack Customs Officers. Some Customs officers relayed different sad stories of frequent attacks from the community people on the Customs Officer, in the process of protecting the interest of the youth smugglers against the interest of the government of this country. Oro Cult was also another ‘weapon’ that was normally used to scare away Customs Officers, when trying to perform their lawful duties.

It was very sad to note that there were some community leaders who also participated in protecting and helping the youth smugglers against the interests of the government who the

Customs Officers were working for. The study discovered that youth smugglers usually rewarded the “Services” of the community people who assisted them one way or the other, by giving them money and on few occasions, materials things.

From the survey conducted, we also discovered that some corrupt Customs Officers formed the social networks and supporting mechanisms for the youth smugglers. Virtually all the youth smugglers interviewed talked about ‘booking’ which was a form of bribe given to some corrupt Customs Officers, to ease their passage across the border. Booking was not official duty which is supposed to be paid on goods, but a form of bribe which gave the youth smugglers the opportunity to escape with their smuggled goods. We also discovered that some Customs Officers even acted as spies

for the youth smugglers. Such Customs Officers usually alerted the youth smugglers of important information very useful for their operation. They usually told them when to come out for operations and when the day would be though on smugglers especially when the area comptroller would be out on routine patrol. Moreover, they usually informed the youth smugglers when officious and faithful officers would be on duty and when they would not be on duty. All these information and others were the forms of supports that some corrupt Customs Officers gave the youth smugglers.

Very interesting to mention was another support mentioned by a youth smuggler during an interview session. The youth smuggler said that occasionally, Customs Officers did help them in rehabilitating their smuggling routes when such were not motorable for them to pass. He narrated that they needed to do that, because not doing it would reduce the money they normally collected from the youth smugglers, passing through such routes. This was because bad roads would reduce the numbers of the youth smugglers who normally passed such routes.

## 5. Conclusion

The study concludes that smuggling has become more sophisticated, more departmentalized and a more specialized crime in Nigeria. The areas of the youth involvement discovered in this study threw more light on smuggling. Smuggling in Nigeria has become more organized than the years past in the history of Nigeria. We concluded in this study that the supports and social networks involved in smuggling started right from the family level, at the community level and from some corrupt Customs Officers. These were the factors which made smuggling very difficult to control or suppress.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that government should make the processes involved in acquisition of import / export license explicit to the public so that the community people interested in getting license for importation and exportation would follow the due processes involved. This would reduce the rate of smuggling among the community youths living around the border areas. Moreover, Nigeria government should always work hand in hand with government of Republic of Benin in stemming down the rate of youth's involvement in smuggling.

The problem of corruption among the Customs Officers should be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. The study uncovered huge form of corruption among some Custom Officers posted to the border areas. Corruptions

among these officers make smuggling a big problem which seems unsolvable. The corruption gives encouragement and support to the youth smugglers involved, and many respondents who participated in the study testified to this. However, addressing the problem of corruption among the Customs Officers should start by addressing the corruption in the government and entire society first.

The government should also try to set up a powerful committee on how the problem of porous Nigerian border can be tackled by the government. This is the problem which causes free for all smuggling activities around the Nigerians borders. Hence, to reduce drastically the problem of smuggling, the problem of porous border must be dealt with accordingly.

The government should also take cognizance of the needs of the Customs Officers. Government should ensure good welfare for the officers. Enough accommodation should be provided for them, so that some of them would not be residing in houses built by community smugglers. Government should ensure that good salaries are paid to the Customs Officers, and that benefits and allowances are paid promptly and adequately. Provision for uniforms should be done by the governments, enough work equipment and facilities should be provided, especially modern ones as obtainable in some other countries of the world. In summary, the entire welfare of the Customs Officers should be paramount to the government of Nigeria. Their welfare should therefore, be adequately looked into by the federal government. Government should not forget that customs and the excise duties give the second largest revenue to the government, after oil exportation.

We also discovered during the study that community people promote youth smuggling within the community areas close to the borders. Therefore, government should take radical steps to re – orientate the community people on the dangers that youth involvement in smuggling will bring to the country, the communities and the youths involved.

The community people should be sensitized on these dangers through government championed public talks, seminars, workshops, rallies round the communities, and media campaigns. The community heads must be carried along and those who aided smugglers among them must be dissuaded from doing so.

We recommend that laws on smuggling should be updated to meet present challenges and the international standard. Hardly, in the past, the media carried the news of smugglers apprehended, tried and sentenced for involvement in smuggling. We subscribe to the opinion of some of the respondents that there is no strict implementation of laws on smuggling.

Many apprehended smugglers were usually allowed to go scot-free. Therefore, arrest of suspects and sentencing them accordingly, when found guilty, as deterrence to others in the society, is recommended. Moreover, those who are in position of political power who may probably back the smugglers up must be checkmated.

Finally, abundant job opportunities should be made available to the youths in Nigeria

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