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Rule-breaking, Inequality and Globalization: the Trans-nationalization of Irish Criminal Gangs

Abstract

This article seeks to situate the emergence of transnational criminal gang networks in Ireland within broader debates about the impact of globalization on Irish society (Coulter and Coleman 2003; Kuhling and Keohane 2007; Donovan and Murphy 2013). As a result of attempts to integrate the Irish economy into global capitalism, the number of jobs available to unskilled and semi-skilled workers in poor urban neighborhoods has reduced since the 1960s. The poverty and misery experienced in these communities as a result of social exclusion has been further exacerbated by those operating on the so-called dark side of globalization (Whitaker 2002). These are members of trans-national gang networks who sell drugs, recruit foot-soldiers and use these neighborhoods as bases for their drugs distribution networks (Hourigan 2011). The article focuses on the impact which this dual negative experience of globalization has had on these communities and devotes specific attention to the emergence of a core leadership strata within these criminal gang networks who are comfortable operating both inside and outside the Irish state. In 2002, Leslie Sklair (2002) created a typology for what he described as the transnational capitalist class, a group who were key drivers of the process of globalization. The article concludes by examining the potential to use this typology to understand the leadership strata of transnational criminal gang networks which have emerged from Ireland.

Key words: gangs, transnational crime, globalization, drugs, criminal justice

Introduction

Anthony Giddens defines globalization as ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away’ (Giddens 1990: 64). This process has been largely facilitated by the development of new technologies in communications, production and transportation (Waters 2001: 5). Global capitalism has been, some would argue, the most direct beneficiary of these changes which have enabled transnational capitalist corporations to operate increasingly above and beyond nation-states which historically have had a key role in limiting and monitoring their activities (Castells 1998). Doreen Massey (1993) has noted that the pace of globalization is deeply uneven and the process is experienced in profoundly different ways across the globe. Legitimate global capitalist corporations have been relatively open about their desire to exploit the disjunctures and differences within the flows of globalization for their own benefit (Appadurai 1990). These companies often move local production facilities in order to benefit from lower tax rates, wage costs and

weaker environmental regulations in different countries across the globe. Indeed, the ideology of neo-liberalism championed by Milton and Rose Friedman (1980) and Friedrich Hayek (1944) robustly defends their right to over-ride attempts by governments to regulate capitalist growth. However, less attention has been devoted to the capacity of those involved in the so-called dark side of globalization, trans-national criminal gang networks, to harness the process of globalization for their own benefit. In 2002, Leslie Sklair highlighted the importance of a group he described as the trans-national capitalist class in driving the process of globalization. This article explores whether Sklair's typology can be used to further understand the operation of the leadership strata of trans-national criminal gang networks by focusing specifically on the Irish case.

The article begins with a discussion of the impact of globalization on organized crime. The trans-nationalization of Irish criminal gang networks over a fifty year period is outlined. This process is considered in terms of the broader contraction of opportunities which was experienced by unskilled and semi-skilled workers in marginalized urban communities due to Irish government policy which sought to integrate the Irish economy further into global capitalism (Bielenberg and Ryan 2013, Allen and O'Boyle 2013). Two key moments in the Irish state's response to criminal gang activity are highlighted; the establishment of the Criminal Assets Bureau in 1996 and the introduction of the Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 2009. It is argued that these two state responses generated a more outward orientation within Irish criminal gang networks. It has prompted senior members of Irish gangs to move outside the state, particularly to The Netherlands and to Spain. In their growing dominance within the European drugs trade, the leaders of these criminal networks have come to closely resemble members of the trans-national capitalist class identified by Leslie Sklair (2002). In the meantime, marginalized communities in the Republic of Ireland suffer the negative consequences of two forms of globalization emanating from the formal and illicit economies.

Globalization and Crime

Within criminology, organized criminal activity has historically been characterized as not only a creative response to deprivation (Merton 1938, 1968) but also an innovative response to new opportunities and realities (Cloward and Ohlin, 1966). The opportunities generated by globalization have been exploited as quickly by those involved in the global illicit drugs trade as those involved in global corporate capitalism. Carlos Resa Nestares comments

By acting through networks rooted in the legal economy by globalization processes, criminal organizations have taken to drawing up plans on a rationalized, country-by-country basis, for a wide range of activities such as money laundering, and drug trafficking so as to take maximum advantage of the legal frameworks involved (1999: 20).

Reg Whitaker notes how closely the development of these transnational networks mirror the evolution of global capitalism saying 'capitalism's reach across national

borders has accelerated, so too has the internationalization of criminal enterprise. The same technologies have enabled this cross-border criminal activity' (2002: 132).

Whitaker makes some pithy observations about the similarities and differences between criminal and conventional capitalist organizations. He notes that like their counterparts who lead global capitalist firms, those leading criminal networks are able to manage information effectively, identify and adapt to market changes and engage in networking opportunities. Federico Varese (2001) notes however, that illicit organizations may struggle to take advantage of economies of scale. Whitaker concurs stating:

the bigger the organization, the harder it is to collect reliable information both on new recruits and local conditions. Moreover, the bigger the reach of the organization, the more likely it is that disputes will arise within it, and that criminal reputations will be faked, allowing police informants to penetrate the organization (2002: 135).

However, it is argued that criminal networks have been more effective in melding their distinctive ethnic identities with their transnational criminal activities. Essentially, ethnic ties have been used to create bonds of loyalty defining the parameters of networks and allowing members to forge links within terrorist organizations (Castells 1998).

The limited capacity of nation-states to respond to the challenge posed by developing trans-national criminal gang networks has long been a sub-theme of the broader debate about the declining powers of states in an era of global transformation (Held and McGrew 2001). Particular attention within this debate has been devoted to the criminal gang networks which traverse North and South America (Hagedorn 2007; Zilberg 2004). Even within the European Union, where considerable energy has been focused on developing greater convergence between the legal frameworks of European states, huge distinctions remain between the drugs, corruption and anti-gang legislations of member states. These differences have been exploited by gangs from a range of ethnic backgrounds and European co-operative policing has been relatively slow to respond to these challenges.

Given the relative ease with which leaders of transnational gang networks move between states and exploit their different weaknesses, there is some scope to consider their activities in terms of the broader model of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) identified by Leslie Sklair (2002). Since the 1970s, a range of theories have emerged about those leading transnational corporations, politics and public administration who are driving the process of globalization (Hymer 1979; Goldfrank 1977). Sklair's typology remain dominant as it not only identifies core characteristics of the TCC but 'goes furthest in conceiving of the capitalist class as no longer tied to territoriality or driven by national interest' (Robinson and Harris 2000: 20). It is surprising therefore given the growing sophistication of the leadership strata of trans-national gang networks that the TCC model has not been used more widely to understand their activities and worldview. This article seeks to remedy this omission by focusing on the emergence of transnational criminal gang networks from the Republic of Ireland.

Drugs and the Irish Economy

After the establishment of the Irish state in 1922, economy policy based on laissez-faire capitalism was replaced in the 1930s by a protectionist regime which led to an economic war with the United Kingdom. The Irish economy grew during World War II by supplying the British war effort. However in the post-war period, it experienced deep stagnation leading to high unemployment, emigration and very low rates of economic growth (Lee 1989). By the late 1950s, one prominent academic commented 'In purely physical terms, the population cannot dwindle any further, the bottom of the curve must come somewhere, there is literally nowhere to fall from' (Meehan 1960: 506). The response of the Irish state was to introduce a range of policies which opened the Irish economy to direct investment from the global economy. Particular emphasis was placed on attracting trans-national corporations (TNCs) from Europe and North America to locate in Ireland through the introduction of favorable tax arrangements and the provision of a well-educated and relatively low-cost workforce (Lee 1989).

The economic growth and prosperity which followed these changes was impressive and Ireland opened itself not only economically but also culturally to globalization (Fagan 2003). However, the Republic of Ireland's small working class was heavily dependent on the jobs provided in its small indigenous industrial sector which shrank rapidly during the 1970s as a result of this economic openness. In addition, many of the TNCs which were located in Ireland during the 1960s and 1970s began to close or move to other locations in the early 1980s where labor costs were cheaper (O'Hearn 2003). Therefore, communities where the lowest paid workers were concentrated had experienced two waves of factory closures by the early 1980s leading to very high levels of unemployment and deepening social deprivation.

In post-war Europe, the growth of formal European economies was mirrored by a spectacular growth in the trade of illicit drugs. Within this context, there is evidence that the Republic of Ireland was viewed not only as a lucrative new market but also a useful trans-shipment to the United Kingdom as it has a rugged coastline which is difficult to monitor (Marks 1997; Mc Donald and Townsend 2007). The depth of conflict in Northern Ireland resulted in the diversion of policing resources to the border region leaving a policing vacuum in the Southern Irish state. During the 1970s, criminal family networks in disadvantaged communities which had been involved in trading stolen goods and running protection rackets gradually formed links with international drugs cartels (Williams 2011). By 1981, the rapid spread of heroin addiction in Dublin's inner city had led to an upsurge in street crime, child neglect and related health issues. The level of disquiet within these communities about the presence of criminal gangs was so great that in 1982 anti-drugs activist Tony Gregory was elected a member of the Irish parliament (Ferriter 2004).

Although Dublin was the heartland of gang activity in the Republic of Ireland, similar criminal gangs were emerging in other parts of the country. Small scale versions of Dublin's criminal gangs appeared in Cork, Galway and most notably Limerick city, where individual families used their involvement in the horse trade to make connections with drugs suppliers at national and international level (Duggan

2009). After a deep recession in the mid 1980s, the Irish economy began to grow once more due to government policy which combined a focus on structural adjustment with successful attempts to attract global ICT and pharmaceutical corporations to the Irish state. By the early 1990s, these policies began to take effect and the so-called Celtic Tiger boom led to Ireland becoming one of the fastest growing economies in the OECD (McSharry and White 2000). Unfortunately, increased disposable income amongst the young and affluent middle classes led to a growing demand for recreational drugs such as ecstasy and cocaine (Mooney 2013; McCaffrey 2011). As a result, criminal gang networks operating in the Irish state became wealthier and more powerful.

The activities of gang leaders became more visible and were described frequently in the national media most notably by the *Sunday World* and by the *Sunday Independent's* crime correspondent Veronica Guerin. When she was shot by a member of a criminal gang in 1996, the Republic's government began to realize that the intimidation of individuals by criminal gangs, a problem which had been confined to disadvantaged communities, was spilling over into the wider society. A range of new measures to tackle gang crime were announced, most notably the establishment of the *Criminal Assets Bureau*. Liz Campbell comments:

CAB acts to confiscate, freeze or seize assets deriving or suspected of deriving from criminal activity to ensure that the proceeds of (suspected) criminal activity are taxed and to investigate and determine any claim for benefit...This capacity to seize assets in the absence of a criminal conviction, and to tax illegal income, has proved remarkably successful, both in real terms and public and political perception (2016: 261)

As a result of the establishment of CAB, a number of prominent criminals had their assets seized and others left the state to avoid the Bureau's attention. The model was reproduced in a number of other European countries where concerns were growing about the activities of criminal gangs (O'Mahony 2002). The establishment of CAB represented a key moment in the trans-nationalization of Irish criminal gang networks as it forced a number of the most senior criminals to move outside the state. They re-located to other parts of Europe, particularly to the Netherlands and Spain, where weaker legislation meant that they could continue to operate their networks.

While legislative change was occurring in the Republic of Ireland, the peace process was gaining momentum in Northern Ireland. The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 altered the structure of Irish Republicanism created divisions between those who accepted the new status quo and dissident groups who rejected the agreement (Horgan 2013). These internal conflicts within Northern Republicanism combined with the growing number of non-Irish gangs operating south of the border greatly increased the complexity of gang activity as the country moved into the 21st century. Even after the murder of Veronica Guerin, a certain public tolerance for the activities of criminal gangs continued, perhaps because it was the public who were consuming the drugs and other commodities they were selling (McCullagh 2011). This public tolerance diminished considerably after two murders in Limerick city. In 2008, Shane Geoghegan, a local rugby player was murdered when he was mistaken

for an associate of a local family gang. In the following year, Roy Collins, the son of a local Limerick businessman who had given evidence against a Limerick gang, was shot (Galvin 2013; Williams 2014). In the wake of both these murders, there was a public outcry about gang activity in the Limerick city. The *Criminal Justice Act (Amendment) 2009* was introduced, which provided the state with a range of new powers to prosecute gang members. Significantly, the legislation drew on the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in order to define a criminal gang network. Section 3 (a, b) defines a criminal organization as:

A structured group, however organized, that has as its main purpose or activity the commission or facilitation of a serious offence... structured group means a group of 3 or more persons, which is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of a single offence, and the involvement in which by 2 or more of those persons is with a view to their acting in concert; for the avoidance of doubt, a structured group may exist notwithstanding the absence of all or any of the following: (a) formal rules or formal membership, or any formal roles for those involved in the group; (b) any hierarchical or leadership structure; (c) continuity of involvement by persons in the group.

In her speech to the Irish parliament in 2014, outlining the reasons why the Act was introduced, Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald stated: 'Organized criminal gangs were behaving as though they were untouchable by the Gardaí and the Courts. They even appeared to be taunting those tasked with preventing and investigating criminal acts' (Irish Government News Service, 2014: 11) The Act allowed the state to use the non-jury Special Criminal Court for a limited number of gang-related offences including

- directing the activities of a criminal organization (Section 71A of the Criminal Justice Act 2006)
- Participating or contributing to certain activities of a criminal organization (Section 72)
- committing a serious offence for a criminal organization (Section 73)
- Liability for the offences committed by the body corporate (Section 76).

These legislative changes were accompanied by a number of targeted policing measures including the deployment of armed response units, the use of CCTV surveillance, the placing of witnesses in witness protection programs and significant investment of resources in community policing (Hourigan 2011). These changes resulted in a number of high profile convictions of senior members of criminal gangs.

The increased powers generated by the Criminal Justice Amendment Act (2009) sharpened the outward orientation which had begun to alter the structure of Irish criminal gang activity since the establishment of the Criminal Assets Bureau. The Irish police now find that the more senior members of prominent Irish gangs reside outside the state and direct the activities of the gang from secure remote locations in other nation-states with weaker policing structures and anti-gang legislation. Local operations in Ireland are most frequently run by members of the extended family networks of these senior gang members who manage the foot-soldier strata of the

gang in urban neighborhoods. These foot soldiers can include those who are seeking to traverse up the hierarchy of the gang and also those who are forced to work for the gang to repay their own debts or those of family members (Lally 2016). The practice of gangs exploiting children to transport guns and drugs which was first identified in Hourigan's 2011 ethnographic study of gangs in Limerick city continues to be evident. Continuing tensions also exist with dissident Irish Republican groups who seek to control certain territories in Irish cities. However, Johnson (2016) notes that some senior gang leaders trade on the links to Republican organizations in the broader European context in order to boost their prestige.

As well as criminal justice measures, there have been some limited official recognition that the deep social exclusion which characterized urban areas in Irish cities which are generating gangs may have contributed to the problem (Fitzgerald 2007). Although the Republic of Ireland became much wealthier between 1995 and 2007, it also became much more unequal (Allen 2000; Kirby 2001; O'Hearn 2003). The rapid increase in employment, wage levels and property prices during this period made barely any impact on marginalized communities in Dublin, Limerick and other cities. Young people living in these neighborhoods were just as attracted to the luxury consumer goods such as cars, clothes, and gadgets as their more affluent fellow citizens. Becoming involved in drugs distribution or other illegal activities through a gang was a direct route to gaining these objects of desirability for a group largely excluded from broader societal affluence. Regeneration projects were established in both West Dublin and Limerick, which aimed to unpick this marginalization and reduce gang participation. These projects, though costly, did achieve considerable success. However, the capacity of the Irish state to fund such urban regeneration initiatives was severely undermined as a result of the impact of the 2008 banking crisis on the Irish economy.

Trans-nationalization and Irish Criminal Gang Networks

The link between globalization, drugs and Irish criminal gang networks was underlined anew between 2007 and 2010. During the latter half of the Celtic Tiger boom, growth in manufacturing was replaced by growth in construction and property market as the key driver of Irish economy (Donovan and Murphy 2013). Much of this trade was fuelled by cheap loans from European banks which were made available after European Monetary Union. However, in 2008 when crisis hit the global banking system, it became clear that Irish banks had did not have the assets to cover these loans and were effectively in-solvent. The European Central Bank and IMF insisted that Ireland accept a bailout effectively ceding its economic sovereignty to trans-national institutions. As part of the bailout agreement, the state had to agree to a series of new taxes and deep cuts to public services (Allen and O'Boyle 2013). The economy shifted in recession, and there was a significant reduction in demand for drugs linked to the contraction of disposable income and significant levels of youth emigration.

Since 2010, some gangs have shifted their attention away from cocaine towards heroin or other commodities such as fuel (Pike and King 2013). The border region

has also become an increasingly important focus for gang activity. Criminal gangs in this area are focusing their attention on the laundering of foodstuffs and other commodities as well as drugs (PSNI and An Garda Síochána 2012). Within the state itself, foot-soldiers of these transnational ethnically Irish gangs compete with gangs from other ethnic groups to control their share of lucrative markets. Vietnamese and Chinese criminal gang networks are heavily involved in cannabis production in Ireland, an industry which intertwines with their human trafficking activities. There is evidence that these networks are also selling their expertise in cannabis cultivation to other groups (Cusack 2013; EMCDDA/Europol 2016). Eastern European gang networks have also established a significant presence in Ireland in terms of drugs, human and sex trafficking and organized theft. These networks have played a prominent role in introducing new technologies which facilitate crime into Ireland (Cusack 2013). Both Asian and Eastern European gangs are also involved in the sale and import of illegal tobacco into the Republic of Ireland often in co-operation with indigenous criminal groups (Calderoni et al. 2013).

The increasingly transnational network of Irish criminal gangs has been recognized by the Irish state most specifically through its involvement in Operation Shovel in 2010. The operation, co-ordinated by Europol, led to the arrest of 35 people linked to one Irish family criminal gang network though no prosecutions have followed. The origins of the Operation highlight the complexities in responding to the structures of trans-national gang networks. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) comment:

Starting in 2006 and linked to a well-known family clan, a series of violent acts related to Irish citizens in Costa del Sol was carried out, involving known criminals from Ireland. The police investigation identified a complex corporate structure used by this organization to channel the proceeds from criminal activities, among them drug and arms trafficking, kidnapping, counterfeiting, smuggling of vehicles, murders and money laundering. Information was exchanged at a later stage with police in the United Kingdom, which showed that the organization was involved in criminal activities in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands (UNODC 2016).

The popularity of Spain as a holiday destination for British and Irish people and its large ex-patriot communities means that the Costa Del Sol functions as a home from home for the leadership strata of Irish transnational gangs (Lally 2016). In terms of the spectrum of organized crime activity in Spain, the Irish are relatively minor players. From the 1960s onwards, Resa-Nestares notes:

Large international crime groups began to establish themselves in a major way in Spain... Their main activity consisted of laundering the money generated in businesses such as drugs trafficking, arms trafficking, extortion and kidnapping. After creating operating bases and incorporating new and powerful business organizations, they have achieved a division of labour so perfect that they have been able to operate virtually unnoticed by the majority of the general public (1999: 48).

Spain functions as a key point of entry into Europe for cannabis, cocaine and other drugs. However, there are other factors which contribute to its importance as a hub in the global drugs industry including its climate, banking and financial systems, weak organized crime legislation, a public policy which aims to facilitate and attract investment, police corruption and lack of internal co-operation between police forces (Sands 2007). Jennifer Sands comments that organized crime poses a particular problem in the Spanish state because of

the apparent lack of public and political attention given to the problems posed by organized crime and the lack of proactive and systematic anti-organized crime policy, as well as through deficiencies in the legal, penal, and judicial spheres and the complexities surrounding policing and law enforcement structures (2007: 228–229).

In addition to their presence in Spain, Irish criminal gang networks are also key players in the Amsterdam drugs market. Graham Johnson comments:

The Dutch police say Irish-British gangs are a dominant force in Amsterdam's underworld – the stock exchange of the European drugs business. Over the last two decades, Irish gangs have helped to repel competition from the Yugoslavs, South Americans and North Africans to take control of this prized Dutch distribution centre (2016: 9).

Given the growing prominence of the senior leadership strata of Irish criminal gang networks at the trans-national level, it is surprising that almost no critical attention has been devoted to their role as trans-national actors within globalization.

Leaders of Irish Criminal Networks as Part of the Transnational Capitalist Class

As part of his transnational model of globalization, Leslie Sklair (2002) highlighted the role of a group which he described as the trans-national capitalist class, individuals who were critical drivers of the process of globalization in the trans-national economy. In his analysis of the formal economy, he identified members of the class as the owners and controllers of transnational corporations, globalizing bureaucrats and politicians, globalizing professionals and consumerist elites. However, I would argue that the position of senior figures in organized crime networks represent a neglected group within this typology. In terms of Sklair's characteristics of the TCC, they would appear to conform to a number of aspects of their profile. When describing the TCC, he notes:

The economic interests of its members are increasingly globally linked rather than exclusively local and national in origin. As rentiers, their property and shares are becoming more globalized through unprecedented mobility of capital that new technologies and new global political economy have created (2002).

Graham Johnson's assessment of the activities of the most senior members of Irish criminal gang networks has some surprising echoes of this model. He notes that 'Irish-British gangs control drugs hubs such as Amsterdam and Spain. They control

them and supervise the flow of drugs, money and power into the rest of Europe' (2016: 9). Conor Lally and Colin Gleeson also note:

When an estimated 700 police officers across Europe and as far away as South Africa and Brazil executed a series of co-ordinated searches against the Spain-based Irish cartel...it became clear how rich and powerful the gang had become... the transnational structure of their criminal activity and the fact they are in a position to pay others to transport drugs and firearms and carry out shootings for them has largely insulated them from law enforcement (2016: 11).

A geographical outward orientation is a core characteristic of the TCC with Sklair commenting 'the TCC increasingly conceptualizes its interests in terms of markets which may or may not coincide with a specific nation-state and the global market which clearly does not' (2002). Again, the description of the reach of Operation Shovel demonstrates a similar understanding of the relationship between markets and nation-states within the leadership strata of Irish criminal gang networks. The UNODC comment: 'The organization was involved in criminal activities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Spain. It had international branches in more than 20 countries around the world, where they would launder the proceeds of their illicit activities' (UNOD 2016).

Members of the trans-national capitalist class have a range of skills which enable them to function effectively at the global level. Again, there are leaders within Irish criminal gang networks who recognize the need for these skills and devote considerable energy to developing them. In describing the activities of Christy Kinahan, one of the most prominent leaders of indigenous Irish criminal gang networks, Conor Lally comments:

Regarded as one of the most intelligent Irish criminals involved in the international drugs trade, Kinahan speaks several foreign languages including Dutch and Spanish. During a prison term in the 1990s, he studied for a degree in French and refused temporary release so he could complete it (2016: 4).

Finally, members of the transnational capitalist class' orientation towards a specific type of private and affluent lifestyle was also identified by Sklair (2002) as characteristic of the TCC. He notes that

integral to this process are exclusive clubs and restaurants, ultra-expensive resorts in all continents, private as opposed to mass forms of travel and entertainment and ominously, increasing residential segregation of the very rich secured in gated communities by armed guards and electronic surveillance (2002: 155).

Again, there are strange echoes of the lifestyles of those at the apex of criminal gang networks. A number of prominent Irish criminals reside in gated communities on the Costa Del Sol and have invested in luxury properties such as exclusive clubs, and golf courses. The residence of Gary Hutch, who was subsequently murdered by some of his former criminal network colleagues in a feud was described as follows by two reporters from Ireland:

His plush pad is extremely private, with state-of-the-art fencing and security guards on duty 24 hours a day. A stunning private swimming pool is surrounded by mature trees and several beaches are just a short spin away. His three-bedroom penthouse apartment is worth well in excess of €500,000 (Tallant and McCaffrey 2014: 7).

Therefore, while the leadership strata of Irish criminal gang networks operate on the so-called dark side of globalization, in terms of their lifestyles, skills and orientation, they mirror a number of the key qualities outlined by Sklair (2002) in his delineation of the transnational capitalist class in the formal global economy.

Conclusion

In considering the position of the leadership strata of Irish criminal gang networks as part of the trans-national capitalist class, it is important to recognize that in broader European terms, Ireland remains a relatively peaceful state. In terms of UNODC data, the Irish murder rate of 1.2 per 100,000 is half the European average and a good deal lower than the American average of 4.7 per 100,000. Many drug users in Ireland buy their supply from acquaintances and levels of systematic violence between dealers and users are low. Higher levels of violence are evident, however, in inter-gang feuds and disputes with Irish Republican groups.

In terms of the broader literature on the impact of globalization on Irish society, the activities of criminal gang networks have been almost completely ignored. While economists and social scientists have alternately celebrated and criticized the impact of global flows on the Irish economy and Irish culture, no systematic attention has been devoted to members of criminal gangs as actors within the space of flows within globalization. This is a significant gap in the literature as there is evidence that leaders within these networks share some of the qualities more typical of Sklair's trans-national capitalist class. Tragically, for those living in marginalized communities in Irish cities, it means that they are living with the negative effects of two forms of globalization. Successive Irish government's attempts to maintain its competitive advantage within the global economy has led to weaker public services, a contraction of opportunities for un-skilled and semi-skilled workers and rising levels of insecure, precarious employment (Keohane and Kuhling 2014). These changes have had a marked negative impact on these communities, heightening levels of poverty, social exclusion and despair. From the 1970s onwards, criminal gang networks have sought to capitalize on this vulnerability by selling drugs in these neighborhoods, a business which became significantly more lucrative as the Irish economy began to grow more rapidly in the 1990s. The limited capacity of the Irish state to respond effectively to transnational organized crime has become sharply evident in recent years. The pace of co-operation between European states on criminal justice and policing matters lags far behind levels of integration in terms of economic activity. This difference has created a disjuncture which has been widely exploited by the leaders of Irish criminal gang networks who are playing an increasingly prominent role in the transnational European market for illicit drugs and in the process perhaps becoming members of the transnational capitalist class.

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Złamanie zasad, nierówność i globalizacja: Transnacionalizacja irlandzkich gangów kryminalnych

Streszczenie

Artykuł ten ma na celu umiejscowienie międzynarodowej sieci przestępczych gangów w Irlandii w kontekście szerszych debat na temat wpływu globalizacji na społeczeństwo irlandzkie (Coulter i Coleman 2003; Kuhling i Keohane 2007; Donovan i Murphy 2013). W wyniku prób włączenia irlandzkiej gospodarki do globalnego kapitalizmu, liczba miejsc pracy dostępnych dla robotników niewykwalifikowanych i pół-wykwalifikowanych w biednych dzielnicach miast zmniejszyła się od 1960 roku. Bieda i nędza doświadczana w tych społecznościach, w wyniku wykluczenia społecznego, sprawia, że wiele osób zaczyna współpracować z grupami przestępczymi (Whitaker, 2002). Są to członkowie transgranicznych sieci gangów, sprzedający narkotyki, rekrutujący żołnierzy i używający tych dzielnic jako podstaw dla sieci dystrybucji narkotyków (Hourigan 2011). Artykuł koncentruje się na wpływie tego podwójnego negatywnego doświadczenia globalizacji na wymienione społeczności i poświęca szczególną uwagę pojawieniu się podstawowych warstw przywódczych w obrębie sieci przestępczych gangów. Leslie Sklair (2002) stworzył typologię tego, co określił jako ponadnarodową klasę kapitalistyczną, grupę, która była kluczowym czynnikiem wpływającym na

proces globalizacji. Artykuł bada konkluzje poprzez zbadanie możliwości wykorzystania tej typologii do zrozumienia struktur przywódczych ponadnarodowych sieci gangów przestępczych, wywodzących się z Irlandii.

Key words: gangi, przestępczość transnarodowa, globalizacja, narkotyki, przestępstwo kryminalne