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**THE ITALIAN MAFIAS IN THE WORLD: A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF THE MOBILITY OF CRIMINAL GROUPS.**

Francesco Calderoni <sup>1</sup>, Giulia Berlusconi <sup>1</sup>, Lorella Garofalo <sup>1</sup>, Luca Giommoni <sup>2</sup>, Federica Sarno <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Università Cattolica and Transcrime

<sup>2</sup>School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University



## INTRODUCTION

The movements of mafiosi and terrorists across countries is a subject of increasing interest. In fact, these movements occur quite exceptionally, despite sensational claims by the media. Yet in specific cases some groups have actually moved (Decker, van Gemert, and Pyrooz 2009; Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011; Varese 2011): for example, street gangs from U.S. cities (e.g., Mara Salvatrucha, the Latin Kings, the Barrio 18) to other areas; terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda to the Middle East and North Africa (e.g., Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb); mafia families of the Italian 'Ndrangheta to Canada, Germany, and Australia. Nevertheless, despite the growing interest in the mobility of these groups, most studies focus only on one area or country, whereas worldwide studies are scarce.

Among these movements, mafia mobility has received increasing attention in the recent years and is now regarded as one of the main emerging theoretical issues in organised crime research (Kleemans 2014, 47; Von Lampe 2012, 184–185). The movement of mafia groups may generate negative consequences for the host countries, such as violence, corruption, and money laundering (Caneppele and Martocchia 2014; Savona 2010). Furthermore, mafia presence may negatively affect the economy (Lavezzi 2008; Pinotti 2012; Calderoni 2014b). For these reasons, recent studies have analysed the drivers and the nature of mafia movements (Allum 2014; Campana 2011; Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011; Sciarrone and Storti 2014; Varese 2011).

To date, studies on the mobility of the mafias have mostly analysed specific cases of attempted or successful movements to one territory. This study provides a complementary exploratory assessment of the presence and the activities of the Italian mafias across the world. The analysis is conducted on the references to mafia presence in foreign countries in the reports of Italian antimafia authorities. For the purposes of this article, a mafia is a special type of criminal group, long lasting and with a complex socio-cultural organisation, which mixes participation in illegal and legal markets to earn profits with control of a territory to exercise power (Campana 2013; Paoli 2014; Sciarrone and Storti 2014; Varese 2010).

The results show that the mafias' presence varies significantly across types of mafia, activities, and countries. The mafias concentrate in a small number of countries and mainly engage in drug trafficking. References to money-laundering are few, whereas at least four developed countries (Germany, Canada, Australia, and the United States) report a stable mafia presence. While some suggest that private protection is the core business of the mafias (Gambetta 1993; Varese 2011), such instances or other forms of territorial control were nearly absent. The next section discusses the nature and causes of mafia mobility, whereas the third section reviews the few worldwide studies and identifies their shortcomings. After description of the methods in the fourth section, the fifth one presents the results. The sixth section discusses the findings and the conclusions outline the research and policy implications.

## **MAFIA MOBILITY**

Until recent studies, scholars developed two competing views on mafia mobility. For years, experts argued that the mafias were closely associated with specific social, cultural and

economic characteristics of a territory, so that the export of mafias was unlikely (Hess 1973). Since the mid-1990s, an opposite view has developed, fuelled by moral panic, the securitisation of crime control policies, and the establishment of the concept of transnational organised crime on the global agenda (Carrapiço 2008; Woodiwiss 2003). According to this view, organised crime groups can easily exploit the opportunities offered by globalisation to migrate across countries (Sterling 1995; Castells 2003). Yet, both views lacked strong empirical support (for further discussion, see Varese 2006; Varese 2011; Sciarrone and Storti 2014; Paoli 2014).

Empirical evidence from different countries and times refutes both views. Mafia mobility is limited by the difficulties of operating in the illegal world (e.g., monitoring associates, gathering information, and advertising goods and services) (Reuter 1985; Gambetta 1993). Yet, in few cases, groups have successfully moved to new territories (Varese 2006; 2011). These instances contrast both with the non-exportability and with the free movement of the mafias. In fact, the recent literature shows that the mobility of criminal organisations is affected by a number of factors, and that it takes different forms (Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011; Savona 2012; Varese 2011).

Recent studies have identified several factors affecting mafia mobility. Varese analyses the supply of mafiosi due to intentional (e.g., search for resource-, investment-, or market-related opportunities) or unintentional movements (e.g., generalised migration, need to escape mafia wars or law enforcement), and local conditions or demand for mafia protection (e.g., low trust, newly-formed market economies) (Varese 2006; 2011). Similarly, Sciarrone and Storti (2014) identify agency (intentional or unintentional decisions) and context factors (economic,

cultural/relation, and political/institutional). Other scholars distinguish between push and pull factors, namely, factors driving criminal groups away from or to a place, respectively. Push and pull factors may stem from market, ethnic, or criminal environment elements (Allum 2014; Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011).

Mafia mobility may also take different forms. The media often allege the pervasiveness of the mafias, in line with the above mentioned view that transnational organised crime groups exploit opportunities across countries with minimal effort (Champion 2010; The New York Times 2014; Yardley 2014). Scholars often express scepticism about these accounts (Gachevska 2012; Campana 2013; Sarno 2014). Studies acknowledge that the groups restrict the activities typical of territorial control to home territories (e.g., private protection, extortion racketeering, loan-sharking, and infiltration in politics) (Allum 2014; Campana 2011; Europol 2013a; Savona and Sarno 2014; Savona 2012, 12). In fact, the mafias' foreign presence is associated with the drug trade, money laundering, and infiltration in the legal economy (Campana 2011).

Scholars offer several interpretations of the forms of mafia mobility. Campana (2011) distinguishes between *transplantation* (the transfer of a group's core business, i.e., forms of illegal governance) and *diversification* (a few members move to the new area to trade in specific markets). Sciarrone and Storti (2014, 45) discriminate between close or loose connections with the home territory. With close connections, the mafia presence may take two forms: a *settlement*, when the mafia becomes embedded in the host territory, reproducing its typical connections with the political and economic world; or an *infiltration*, when the mafia replicates only certain of its features. In the case of loose connections, the mafia presence may follow a

process of *imitation* (establishment of a symbolic link with the original organisation but development of an autonomous form of mafia) or of *hybridisation* (an initial link with the original territory generates a distinct criminal group over time). The authors argue that this taxonomy has exploratory purposes: the mafia presence may fall within different types simultaneously, and it also develops from one type to another over time. Allum (2014, 595–597) contends that the relations between home and host territories are interdependent: activities in foreign countries are often related to the homeland and vice versa.

Most of the studies mentioned above adopt a case study approach. Whereas the characteristics of each case can affect the results, the authors often attempt general interpretations of mafia mobility. In fact, only further studies may enable generalisation of these results and this process may take several years (Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 54; Sarno 2014). In the meanwhile, the knowledge of mafia mobility may benefit from a complementary, broader, approach.

Analyses at a broader level may complement existing knowledge, offering a wider perspective on the mobility of criminal groups. Such an approach may determine the differences among countries, groups and activities and supplement evidence from specific case studies (Campana 2013, 4). For example, they could corroborate and/or refute evidence from single cases, or uncover new patterns of mafia mobility so far under researched (Albanese 2014). This study proposes an exploratory analysis of mafia mobility by examining the different Italian mafias and their activities across the world. Beyond the field of organised crime, the approach may be of interest also for the study of transnational street gangs and terrorist groups with similar mobility patterns.

## **THE PRESENCE OF THE ITALIAN MAFIAS WORLDWIDE**

Most studies on the mobility of criminal groups have focused on the Italian mafias. The Italian mafias comprise four main types, with different origins and distributions: Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, and Apulian Mafias (Berlusconi 2014; Calderoni 2011). Whereas each type has specific characteristics and encompasses groups with varying autonomy, they all have significant similarities, and they are all mafia-type associations according to the Italian criminal justice.

In recent years the attention paid by international media and policymakers to these mafias has significantly grown. Several events showed that the mafias may generate violence, corruption and impact on the economy of the host countries.

Given the increasing attention to the presence of Italian groups in developed countries, it is surprising that only few studies have analysed the topic from a cross-national perspective. Moreover, these exercises reveal problems and limitations. The first mapping attempts by Forgione (2009; 2012) draw on official and media reports. Despite a wealth of anecdotes, they furnish limited information on their sources, time period, and methodology. A study by Transcrime for the Italian Ministry of Interior has explored the worldwide presence of the four types of mafias by counting the references to foreign countries in official reports issued by the Italian authorities from 2000 to 2011 (Transcrime 2013). Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Albania, and Canada rank at the top. Although the study omits a detailed analysis of the activities, it identifies three general drivers of the mafias' presence: international illicit trades, the formal establishment of mafia groups abroad, and the presence of fugitives. These results are



consistent with those of an analysis on 110 cities of the EU based on the above-discussed works by Forgione (Campana 2013): in Spain and the Netherlands the mafia presence mainly relates to fugitives and drug trafficking, in Germany and France to investments in the legal economy and other illegal activities such as counterfeiting, arms trafficking and frauds (Campana 2013, 5). Yet the study focuses only on one region, fails to distinguish among the types of mafias, and is based on unclear sources.

The information on the Italian mafias is limited even when classified information is accessible. A 2013 Europol report generally describes the diffusion of the four mafias worldwide (Europol 2013a). An unpublished, extended, version in Italian provides more insight into the activities of the mafias by country (Europol 2013b). Details on the methodology reveal that the report encountered a number of difficulties: with the exception of Italy, the majority of EU Member States did not reply to Europol questionnaire, or had no information on the Italian mafias.

Overall, the limitations of the mapping exercises, including the report of an international law enforcement agency like Europol, demonstrate the difficulties of analysing the presence of the Italian mafias worldwide. The most problematic limitations are a lack of differentiation among types of mafias, although the characteristics of each mafia may influence both its activities and the countries in which it is present (Savona 2012); an incomplete analysis of the activities, regardless of findings that groups may engage in different activities in different countries (Campana 2013, 5); an unclear time frame, despite the proof that the presence varies over time (Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 47 and 54); and a partial geographical coverage, notwithstanding the manifestation of the mafias in different continents (Transcrime 2013). Furthermore, the

mapping exercises often rely on merely descriptive accounts and neglect the analysis of the most relevant countries and activities by type of mafia, with few exceptions: Transcrime (2013, 219–232) furnishes exploratory bivariate analyses, ranking the countries with the highest presence by mafia type; Campana (2013, 5) conducts a correspondence analysis to assess the associations between countries and activities.

This study addresses the gap in the knowledge about the worldwide presence of the Italian mafias. It systematically assesses the presence and the activities of the four mafias for the period 2000-2012. It tackles the above discussed limitations by focusing on a specific time frame, using publicly available sources, including all countries of the world, distinguishing among types of mafias and exploring the diversity of their activities. The study addresses the following questions: which countries have the strongest presence of the Italian mafias? What are their most important activities? Are there differences across types and countries? If yes, what are the most important relations among types, countries, and activities?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study proxies the foreign presence of the Italian mafias through the references to mafias' activities provided by Italian official reports. It addresses the limitations of previous studies by examining publicly available law enforcement reports for the period 2000-2012.

### **DATA SOURCES**

The data came from the official reports of the Italian *Direzione Investigativa Antimafia* (hereinafter DIA) and *Direzione Nazionale Antimafia* (hereinafter DNA). The DIA is a

specialised law enforcement agency composed of officers from the three main national police forces. It conducts strategic and criminal investigations on the mafias with a specialised division tasked with international cooperation. The DNA is a special bureau attached to the Prosecutor's Office at the *Corte di Cassazione* (Italy's highest court) with the mission of coordinating the prosecution of mafia crimes among 26 District Antimafia Prosecutor's Offices.

The study examined 25 half-yearly reports by the DIA (1<sup>st</sup> half 2000 to 1<sup>st</sup> half 2012) and 12 annual reports by the DNA (1999-2000 to 2011-2012). Each report provides information about relevant investigations, trends, patterns and a detailed description of the activities of the four main Italian mafias (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta and Apulian Mafias). The documents amounted to more than 14,600 pages and the analysis focused on the sections dedicated to each mafia.

The sources offered the best available options for mapping the Italian mafias worldwide. As demonstrated by the vicissitudes of the Europol's report, to date there is no practicable alternative to the use of Italian law enforcement sources. The information available from specific countries is sporadic, preventing comparison. Moreover, recent studies on the perception of Italian mafias in Europe have shown that much of the foreign interest for the mafias developed in recent years and is associated with specific sensational events (e.g., homicides, mass murders) (Sarno 2014). Conversely, both the DIA and the DNA have more than twenty years of experience, have specialised staff, analysts and databases, and serve as key hubs for the international cooperation in criminal matters. Moreover, they provide information about the involvement of mafia groups in specific activities – such as money laundering,

counterfeiting, etc. – which do not cause social alarm and may be overlooked by foreign sources. The reports also allow differentiation by type of mafia, whereas a tendency to mythicize the Sicilian mafia as the model of all other mafias still persists in foreign countries (Lombardo 2010; Berlusconi 2014; Sarno 2014). Lastly, the results were in line with those of the literature, suggesting that the analysis was acceptably reliable. Overall, the reports provided an opportunity sample offering a reasonable proxy of the foreign presence of Italian mafias, especially for a broad assessment of the associations among different mafias, activities, and countries.

These considerations should not overlook the limitations of the data: the DIA and the DNA did not aim to chart mafia presence, but rather to report on relevant operations and on general trends. The references in the reports comprised only a fraction of the instances of mafia presence abroad, and this risked biasing the analysis in various respects: the mafia presence may still be unknown in some territories; the criteria for reporting cases are unclear and possibly subject to errors; differences in the quality of law enforcement cooperation with Italian authorities may influence the number of reported references. Despite the caution in the collection and analysis of the data, it was impossible to address all these risks adequately. Nevertheless, these limitations should not prevent advancing the knowledge of the mobility of criminal groups. In this perspective, this study aims at providing a first systematic assessment, paving the way for further analyses based on different sources.

## DATA COLLECTION

The analysis identified all the references to the mafias in foreign countries in reports. Each reference corresponds to a sentence providing information on the type of mafia, the country, and the activities (e.g., “An Apulian mafia-type organisation smuggled heroin from Albania”).

Data collection started with the search of the names of the countries of the world assisted by text-mining software (WordStat 6.1.20). Subsequently, the authors read the reports and included other relevant references (references as “two Camorra members arrested on French territory” which did not include the word “France”). This resulted in an initial sample of 2,128 references. They also removed irrelevant references, such as those unrelated to mafia activities (e.g., “Turkey is a key hub for the international heroin trade”), referring to other groups (e.g., “an Albanian criminal group was dismantled while smuggling cigarettes to Italy), or which were duplicates. The cleaning process resulted in a final sample of 985 references.

Each reference was coded by country, type of mafia, and activity. Attribution of a reference to a mafia was based primarily on the classification made by the DNA and DIA reports, and on specific elements in the documents. Differently from case studies, this analysis focused on the types of mafias (e.g., Cosa Nostra), as the examination of specific groups would have been unmanageable. This type-level focus implied that references to a type of mafia comprise a variety of different groups which should not be considered as a single entity.

Activities were ultimately classified into six binary variables:

- Drug trafficking (Drugs): e.g. drugs shipments from/through/to a country.

- Legal economy and money-laundering (LE&ML): investments in the legitimate economy (e.g. restaurants, bars, etc.) or reinvestment of the proceeds of crime.
- Fugitives and arrests (Fug.&Arr.): presence of fugitives or arrest of mafiosi.
- Generic presence (Gen.Pr.): general references to the presence, interests or activities of the mafias in the country, with no specification about its stable nature (e.g. “Members of some Camorra affiliates live on the Costa del Sol and on the Costa Brava in Spain”).
- Stable presence (St.Pr.): specific references to a structured mafia presence such as stable organisations, families, clans, and *locali*,<sup>1</sup> or other permanent establishments of mafiosi (e.g. “Rogatory letters confirmed that ‘Ndrangheta locali are present in Rielasingen, Ravensburg and Engen”). In the case of doubt, the reference was classified as “generic presence”, as a precaution against excessive emphasis on the stable presence of the mafias.
- Other illegal activities (Oth.III.): provision of other illicit goods and services.

Each of these six variables was compiled separately and not as part of a single categorical variable because one reference might provide information about more than one activity (e.g.. “a recent operation in Venezuela led to the arrest of three suspects trafficking drugs with a Cosa Nostra family”) was registered under both “fugitives & arrests” and “drug trafficking”.

The classification of the activity variables was based on the frequencies in the sources and on the pooling of infrequent or overlapping categories (e.g., fugitives and arrests; money laundering and legal economy). Activities falling into the residual category “other illegal activities” were mainly the illicit trades in cigarettes, counterfeit goods and firearms. Overall,

the classification was in line with those of previous studies on Italian mafias abroad (Campana 2013; Caneppele and Sarno 2013; Transcrime 2013).

To ensure inter-coder reliability and to test the validity of the coding scheme a random 20% of the sample was re-coded by different authors, resulting in 81% of identical coding. Most of the wrongly coded references regarded overlapping categories, addressed, as already mentioned, by pooling them together. Lastly, the few unclear cases were resolved by consensus among the authors.

Table 1 provides an example of the final dataset structure.

TABLE 1 HERE

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Preliminary statistical analyses assessed the frequencies and correlations of the type of mafia and activities across countries.

The associations among type of mafia, activities and countries were analysed through multiple correspondence analysis (hereinafter MCA). MCA is a family of techniques to identify and display the patterns of association among three or more different categorical variables (Blasius and Greenacre 2006; Le Roux and Rouanet 2010). It projects the different modalities of the variables in a low-dimensional Euclidean space (generally two or three dimensions are considered), where the dimensions capture most of the variance of the data. As a result, in MCA

plots, points close to each other are more strongly associated. Studies on crime have sometimes applied MCA (Harcourt 2006). In particular, the method enabled exploration of the internal organisation and geographical distribution of criminal organisations (Campana 2011; Varese 2012). Campana (2013) also used correspondence analysis to explore the association between the criminal activities of the Italian mafias and the European cities and countries where they are active.

In this study, use was made of specific MCA, a variant enabling restriction of the analysis to the categories of interest of the three variables considered (i.e. type of mafia, country and activities) (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010, 61–64).<sup>2</sup> This method is suited to the sample because it allows excluding some modalities from the analysis. Indeed, the six activity variables were dichotomous but not mutually exclusive (one reference might report information on more than one activity). In these variables, one category was the presence of a specific mafia activity, while the other was the absence of any mention of the activity, which was irrelevant for the study. Specific MCA made it possible to ignore these categories in determination of the distances between the variables and the categories. The specific MCA focused only on countries with at least 10 references so as to improve the readability of the graphs. The number of cases was 842 (85% of the total 985 entries in the dataset). Preliminary specific MCA on the entire sample yielded very similar results. Where necessary, the discussion section provides information on these results.



## RESULTS

The final dataset contained 985 references, covering 61 countries and 1164 criminal activities. Table 2 summarises the frequencies by type of mafia and activity for the 19 countries with more than ten references.

TABLE 2 HERE

The Italian mafias concentrate in a relatively small number of countries (Figure 1). Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands have the highest number of references (164, 126, and 94, respectively). Another set of countries record more than 40 references (Colombia, Albania, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, and France). These nine countries account for two thirds of all the references (Table 2).

FIGURE 1 HERE

The presence of the mafias varies across the world (Table 2). The 'Ndrangheta records the highest number of references (355 in 39 countries), although the Camorra is present in more countries (256 references in 44 countries). Also Cosa Nostra has a large number of manifestations (234 references in 37 countries), while the Apulian Mafias is less widespread, with only 140 references in 24 countries. The Camorra and Apulian Mafias mostly concentrate in Europe (82% and 96% of the total references). The 'Ndrangheta has a large presence in the EU (55%), North (12%) and South-Central America (14%); it is the only mafia in Australia (9%). Cosa Nostra is the only organisation with less than half of the references to EU countries

(44%), revealing a particularly wide geographical presence, especially in South-Central America (26%).

As for specific countries, often only one or two mafias prevail, e.g. Camorra in Spain, ‘Ndrangheta in Germany, Apulian Mafias in Albania, and Cosa Nostra in Venezuela. Interestingly, only the Netherlands records a significant presence of all the four types. Camorra and ‘Ndrangheta report significant concentrations: Spain accounts for one third of all Camorra references (86), Germany records 74 ‘Ndrangheta references (20% of the total). The presence of Cosa Nostra and Apulian Mafias is more homogeneous across countries.

#### TABLE 3 HERE

The presences of the four mafias are often positively and significantly correlated (Table 3). The three traditional mafias (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, and ‘Ndrangheta) are mutually linked. Apulian Mafias show a different presence, and are associated only with one other mafia (the Camorra). Overall, the results suggest that the mafias tend to be present in the same countries, possibly due to country-, or activity-specific factors (e.g. international drug routes). Nevertheless, other group-specific factors (e.g. agency factors, the supply of mafiosi) may play a significant role.

Drug trafficking is the main activity of the mafias: it accounts for 38% of the recorded activities across 44 countries (Table 2). A significant number of references relate to the generic or stable presence of the mafias (233 and 109 references, i.e. 20% and 9%, in 32 and 14 countries, respectively).

The activities of the four mafias show marked differences (Figure 2). They all report similar shares of drug trafficking (whose share of total activities ranges between 33-39%, peaking at 48% for Cosa Nostra), fugitives and arrests, and legal economy & money laundering. The ‘Ndrangheta occupies a prominent position in regard to both generic and stable presence. Other illicit activities have a significant role for the Camorra and the Apulian Mafias, as these are frequently involved in the illicit trade in tobacco products and counterfeiting.

FIGURE 2 HERE

The specific MCA provided a clear representation of the mafias, activities and countries. It complemented the above bivariate analyses by furnishing a synthetic map of the most significant associations and discarding other, less relevant, connections. The first two dimensions identified by the specific MCA describe 57.7% and 26.4% of the total variance of the data, thus providing a good visual representation of the positions of the different categories. The graph presents different clusters, visually identified by the authors, associating mafias, activities and countries (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 HERE

A first cluster, in the upper left part of the figure, describes the stable presence of the ‘Ndrangheta in a few specific countries: Canada, Australia, and Germany. Here, empirical evidence shows that the ‘Ndrangheta created stable *locali*, organised similarly to the Italian ones (Gratteri and Nicaso 2009; Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 49; Tribunale di Reggio Calabria 2011). The United States are in the lower part of this first cluster and report signs of both stable and

generic presence. Historically, the Sicilian mafia maintained links with the Italian-American mafia families. Nonetheless, recent investigations have also detected a significant presence of the 'Ndrangheta: e.g., in May 2015, operation Columbus led to the arrest of 30 participants in an international drug trafficking scheme between the US and Calabria. (Day 2015).

A second cluster reflects the provision of other illicit goods and services, and in particular engagement in the illicit cigarette trade (upper right quadrant in Figure 3). The Apulian Mafias are close to other illicit activities, in turn associated with Greece, the United Kingdom and Montenegro. For most of the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, Montenegro was one of the main hubs for the illicit trade in tobacco products headed for Italy. Greece was another important gateway for cigarettes and counterfeit products from the Middle and Far East, while the United Kingdom was a preferred destination country, due to the high prices of cigarettes affording higher profits. The position of the Apulian Mafias is consistent with this picture. Not only is Apulia geographically close to the Western Balkans and Greece, but Apulian organised crime groups have traditionally participated in the illicit cigarettes trade (Calderoni 2014a).

The third cluster captures activities related to the legal economy and money laundering (upper central part of Figure 3). Switzerland is the only country in the cluster, but the overall sample included also other countries famous for their financial sectors (e.g. San Marino and Monaco). Several references regard the use of the Swiss financial industry for money laundering purposes. For example, in one case the director of a Swiss bank was arrested for laundering the proceeds of a former mayor of Palermo, convicted for mafia-type association.

The fourth cluster relates to drug trafficking (lower central part of the graph, Figure 3). Non-European countries, sources and/or transits of different drugs are in the lower part of the cluster (Brazil, Colombia, Morocco, Venezuela, and Turkey). The upper part of the cluster comprises Cosa Nostra and Camorra, fugitives and arrests, and three European countries, Spain, the Netherlands and Albania, notorious hubs for the European drug trade.

Spain is one of the main gateways for drugs at the intersection of two major routes: cocaine from South America, and hashish from Morocco (Europol 2011, 13; Giménez-Salinas Framis 2013). The country also records a number of references to the stable presence of the Camorra (in Madrid and Barcelona, on the Costa del Sol and the Costa Brava). Indeed, *mafiosi* have traditionally perceived Spain as a country with low risks of detection because, at least until the most recent years, domestic terrorism was the main security priority. Indeed, in the mid-2000s members of the Camorra *Scissionisti* confederation (also known as *gli spagnoli*, the Spaniards) moved to Spain on the outbreak of a violent conflict with the Di Lauro clan (Barbagallo 2010, 225).

The Netherlands is a strategic hub for the trade in cocaine, cannabis and synthetic drugs (Europol 2011). Moreover, the groups have considered the country a safe haven for fugitives (Kleemans and De Boer 2013, 23; Sarno 2014). In line with the findings in the literature, references to a stable presence are limited. A 2011 report by the Dutch Police concluded that evidence of a stable presence of the 'Ndrangheta is scarce and the Calabrian groups mainly engage in the drug trade (KLPD 2011).

Albania is a key transit country for heroin coming from Afghanistan, the world's leading producer, and a major source of cannabis (UNODC 2012, 48 and 78). Whereas the Apulian Mafias record the highest number of references to Albania, the specific MCA privileged the association with the drug trade.

A last cluster is at the centre of the graph, grouping generic presence, fugitives and arrests, Camorra, Cosa Nostra and a number of countries with close socio-cultural connections with Italy (Figure 3): France, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Albania, and the United States. In addition to the countries already discussed, the mafias' presence in France relates mainly to fugitives and arrests and a generic presence. Members of the four mafias have been arrested, or have hidden as fugitives, in the country (Europol 2013b). Moreover, some sources generally report the existence of 'Ndrangheta groups or *locali* in south-east France (Gratteri and Nicaso 2009, 248). However, the DNA has recently stated that "according to investigations, so far, there is no evidence of the presence of 'Ndrangheta's *locali* in France, despite the existence of large Calabrian communities" (DNA 2012, 109). The mafias' presence in Belgium refers to the drug trade and to generic presence (KLPD 2011; Europol 2013b).

## **DISCUSSION**

The concentration in a few countries confirms that the mafias' mobility encounters several difficulties (Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011; Varese 2011, 190–192). It also recommends particular caution in regard to the most sensational claims about the pervasiveness of the Italian mafias abroad (Gachevska 2012; Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 55).

The analysis of the activities points out a picture more complex than that currently described in the literature. Whereas the drug trade is clearly the most important activity, money laundering and investments in the legitimate economy are less relevant. Only a few countries report evidence of a stable presence and nearly absent are instances of territorial control (e.g. private protection, extortion racketeering, loan-sharking, and infiltration in politics). This corroborates studies arguing that the mafias diversify their activities across different areas (Campana 2011; Savona 2012, 12; Europol 2013a; Savona and Sarno 2014).

Unsurprisingly, drug trafficking is the main activity of the Italian mafias abroad. This is consistent with the trade's inherently transnational nature, with concentrated source, transit, and destination countries. The top countries for the drug trade are Spain, the Netherlands, Colombia, and Albania, which are key hubs on the international drug routes. Yet the importance of this activity should not lead to overestimation of the role of the mafias in the world drug trade. The sources may have emphasised drug-related activities because international cooperation in this field relies on a long-established practice providing opportunities for high-visibility results (e.g. arrests, seizures). The literature has clearly rejected the idea that large, structured groups like mafias can dominate illicit markets (Reuter and Haaga 1989; Dorn, Levi, and King 2005). Even in Italy, a variety of groups engage in the drug trade with foreign connections functional to acquiring resources and controlling the consignments (Campana 2011; Varese 2011, 18–19). Instead of governing the drug market, the mafia groups only trade in it, often competing against each other (Paoli 2002; 2004; Campana 2013).

The results provide poor evidence on money laundering and infiltration of the legitimate economy in foreign countries: the number of references is low, and the specific MCA identified a significant association only with Switzerland. Possibly, the law enforcement agencies may have neglected these activities because they are often hidden and difficult to investigate, especially abroad (KLPD 2011; Kleemans and De Boer 2013, 24). A recent study found evidence of mafia investments in the legal economy in several European countries, mostly corresponding to those identified in the analysis of Italian official reports (Savona and Riccardi 2015). The study also confirmed the difficulty to collect information on the mafias' activities in this field.

Germany, Canada, Australia, and the United States are at the top ranks for stable presence, uncovering a particular characteristic of mafia mobility. In fact, even in these countries the instances of territorial control are scarce, confirming that the core business of the groups still remains in their home territories (Campana 2011; Savona 2012, 12; Europol 2013a; Allum 2014; Savona and Sarno 2014). Nevertheless, in several instances the mafias have established groups functioning similarly to those in the home territories. These cases may fall within the concept of transplantation advanced by Varese (2011, 6), and they suggest a number of considerations.

First, migration is unlikely to be a decisive factor (Varese 2011, 16; Savona 2012, 14; Buonanno and Pazzona 2014). Whereas the four countries mentioned have received many Italian migrants, other important destinations (e.g. Argentina, France) lack a stable mafia



presence. Furthermore, the emergence of the mafias has often occurred at times different from those of the main migratory flows (Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 53).

Second, the countries with the highest number of references to a stable presence are democratic countries with developed market economies. The establishment of mafiosi is hardly exclusive to poor social, institutional, and economic settings. Varese has advanced the “property rights theory of mafia emergence”, arguing that mafias are likely to emerge during rapid transitions to a market economy in countries lacking reliable protection of property rights and dispute resolution systems, and when a supply of people with expertise in violence is available (Varese 2011, 23). Yet in some cases the mafias have emerged to meet demand for protection following a sudden and unregulated market boom (Varese 2011, 195). Also for Germany, Canada, Australia, and the United States the stable presence may relate to similar dynamics occurring in various areas and periods. However, the information with which to verify this hypothesis is still insufficient. For example, the unification of Germany in 1991, with the rapid transition to a market economy of the eastern part of the country, may only in part explain the establishment of the mafia. In fact, most of the reported *locali* in Germany are in the West (Sciarrone and Storti 2014, 52–53).

Third, there is strong evidence that in Australia, Canada, and Germany the ‘Ndrangheta has established formally structured *locali* similar to those in its native Calabria. In Canada, the *Siderno Organised Crime Group*, thus labelled by the Canadian authorities in the 1990s, comprises different groups connected to the ‘Ndrangheta from Siderno, a town in Calabria. The Italian authorities have ascertained that a number of *locali* are active in Toronto and Thunder

Bay and that they are closely connected with the main *locale* in Siderno: members of the various groups periodically travel between Canada and Italy (Tribunale di Reggio Calabria 2011).

In Australia, the establishment of the ‘Ndrangheta dates back to the middle of the twentieth century, although signs of criminal activities by members of the Calabrian community date back to the first half of the century (Hall 1986; Gratteri and Nicaso 2009, 233–237). In 2009, an Italian investigation recorded the meeting of a former mayor of Stirling (a suburb of Perth, Western Australia) with members of the ‘Ndrangheta in Italy. The discussion revolved around the situation of the groups in Australia, and it revealed a structure and organisation similar to the Calabrian one (Tribunale di Reggio Calabria 2011).

Many sources report the stable presence of ‘Ndrangheta *locali* in Germany (Neubacher 2013; Sciarrone and Storti 2014). Investigations show that the groups maintain the internal organisation, structures and rituals typical of the ‘Ndrangheta (Tribunale di Reggio Calabria 2011). The *locali* are also closely linked to various *locali* in Italy, which take strategic decisions and provide finances to be invested in Germany (Sciarrone and Storti 2014).

Despite some evidence of investments in the legal economy and influence over politics in the three mentioned countries, the mafia presence still takes the form of infiltration (strong connections with the home territory, low embeddedness in the host territory, involvement in illegal businesses). Sciarrone and Storti (2014, 46–51) argue that the ‘Ndrangheta has not yet developed a political subjectivity in Germany. Nevertheless, from a broader perspective, these cases reveal particular elements of mafia mobility, inviting closer examination. Whereas the

literature has analysed in depth the establishment of Italian mafiosi in the United States (among many examples, see Lupo 2008; Varese 2011), further studies should closely examine mafia presence in specific areas of Germany, Canada, and Australia.

In addition to common patterns, the results identify significant differences in the foreign presences of the four Italian mafias. The ‘Ndrangheta is the only organisation with formally organised groups outside Italy. Among the features of the Calabrian mafia favouring this diffusion, may be the relevance of blood and kinship ties, a feature almost exclusive to the ‘Ndrangheta. The connections among members of the same family may facilitate the maintenance of cultural and criminal links across countries. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that members of foreign *locali* are often composed of people from the same town in Calabria (Sciarrone and Storti 2014; Tribunale di Milano 2011).

Cosa Nostra and Camorra are closely associated with the drug trade, although with different purposes. Whereas the Sicilian mafia records a presence in different continents, particularly in the Americas, the Camorra is confined to Europe. Both mafias record references to a stable presence in a few countries, although to a far lesser extent than the ‘Ndrangheta. Connections with the American Cosa Nostra families may explain the references to a stable presence of the Sicilian Mafia in the United States. Spain accounts for most reference to a stable Camorra presence. However, the available information is limited. A recent contribution analyses two cases of *camorristi* moving to Spain. In both cases, the criminals participated in the drug trade and laundered proceeds in Spain; they also maintained permanent contacts with the homeland

(Allum 2014). Whereas some elements point out that the presence was relatively stable, the two cases also point out the interdependence between the activities abroad and in the home territory.

The findings on the Apulian Mafias show that they are present in fewer countries and mainly engage in the supply of illicit goods. Drug trafficking is by far the most important activity, followed by the illicit trade in tobacco products. References to the stable or generic presence of the Apulian Mafias are extremely rare.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study has conducted the first systematic analysis of the worldwide presence and activities of the Italian mafias, pointing out major implications for research. Given the limitations of the data, the results should be considered as a first exploratory attempt to adopt a broader, worldwide perspective to the mobility of criminal groups.

Several strategies could improve the quality of the data for future research. For example, Italian authorities or Europol could promote a better data collection on the mafias' presence abroad, by connecting references to police or judicial cases; additional unpublished reports by Italian authorities may expand the dataset; foreign law enforcement agencies could validate the results independently from the Italian sources. While demanding, these strategies may significantly improve the validity and reliability of the data and support further, more analytical, studies.

The results corroborate the findings of existing case studies, but call attention to instances of mafia mobility which have been, to date, under-researched (e.g. the 'Ndrangheta in Canada and Australia, and the Camorra in Spain). Future research should explore mafia mobility in these

countries. Similar exercises for other mafias (e.g. the Japanese Yakuza, Chinese Triads, and the Russian Mafia) may yield more detailed understanding of the dynamics of mafia movements at a global level. This study's approach may also contribute in assessing the actual nature of the activities of other groups with transnational characteristics, such as gangs and terrorist groups.

The results also have policy implications, particularly for countries with a significant presence of the Italian mafias. Whereas in recent years several sources have advocated the introduction of mafia-type association offences (based on the Article 416-bis of the Italian Criminal Code), the introduction of such offences may encounter legal and constitutional problems. As the mafias' presence abroad is different from that in Italy, the best strategy may be to develop existing mechanisms of international cooperation further, thus avoiding the creation of safe havens (Gachevska 2012; Campana 2013).

In conclusion, there is room for improvement of knowledge about the mobility of criminal groups. Stereotypes still dominate research on the mafias, as demonstrated by the difficulties of drafting Europol's report, and by a number of studies on the perception of organised crime in various countries (Young and Allum 2012; Allum 2013; Europol 2013b; Kleemans and De Boer 2013; Neubacher 2013; Sarno 2014). Better understanding of the nature of the foreign presence of the mafias would make it possible to improve data collection and, in turn, international cooperation and policies against criminal groups.

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**Table 1. Example of the dataset structure**

ID	Type of Mafia	Source	Year	Country	Type of activity					
					Drugs	LE&ML	Fug.&Arr	Gen.Pr.	St.Pr.	Oth.Ill.
1	Camorra	DIA	2000/1	Albania	1	0	0	0	0	0
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
325	Cosa Nostra	DNA	2007	Spain	0	1	1	0	0	0
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
986	Ndrangheta	DIA	2008/2	France	1	0	1	0	0	0

**Table 2. References to mafia presence in foreign countries, 2000-2012. Frequencies by type of mafia and type of activity.**

Country	Type of Mafia				TOTAL	Type of activity						TOTAL
	Camorra	Cosa Nostra	Apulian Mafias	'Ndranghet a		Drugs	Leg. Ec. & M-L	Fugitives& Arrests	Generic Presence	Stable Presence	Other illicit activities	
Spain	86	26	19	33	164	93	13	39	30	8	12	195
Germany	21	24	7	74	126	31	16	24	46	33	10	160
The Netherlands	24	17	22	31	94	65	2	12	24	5	5	113
Colombia	9	14	3	23	49	43	1	3	5		1	53
Albania	6	10	21	8	45	37	1	1	6		7	52
Belgium	6	12	5	21	44	20	4	8	20	1	3	56
Switzerland	4	9	12	15	40	5	19	4	7	8	9	52
Canada	1	8		31	40	5	2	3	15	17	4	46
France	7	12	5	16	40	5	2	16	15	3	5	46
Australia	1	1		33	35	10		1	11	14	1	37
US	3	16		10	29	6		1	7	11	5	30
UK	12	1	12		25	1	7	3	3	3	12	29
Venezuela	3	17		5	25	12	1	8	4	2		27
Romania	8	5	3	3	19	3	3	4	4	2	7	23
Brazil	4	8	1	3	16	9		2	4	1	1	17
Morocco	3	9	2	2	16	15	1					16
Greece	4	3	6	2	15	2	2	4	1		11	20
Montenegro	2		8		10	1		1	1		8	11
Turkey	3	4		3	10	9			2			11
Other countries	49	38	14	42	143	63	22	18	28	1	38	170
<b>Total references</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>1164</b>
<b>Count of countries</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>61</b>

**Figure 1. Total references to the mafias per country**

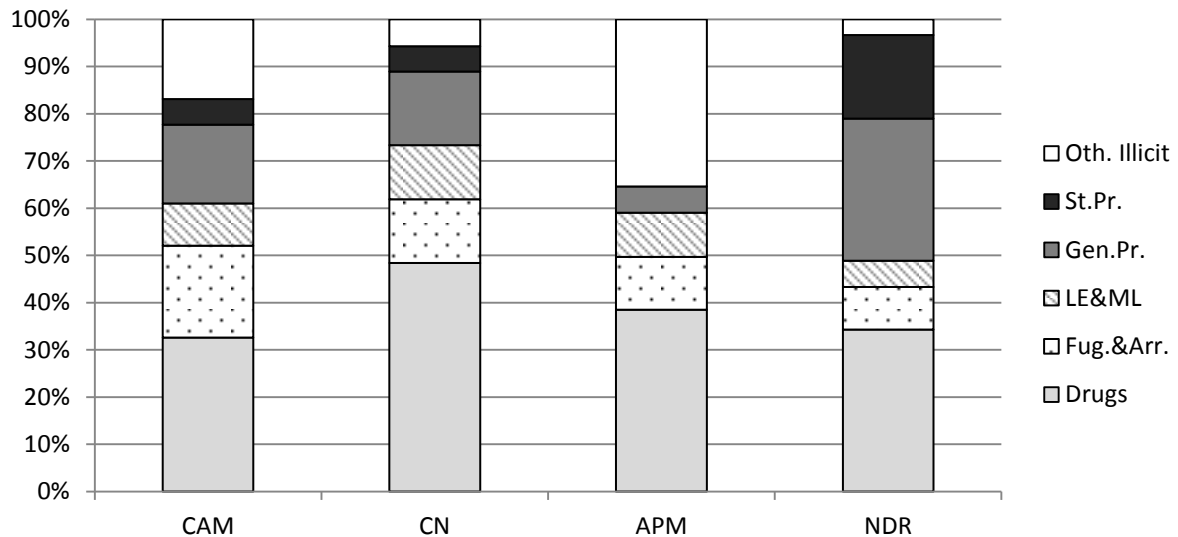


**Table 3. Pearson's correlation coefficients between types of mafia.**

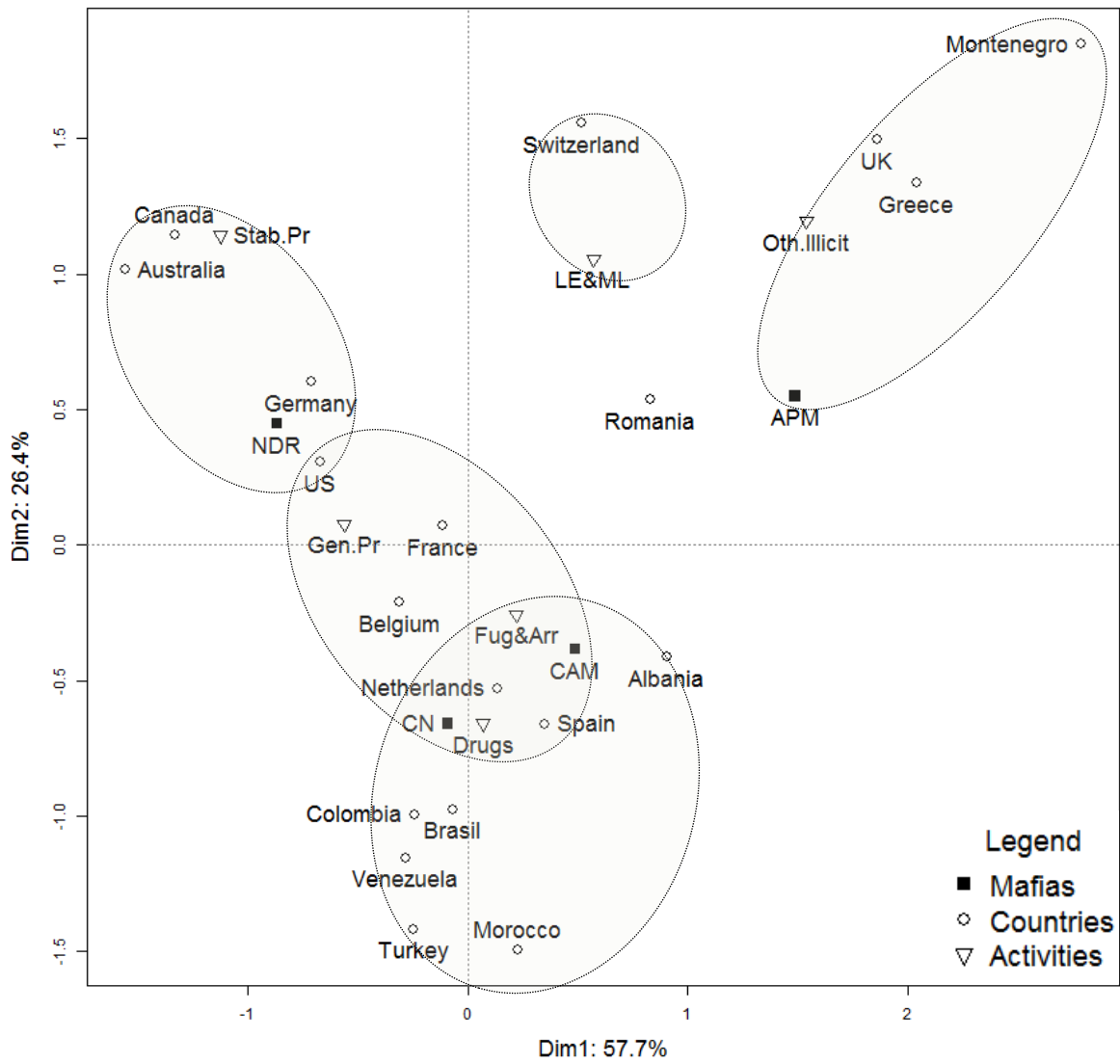
	Camorra	Cosa Nostra	Apulian Mafias	'Ndrangheta
Camorra		.661**	.572**	.468**
Cosa Nostra			.453	.664**
Apulian Mafias				.417
'Ndrangheta				

\*\* Correlation statistically significant at 0.01 level.

**Figure 2. References to Italian mafias' presence in foreign countries, 2000-2012. Frequencies by type of activity and type of mafia.**



**Figure 3. Specific MCA map of types of mafia, activities and countries (2000-2012). Dimensions 1 and 2.**



<sup>1</sup> *Localì* (“places”) is the term commonly defining a ‘Ndrangheta group.

<sup>2</sup> The analysis was conducted on R (R Core Team 2014) with the soc.ca package (Grau Larsen 2014).