

The Italian mafias in the world: A systematic assessment of the mobility of criminal groups

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Abstract This study complements existing literature on the mobility of criminal groups (mainly based on country case studies) with the first systematic assessment of the worldwide activities of the four main types of Italian mafias (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta and Apulian mafias) from 2000 to 2012. Drawing from publicly available reports, a specific multiple correspondence analysis identifies the most important associations among mafias, activities, and countries. The results show that the mafias concentrate in a few countries; drug trafficking is the most frequent activity, whereas money laundering appears less important than expected; a stable mafia presence is reported in a few developed countries (mainly Germany, Canada, Australia, and the United States). The mafias show significant differences: the 'Ndrangheta tends to establish structured groups abroad, whereas the other mafias mainly participate in illicit trades.

Keywords Content analysis, Italian mafias, mobility of criminal groups, multiple correspondence analysis, quantitative analysis, transplantation.

Introduction

The movements of *mafiosi* and terrorists across countries is a subject of increasing interest. In fact, these movements occur quite infrequently, despite sensational claims by the media. Yet in specific cases some groups have actually moved (Decker et al., 2009; Morselli et al., 2011; Varese, 2011): street gangs (for example, Mara Salvatrucha, the Latin Kings, the Barrio 18) from US cities to other areas; terrorist groups (for example, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) to the Middle East and North Africa; mafia families of the Italian 'Ndrangheta to Canada, Germany, and Australia. Nevertheless, despite growing interest in the mobility of these groups, most studies focus only on one area or country, and 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 organized crime research (Kleemans, 2014: 47; Von Lampe, 2012: 184–5). The movement of mafia groups may generate negative consequences for the host countries, such as violence, corruption, and money laundering (Caneppelle and Martocchia, 2014; Savona, 2010). Furthermore, a mafia presence may negatively affect the economy (Calderoni, 2014b; Lavezzi, 2008; Pinotti, 2012). For these reasons, recent studies have

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analysed the drivers and the nature of mafia movements (Allum, 2014; Campana, 2011; Morselli et al., 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 references to a 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 organization, which combines 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 US) report a stable mafia presence. Although 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, and the third section reviews the few worldwide studies and identifies their shortcomings. After a description of the methods in the fourth section, the fifth 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 securitization of crime control policies, and the establishment of the concept of transnational organized crime on the global agenda (Carrapiço, 2008; Woodiwiss, 2003). According to this view, organized crime groups can easily exploit the opportunities offered by globalization to migrate across countries (Sterling, 1995; Castells, 2003). Yet both views lacked strong empirical support (for further discussion, see Paoli, 2014; Sciarrone and Storti, 2014; Varese, 2006, 2011).

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

Recent studies have identified several factors affecting mafia mobility. Varese analyses the supply of *mafiosi* due to intentional (for example, search for resource-, investment-, or market-related opportunities) or unintentional movements (for example, generalized migration, a need to escape mafia wars or law enforcement), and local conditions or demand for mafia protection (for example, low trust, newly formed market economies) (Varese, 2006, 2011). Similarly, Sciarrone and Storti (2014) identify agency (intentional or unintentional decisions) and contextual factors (economic, cultural/relational, 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 et al., 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 organized crime groups exploit opportunities across countries with minimal effort (Champion, 2010; New York Times, 2014; Yardley, 2014). Scholars often express scepticism about these accounts (Campana, 2013; Gachevska, 2012; Sarno, 2014). Studies acknowledge that the groups restrict activities typical of territorial control to home territories (for example, 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, that is, 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 organization but development of an autonomous form of mafia) or of hybridization (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 categories simultaneously, and it also evolves from one type to another over time. Allum (2014: 595–7) contends that 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. Although 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 generalization of these results and this process may take several years (Sarno, 2014; Sciarrone and Storti, 2014: 54). In the meantime, knowledge about 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 organized crime, the approach may also be of interest 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). Although 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 and corruption and have an 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 a 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 mafia 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 of 110 cities of the European Union (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 on only one region, fails to distinguish among the types of mafias, and is based on the unclear sources gathered by Forgione (2009).

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 the Europol questionnaire, or had no information on the Italian mafias.

Overall, the limitations of the mapping exercises, including the report by an international law enforcement agency such as Europol, demonstrate the difficulties of analyzing the presence of the Italian mafias worldwide. The most problematic limitations are a lack of differentiation among types of mafia, 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: 219–32) 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 2000–12. 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 mafia 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 relationships 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 2000–12.

Data sources

The data came from the official reports of the Italian Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA) and Direzione Nazionale Antimafia (DNA). The DIA is a specialized law enforcement agency composed of officers from the three main national police forces. It conducts strategic and criminal investigations into the mafias with a specialized 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 the 26 District Antimafia Prosecutor's Offices.

The study examined 25 half-yearly reports by the DIA (first half of 2000 to first half of 2012) and 12 annual reports by the DNA (1999–2000 to 2011–12). Each report provides information about relevant investigations, trends, and 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 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 in the mafias developed in recent years and is associated with specific sensational events (for example, homicides, mass murders) (Sarno, 2014). Conversely, both the DIA and the DNA have more than 20 years of experience, have specialized staff, analysts, and databases, and serve as key hubs for international cooperation in criminal matters. Moreover, they provide information about the involvement of mafia groups in specific activities – such as money laundering and counterfeiting – that 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 (Berlusconi, 2014; Lombardo, 2010; 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 sought 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 caution in the collection and analysis of the data, it was impossible to address all these risks adequately. Nevertheless, these limitations should not prevent advancement of knowledge about 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 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 (for example, ‘an Apulian mafia-type organization smuggled heroin from Albania’).

Data collection started with a search for the names of the countries of the world assisted by a text-mining software (WordStat 6.1.20). Subsequently, the authors read the reports and included other relevant references (references such as ‘two Camorra members arrested on French territory’ that 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 (for example, ‘Turkey is a key hub for the international heroin trade’), that referred to other groups (for example, ‘an Albanian criminal group was dismantled while smuggling cigarettes to Italy’), or that 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. In contrast to case studies, this analysis focused on the types of mafia (for example, Cosa Nostra), because 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 that should not be considered as a single entity.

Activities were ultimately classified into six binary variables:

- Drug trafficking (Drugs): for example, drugs shipments from/through/to a country.
- Legal economy and money-laundering (LE&ML): investments in the legitimate economy (for example, restaurants, bars) 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 (for example, ‘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 organizations, families, clans, and locali,¹ or other permanent establishments of *mafiosi* (for example, ‘rogatory letters confirmed that ’Ndrangheta *locali* are present in Rielasingen, Ravensburg and Engen’). In the event 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.Ill.): 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 (for example, ‘a recent operation in Venezuela led to the arrest of three suspects trafficking drugs with a Cosa Nostra family’ was recorded 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 (for example, 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 percent of the sample was re-coded by different authors, resulting in 81 percent of identical coding. Most of the wrongly coded references concerned 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. 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

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 (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 organization and geographical distribution of criminal organizations (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 (that is, type of mafia, country, and activities) (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010: 61–4).2 This method is suited to the sample because it allows some modalities to be excluded 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 determining 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 percent 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 1,164 criminal activities. Table 2 summarizes the frequencies by type of mafia and activity for the 19 countries with more than 10 references.

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).

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). Cosa Nostra too has a large number of appearances (234 references in 37 countries), whereas the Apulian mafias is less widespread, with only 140 references in 24 countries. The Camorra and Apulian mafias mostly concentrate in Europe (82 percent and 96 percent, respectively, of total references). The 'Ndrangheta has a large presence in the EU (55 percent), North America (12 percent) and South-Central America (14 percent); it is the only mafia in Australia (9 percent). Cosa Nostra is the only organization with fewer than half of the references to EU countries (44 percent), revealing a particularly wide geographical presence, especially in South-Central America (26 percent).

As for specific countries, often only one or two mafias prevail, for example 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 four types. Camorra and 'Ndrangheta report significant concentrations: Spain accounts for one-third of all Camorra references (86); Germany records 74 'Ndrangheta references (20 percent of the total). The presence of Cosa Nostra and Apulian mafias is more homogeneous across countries.

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 with only one other mafia (the Camorra). Overall, the results suggest that the mafias tend to be present in the same countries, possibly owing to country- or activity-specific factors (for example, international drug routes). Nevertheless, other group-specific factors (for example, agency factors, the supply of *mafiosi*) may play a significant role.

Drug trafficking is the main activity of the mafias: it accounts for 38 percent 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, that is, 20 percent and 9 percent, 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 and 39 percent, peaking at 48 percent 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.

Table 2. References to mafia presence in foreign countries, 2000–12: Frequencies by type of mafia and type of activity.

Country	Type of mafia					Type of activity						
	Camorra	Cosa Nostra	Apulian mafias	'Ndrangheta	Total	Drugs	LE&ML	Fug.&Arr.	Gen.Pr.	St.Pr.	Other illicit activities	Total
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
USA	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
Total references	256	234	140	355	985	435	96	152	233	109	139	1164
Count of countries	44	37	24	39	61	44	24	29	32	14	38	61

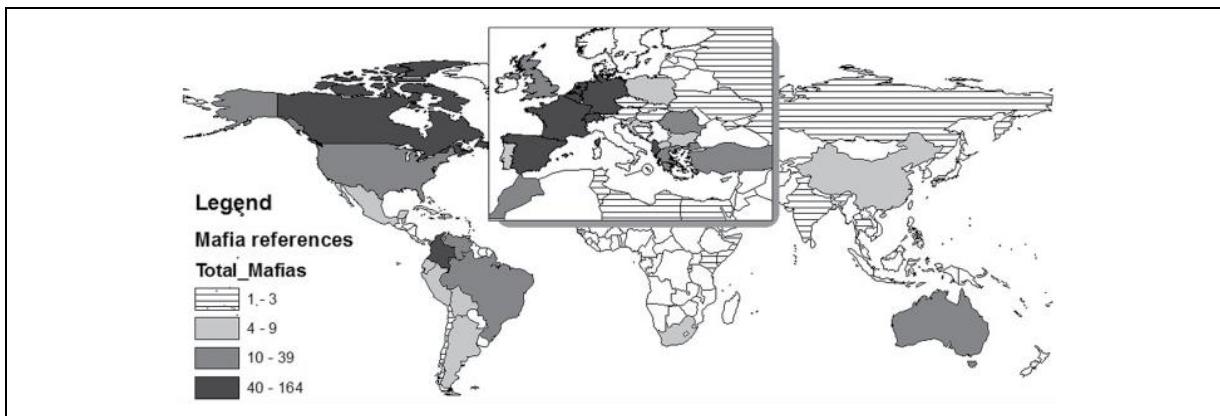


Figure 1. Total references to the mafias per country.

The specific MCA provided a clear representation of the mafias, activities, and countries. It complemented the 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 percent and 26.4 percent 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).

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*, organized similarly to the Italian ones (Gratteri and Nicaso, 2009; Sciarrone and Storti, 2014: 49; Tribunale di Reggio Calabria, 2011). The US is in the lower part of this first cluster and reports 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: for example, 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 UK, 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 East and the Far East, while the UK 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 organized 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 also included other countries famous for their financial sectors (for example, San Marino and Monaco). Several references concern 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.

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 the .01 level.

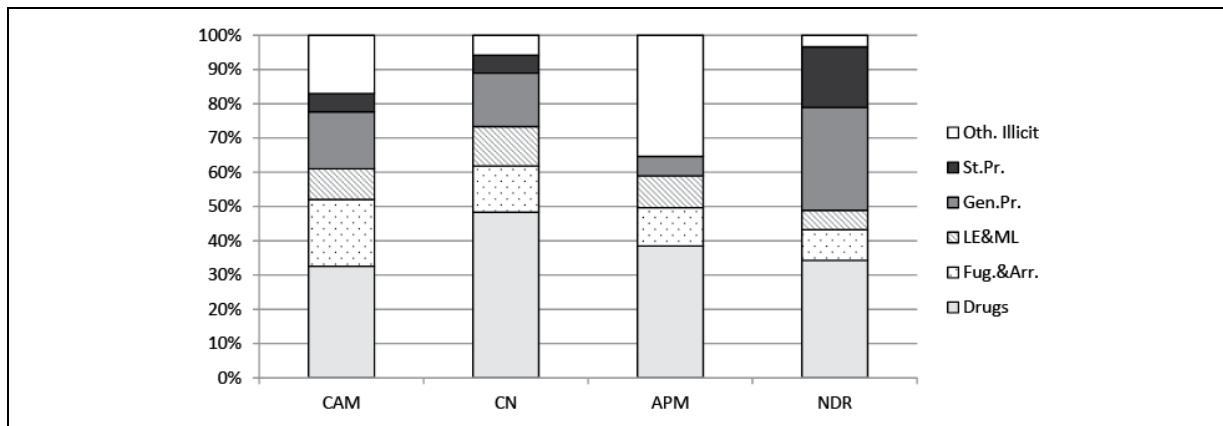


Figure 2. References to Italian mafias' presence in foreign countries, 2000–12: Frequencies by type of activity and type of mafia.

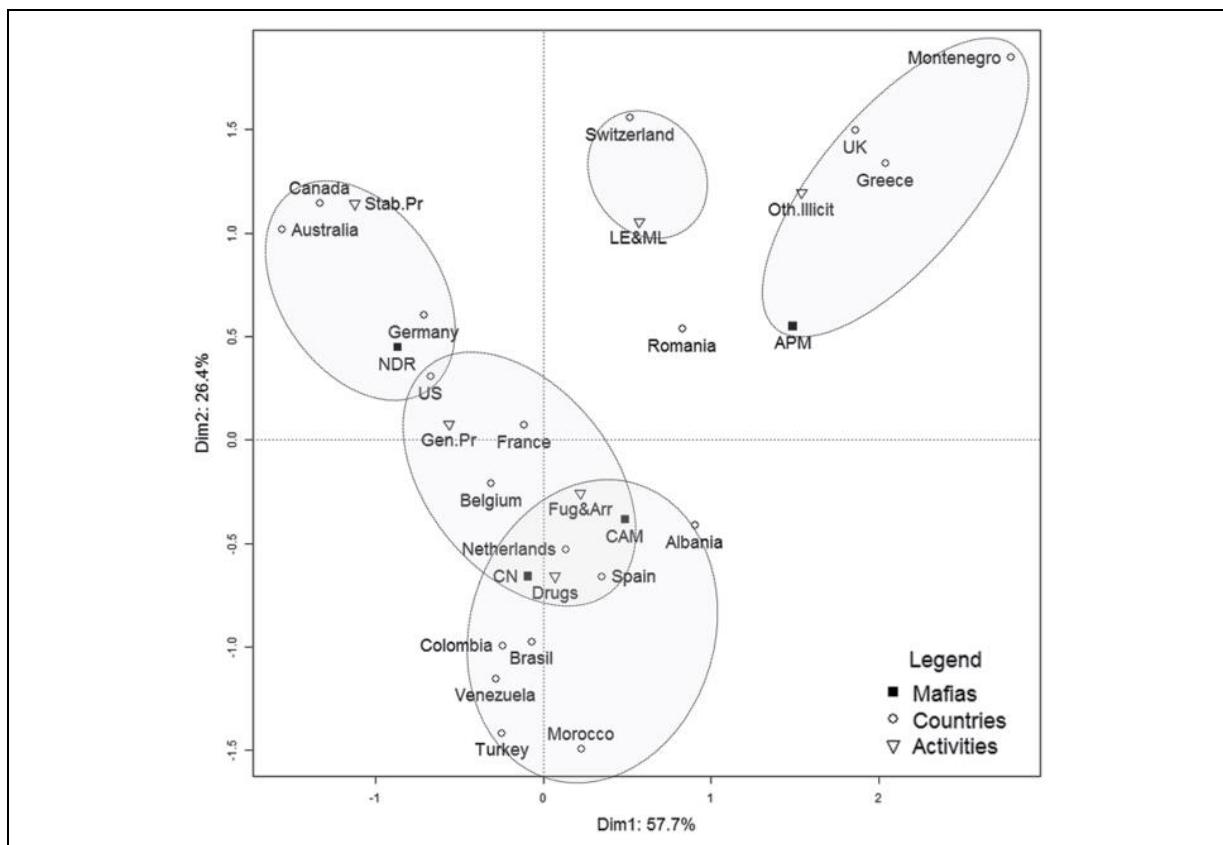


Figure 3. Specific MCA map of types of mafia, activities, and countries (2000–12): Dimensions 1 and 2.

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 on 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 as 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). Although 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 US. 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 in the country, or have hidden there as fugitives (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 (Europol, 2013b; KLPD, 2011).

Discussion

The concentration in a few countries confirms that the mafias' mobility encounters several difficulties (Morselli et al., 2011; Varese, 2011: 190–2). 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 to a picture that is more complex than that currently described in the literature. The drug trade is clearly the most important activity, while money laundering and investments in the legitimate economy are less relevant. Only a few countries report evidence of a stable presence and instances of territorial control are virtually absent (for example, private protection, extortion racketeering, loansharking, and infiltration in politics). This corroborates studies arguing that

the mafias diversify their activities across different areas (Campana, 2011; Europol, 2013a; Savona and Sarno, 2014; Savona, 2012: 12).

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 emphasized drug-related activities because international cooperation in this field relies on a long-established practice providing opportunities for high-visibility results (for example, arrests, seizures). The literature has clearly rejected the idea that large, structured groups such as mafias can dominate illicit markets (Dorn et al., 2005; Reuter and Haaga, 1989). 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 (Campana, 2013; Paoli, 2002, 2004).

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. It is possible that the law enforcement agencies have neglected these activities because they are often hidden and difficult to investigate, especially abroad (Kleemans and De Boer, 2013: 24; KLPD, 2011; Dugato et al., 2015). Two recent studies 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; Savona and Berlusconi, 2015). The study also confirmed the difficulty of collecting information on the mafias' activities in this field.

Germany, Canada, Australia, and the US are in 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 (Allum, 2014; Campana, 2011; Europol, 2013a; Savona and Sarno, 2014; Savona, 2012: 12). 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 (Buonanno and Pazzona, 2014; Savona, 2012: 14; Varese, 2011: 16). Whereas the four countries mentioned have received many Italian migrants, other important destinations (for example, 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 the demand for protection following a sudden and unregulated market boom (Varese, 2011: 195). For Germany, Canada, Australia, and the US too 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 explain the establishment of the mafia only in part. In fact, most of the reported *locali* in Germany are in the West (Sciarrone and Storti, 2014: 52–3).

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 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 20th century, although signs of criminal activities by members of the Calabrian community date back to the first half of the century (Gratteri and Nicaso, 2009: 233–7; Hall, 1986). In 2009, an Italian investigation recorded a 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 organization similar to that in Calabria (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 organization, 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 Canada, Australia, and Germany, 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 US (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 presence of the four Italian mafias. The 'Ndrangheta is the only organization with formally organized 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 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 US Cosa Nostra families may explain the references to a stable presence of the Sicilian mafia in the US. Spain accounts for most references 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 suggest that the presence was relatively stable, the two cases also point to 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 on 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 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 that have been, to date, under-researched (for example, 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 (for example, the Japanese yakuza, Chinese triads, and the Russian mafia) may yield a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of mafia movements at a global level. This study's approach may also contribute to 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. Although in recent years several sources have advocated the introduction of mafia-type association offences (based on Article 416-bis of the Italian Criminal Code), the introduction of such offences may encounter legal and constitutional problems. Because 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 (Campana, 2013; Gachevska, 2012).

In conclusion, there is room for improvement in 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 organized crime in various countries (Allum, 2013; Europol, 2013b; Kleemans and De Boer, 2013; Neubacher, 2013; Sarno, 2014; Young and Allum, 2012). 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.

Notes

1. *Locali* ('places') is the term commonly defining a 'Ndrangheta group.

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

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