



THE TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF MAFIA STYLE ORGANIZED CRIME

The structure of mafia style groups in new territories depends on the nature of the expansion

Globalized international markets are increasingly pervasive. Not only has there been a trend to export goods and services internationally, socio-economic phenomena that have been traditionally isolated to certain areas are being seen outside of their original territories. This is easily identifiable in the case of the transmission of languages, cultures, and religions from one region to another. Over time, the original and exported phenomenon is subject to different contextual factors with different actors, resulting in differences.

Mafia style organized crime groups were traditionally isolated to particular regions within Italy, but this is no longer the case. The authors observed the Cosa Nostra, ‘Ndrangheta, and Camorra operating in non-traditional regions, such as Germany. In the expansion of mafia-type organized crime from traditional regions of Southern Italy, modern mafia-type organized crime groups have taken a more globalized structure, with international linkages, partnerships, or membership. Moreover, the nature of these enterprises suggests that they are becoming increasingly transnational in nature. There is discussion within the academic community on the nature of this ‘exportation’ of mafia-type groups, and if these groups are able to replicate themselves in new territories. If they can, does the replication result in maintaining a connection (and dependence) on the original, or a break from the original group into a substantially independent organization?

While developing an ideal-type for mafia-type

In This Issue

The Territorial Expansion of Mafia Style Organized Crime	1
Intervening in the Recruitment Pathway as a Response to Organized Crime.....	2
Policy Effects in Transnational Illicit Markets	4
Monitoring Online Offenders.....	5
A Typology for ‘Polymorphous Criminal Networks’ and Diversification or Co-occurrence	6

organized crime groups is fraught with challenges on its own, there are some common characteristics such as deviance, criminality, and violence, which are recognized in some way worldwide. Historically, the Cosa Nostra, ‘Ndrangheta, and Camorra have had deep roots in Southern Italy. The Cosa Nostra tends to be structured, vertical, and pyramid-shaped while the Camorra is more fragmented and the ‘Ndrangheta has tended to be more horizontally structured. The authors present an ideal-type construct of the mafia that focuses on its violent network structure which includes varying dimensions of enterprises. These enterprises operate between the legal and illegal markets. There is also a form of organization for control over territory. While profit is one concern for these groups, the mafia is also interested in seeking power to influence the public and private spheres.

Due to its territorial nature, some academics purport that it is difficult for mafia-type organized crime to be exported, though it may be possible to partially reproduce itself in different areas. In considering the spread of the mafia, it has been difficult to point to a single causal factor. Two primary categories of factors should be considered in building any understanding: context and agency.

Context factors refer to the economic, cultural, political, and institutional structures that have the potential to foster the emergence of mafia actors. These factors include the level of opposition on the part of law enforcement and the vulnerability of particular sectors. Vulnerable sectors include those with low technological levels (i.e. construction) or sectors subject to public regulation (i.e. competitive bidding). By placing pressure on vulnerable sectors, the mafia is able to access public resources and can create conditions that affect the level of difficulty for mafia expansion. However, context factors do not alone dictate if a region is susceptible to mafia infiltration. Agency can be the result of intentional or unintentional choices, and this will greatly influence the shape of organized criminal enterprises. Unintentional agency can be the result of a crackdown by law enforcement or mafia wars that change the power balance in the region. Intentional expansion involves seeking a migration of operations to new territories to expand both business and profits.

These factors can result in varying forms of two ideal-types of expansion, based on the type of connection maintained with the original group. In *settlement* expansions, connections and subordination structures are maintained with the country of origin. Alternatively, *infiltration* expansions maintain some features of the original group but maintain few ties with the original organization. The expanded mafia group is mainly reproduced due to the presence of existing individual mafia members. However, less intentional expansion results in groups which are more predatory in nature. A final form of expansion, *imitation*, occurs when criminal groups appear to operate similarly to a particular traditional mafia group, imitating the patterns for conduct, and organization. However, they have no ties with the original group or region.

The authors illustrate the processes of mafia expansion

and infiltration of the market economy by examining the German case study. Based on the available data, and applying the contextual and agency factors discussed previously, the authors suggest that infiltration of the economy by the ‘Ndrangheta group in Germany was mainly the result of changes to the growth opportunities in the local economy, as opposed to the massive presence of Italian immigrants. The role of Italian immigrants became significant only in connection to expansion and growing strategies of the mafia, and the authors discredit attribution of mafia style organized activities due to the high concentration of the Italian population in the region.

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INTERVENING IN THE RECRUITMENT PATHWAY AS A RESPONSE TO ORGANIZED CRIME

Intervention strategies can be tailored to disrupt crime script actions along the recruitment pathway

Not all organized crime is equivalent in terms of seriousness or complexity. On one end of the spectrum are small-scale street crimes and family-based local crime while at the other end are large-scale activities relating to terrorist activity, drug cartels, corporate fraud, and human trafficking. While the majority of serious fraud has been found to be perpetrated by individual offenders, research by KPMG (2013), a major international auditing service found that the cases of internal fraud involving four or more individuals had increased from 2% to 6% between 2010 and 2012. Increasingly, organized crime groups are coordinated primarily or completely online.

Little academic attention is directed towards recruitment processes that affect membership patterns among organized crime groups. The level of seriousness of an organized crime group influences the number of individuals involved in the group as well as the complexity of relationships among members. Hierarchical, network-based, or other organization structures will also affect the recruitment pathway.

Better understanding of the recruitment pathways into organized crime allows for more tailored intervention strategies to reduce participation in organized crime. Using crime scripts of recruitment, the authors consider two perspectives of the recruitment pathway: recruiter pathways and recruitee pathways. Recruiter pathways involve processes by which organized crime groups seek out new members with particular skillsets or influence, such as individuals with government positions. Recruitree pathways are the routes through which individuals are recruited into organized crime groups. Recruitree pathways consider the motivations behind why individuals may seek involvement in organized criminal enterprises.

Both recruiter and recruitree pathways begin with the identification of willing and cooperative individuals. Target identification by recruiters is often based on the interests or skills possessed by potential recruits. Depending on the need of the organized crime group, this could include ex-military personnel with experience in explosives, or lawyers and accountants that can serve as vehicles for money laundering or tax evasion. In particular, penitentiaries may provide opportunities to establish ties with other individuals with a criminal record sufficient to warrant a term of imprisonment. The author refers to inadvertent target identification through 'serendipitous identification', whereby individuals with a range of legal and illegal orientations meet and establish social and/or criminal collaborations. Target identification by recruitrees can prove to be more challenging. Beyond the challenge of identifying a target that is not easily recognizable as an organized crime group, recruitrees must also find ways to establish trustworthiness and secure membership.

Establishing trust can be time consuming and intensive for both recruiters and recruitrees, through initiation tactics such as a demonstration of particular criminal skills or criminal conduct. This can be at the outset of joining an organized crime group, or can include regular checks to maintain a trust relationship. Establishing trust online includes additional layers to protect the identity of individuals and data. Reinforcement of trust can also be achieved through the requirement for financial investment or successful

recruitment of new members to the organization.

The author identifies five potential crime script actions in the recruitment pathway as well as several examples of potential strategies for intervention. In response to each of these script actions, the author proposes a number of corresponding intervention strategies that may be appropriate in disrupting the recruitment pathway of participating in organized crime groups. For example, the authors suggest that financial advisors and accountants are occupational groups that are at high-risk of being identified as targets. Efforts to adequately regulate these services would allow intervention efforts to reduce the likelihood that these services are used by organized crime groups. Other law enforcement strategies expand on how to interrupt the recruitment pathways through the identification and monitoring of high-risk meeting locations, raising awareness of the red-flags to becoming involved in financially-motivated organized crime and providing supports or alternatives for potential recruitment targets. Making organized crime unattractive and unprofitable can also increase the difficulty of successful recruitment of targets.

The author summarizes five intervention categories which can be used to interrupt the recruitment pathways into organized crime: (1) addressing anonymity; (2) regulating professional advisors; (3) controlling meeting places; (4) attacking recruitree motivations; and, (5) publicizing risks.

When designing intervention strategies for recruitment into organized crime groups, regards for privacy, human rights, and legislation may place limits on what is possible. Moreover, organized crime is a complex phenomenon, and requires a number of flexible and dynamic solutions to be addressed. Despite potential challenges, discussion of how to disrupt crime script actions could be explored by policymakers who seek to control organized crime activities.

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POLICY EFFECTS IN TRANSNATIONAL ILLICIT MARKETS

Identifying processes central to both its illicit and licit markets important in targeting appropriate policy intervention tactics

Market vulnerabilities are typically exploited by organized crime groups. This is an area that states can modify its regulatory instruments to minimize vulnerabilities, though predicting the effect of any anti-crime policy in complex systems is challenging. Legal trading systems in transportation and financial transactions are particularly vulnerable to illicit market activity. Moreover, since the transportation of cultural property demands specialised knowledge and resources, research suggests that organized crime groups must maintain strong ties with legitimate transportation companies. Trade in the market of arts and antiquities takes place transnationally, involves a complex web of networks, and is set within an ever-changing economic, legal, and political context. As the complexity of interdependent markets increases, so do the vulnerabilities and opportunities for market failure. While most of the market system's components may be visible, the underlying network structure may not be as apparent. Moreover, it is in the interest of organized crime groups to keep hidden or make opaque interdependencies between systems, so that regulatory controls cannot be developed to circumvent illicit behaviour.

The authors adopt a scripting approach, a series of contextualized actions that must take place in a certain order, to investigate the structure of the trade system and the impacts of policy directives on illicit trade. Merged with the network analysis method, the script-network approach is applied to develop a model of the interdependencies between the licit and illicit markets in the international trade of high-value art and antiquities. Using *between-ness centrality*, the crime reduction potential of introducing new measures that target trade functions (complexity) which cut across the industry is evaluated. Additional analysis is conducted to estimate the market's ability to circumvent or recover from crime control measures (transformity), given that there are certain inherent inflexibilities within the system overall.

Complex systems are at higher risk of error-inducing actions, as people interact with each other, as well as

other parts or processes. Legal and illegal markets are able to connect through legitimate actors at these interaction points where focused regulatory intervention is most likely to succeed. Two complementary policy directives are typically used to dismantle illicit markets, referred to as the Market Reduction Approach (MRA). By controlling trade mechanisms and reducing demand through altered opportunity structures, strengthened official regulatory systems, and fostering a reorientation of market processes towards more effective self-governance, the opportunity structure of criminal enterprise is unbalanced.

Script-network analysis requires examining the entire system, breaking down the industry into sectors with scripts, which are specific trade processes. Each script can be made up of several scenes, each of which being an activity that takes place within the specific trade process. Scenes can be further broken down into facets, which outline all possible methods to accomplish each activity within the trade process. Using script-network analysis, it is possible to identify which activities are indispensable and link different processes or actors together across the market. It is imperative that both licit and illicit facets are identified to conduct this analysis. This practice is useful when creating models that predict the impact of crime control policies may have.

In their work, the researchers argue that identifying central processes is crucial in pinpointing where policy is most likely to prevent or reduce illicit behaviour. It is also beneficial to take this analysis further by assessing the potential for spontaneous recovery – where multiple facets exist to accomplish activities. Imposed restrictions are more easily bypassed. Moreover, policy change that increases the value of the commodity provides even greater incentives to find solutions to work around restrictions and should be carefully considered to ensure only effective strategies are implemented.

Applying this methodology to the art and antiquities sector, findings suggest that crime prevention policy should target the mechanisms in the monetization of objects and taxation, though multiple challenges in implementation would be present. Reframing MRA on the structure of the trade system is argued to increase the potential for a greater decoupling of the licit and

illicit market for this sector.

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MONITORING ONLINE OFFENDERS

Using online data to identify criminal networks requires timely data collection as well as meaningful analysis

As offenders are increasingly moving to the internet to conduct illegal activities, the importance of criminologists to move beyond official records, interviews, surveys, and observations has only intensified. There is a need both to continue to develop the tools that are useful in gathering information on illegal activities taking place online, as well as data analysis techniques that are specific to the needs of research work in the areas of online organized crime.

In a networked society, information communication technologies (ICTs) have led to instantaneous communications where time and space constraints can be virtually eliminated. Communicating in many coexisting networks at the same time is now possible. This has resulted in an easier access to social networks for personal and professional purposes, including criminal networks. Moreover, the movement of criminal networks online increases the feasibility for researchers to collect and analyze structures of networks, be they formal organizations or more loosely associated illicit networks.

Research methods to collect data from the internet continue to evolve in such ways that they can be used independently and in collaboration with other techniques. Large-scale data collection, such as those needed for detailed network analysis, require researchers with knowledge in new and emerging digital technologies. Manual collection can be used by those with limited technological skills, however, automatic collection is the preferred method. Automatic data collection enables the collection of large quantities of data that can be used to study widespread phenomena and large or complex networks. Automatic collection is necessary for techniques such as social network analysis (SNA).

Using knowledge of the software DATACRYPTO, a tool that was used to monitor the sale of illicit goods and services on Silk Road, an online black-market, researchers have developed guidelines for developing future custom web crawlers, in particular for researchers who are less familiar with this technology. These include: defining the specifications of the tool by using past research as an indication of the type of useful data if possible; defining the level of automation that is needed; and, seeking a reliable developer by putting out a call for bids and managing freelancers on a day-to-day basis. A concern with data found online is the ability for information to transform quickly. Therefore, collecting information depends on timely data collection.

After collecting online data, researchers are challenged with conducting meaningful analyses of large swathes of data these techniques can generate. SNA uses relationship ties to build a picture of the network structure, as well as the position of each individual. SNA analysis can identify: nodes between actors; central individuals who act as brokers of information within the network; and possible weaknesses within organized crime networks that are otherwise increasingly robust and resilient. By studying these networks, it can be observed that complex networks enable organizations to mitigate consequences of the potential removal of individuals. While this provides a better understanding of the overall stability of a criminal network, drawing a complete map of the network becomes increasingly difficult. Online data collection techniques can assist in developing a map. However, the issue becomes less about the ability to gather large quantities of data, but to conduct meaningful analyses of the data that has been gathered. Using relational ties to uncover the structure of a network and the relative position of each actor that is made possible through SNA techniques contributes to its attractiveness as a research method.

In addition to identifying weaknesses within a criminal network, SNA provides valuable information for researchers and law enforcement agencies to identify possible targets and to reduce the inefficient use of resources. It raises ethical concerns on the rationales to be used in investigations, however. Investigators must take a position of whether to prosecute all known offenders within a network, or use more pragmatic calculations to identify which offenders to prosecute in

order to optimize efficiency in disrupting the overall network. Law enforcement agencies will continue to have to monitor this issue, and measure how networks evolve after each arrest.

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A TYPOLOGY FOR 'POLYMORPHOUS CRIMINAL NETWORKS' AND DIVERSIFICATION OR CO-OCCURRENCE

Organized crime groups are involved in four markets at once, on average

Efforts to police a particular area of organized crime may result in variations to the number of organized crime groups operating in a particular market. Some academic attention has been directed towards why organized crime groups chose to operate in one market over another. These include 'push and pull' market forces, legislative and regulatory environments that make certain markets more attractive than others, as well as the instability or vacuums created by regime change or political events. However, little attention has been given to the relationships between most illicit markets, and between illicit and licit markets.

Increasingly, it is being understood that organized crime groups rarely occupy only one market or geographic region. The diversification of geographic markets, as well as the trafficking in different types of illicit drugs has been explored, at least initially. However, there is less research on the motivations that drive this movement between routes, goods and services. Organized crime groups may be motivated to move from one market to another after certain events, such as a police crackdown or change in profitability, while other groups may seek to maintain a diverse portfolio of goods and services, as well as geographical settings, to minimize the risk of profits disruption. This flexibility of organized crime groups to adapt is seen in 'polymorphous criminal networks' (PCNs) and their motivations to replace income, expand, or increase their resilience.

Using a targeted review of relevant existing research,

the authors develop an illustrative picture of goods and services that have been observed as offered together by a PCN, inferred by studies that do not look at this variable explicitly. It is acknowledged that this exercise is not exhaustive, and any proposed taxonomy of the factors that contribute to the co-occurrence and diversification of illicit and licit market ventures undertaken by PCNs in their work is only a starting point.

As the attractiveness of one illicit market decreases, potentially due to enforcement efforts, organized crime groups are motivated to replace lost profits with other activities instead of simply ceasing to exist. However, little can be known without an understanding of the ecosystem of processes and activities that connect the various illicit and licit markets. Measuring this ecosystem is made more difficult due to the fact that police do not record illicit market efforts uniformly in many countries. It has been argued that figures generated by police data are primarily a reflection of police performance, and not an accurate representation of crime rates in reality.

While the average co-occurrence of PCNs typically involved four markets (a mix of licit and illicit markets that could range from drug production, human trafficking and extortion, to real estate, construction, or banking), there was also evidence that other organized crime groups do not have a diversification of activities. It is suggested that data on activities undertaken by organized crime groups reveals more in regards to reporting practices of a jurisdiction. It is similarly suggested that the reality of co-occurrence and diversification of organized crime is beyond the scope of law enforcement and the data captured currently within the criminal justice system.

A 'big data' approach would be appropriate for analyzing PCNs, and would require complementing and building upon existing data, allowing policy makers to move beyond measures of illicit markets through seizure or arrest measures that are largely influenced by law enforcement activity. These new datasets would need to include systematic collection of data on drugs, prostitution, firearms, and other potentially related crimes, especially if they can reveal information on poly-drug trafficking or on 'multi-crimes'. Without time-consuming and costly efforts, it is unlikely that existing datasets would be able to

provide data in the necessary format to pursue this type of analysis. Other statistical ‘markers’, or proxy measures could potentially be used to construct a composite organized crime index. Moreover, it would be important to include data on other activities that may be associated with PCNs. Public services, such as healthcare or housing, would also provide useful data. However, these areas are typically outside of the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system.

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