

‘Ndrangheta Dynasties: A Conceptual and Operational Framework for the Cross-Border Policing of the Calabrian Mafia

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Abstract Attention to the Calabrian mafia, the ‘ndrangheta, has been increasing across law enforcement authorities around the world. This paper aims at bringing forward a theoretical and operational conversation on how to best approach, from a policing perspective, what is a complex clan-based criminality able to operate simultaneously in different states. The paper will therefore formulate a preliminary framework for strategies focusing on the policing of mafia dynasties. It will do so by identifying how ‘ndrangheta clans can be studied as family dynasties, including in their assessment also the factors of family life (familiness) that can facilitate or obstruct the dynasty’s success. By looking at ‘ndrangheta clans as family dynasties, we can inform a framework that cuts through the most common policing aims and strategies against organized crime, as shared by states involved in current anti-mafia efforts.

Background

‘Ndrangheta is the collective name given to mafia clans in the Calabrian region at the toe of Italy. In the past couple of decades, Anti-mafia investigators in Italy claim that the ‘ndrangheta is the most powerful mafia both in Italy and also abroad (DIA, 2020). Indeed, most contemporary literature on the ‘ndrangheta highlights its global reach, its mobility, and its ability in infiltrating and dominating various legal and illegal

markets both in Italy and abroad (Catino, 2020; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Across this paper, the word mafia and ‘ndrangheta will be used interchangeably.

At the end of January 2020, the Italian state police presented a new project, in cooperation with Interpol, to foster coordination in the fight against the Calabrian mafia, ‘ndrangheta, across borders¹: I-Can (Interpol Cooperation Against the ‘Ndrangheta), funded by the Italian Department

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¹ Press release: <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/165e32c6e77d9ef161902306> and <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2020/Italy-and-INTERPOL-launch-global-project-to-combat-Ndrangheta>

of Public Security. In June 2020,² Interpol hosted an online meeting of police chiefs from 11 participating countries, which are Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, United States, and Uruguay. The project started as a pilot and comprises, for now, countries in different regions of the world that also rank particularly high for the numbers of requests they make to, and receive from, Italy for mutual legal assistance with regard to 'ndrangheta clans.

Departing from studies conducted by the author on the 'ndrangheta in Italy as abroad, in particular in Australia, North America, and to a lesser extent also Europe, this paper will reflect on some of the challenges that law enforcement fighting the 'ndrangheta might encounter. In fact, from a critical criminological perspective, the 'ndrangheta is not a unitary system of power, with clear strategic lines of work. Rather, it is an organization that is built on family trust, rituality, small entrepreneurialism (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016), and a particular ability, like any other mafia, to govern territories and markets (Varese, 2011). A lot of what makes the 'ndrangheta clans particularly insidious is in their relationship with the territories of Calabria (Sergi, 2018a) where the clans originate, in particular, in the areas around the capital city of the region, Reggio Calabria, and the close-by provinces of Crotona, Catanzaro, and Vibo Valentia. From Calabria, the clans receive protection and leverage for their activities elsewhere (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Even if the mobility of 'ndrangheta clans, both in the rest of Italy and abroad, has been proved in both courts of law and research (Varese, 2011; Sciarrone and Storti, 2014; Calderoni et al., 2016, 2017, 2018b; 2019a,b; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016), it has proven, and remains, challenging to imagine a coordinated answer to such mobility outside of Calabria and Italy.

This paper aims at bringing forward a theoretical and operational conversation on how to best

approach, from a policing perspective, what is a complex clan-based criminality able to operate simultaneously in different states. In order to do so this paper will argue two main points. First, this paper will be making a connection between family run enterprises, specifically family dynasties, and the 'ndrangheta clan. Second, this paper will eventually argue that by looking at 'ndrangheta clans through the lenses of family dynasties we can inform policing aims and strategies to fight this mafia also abroad. The paper will ultimately formulate a framework, in the form of a taxonomic analysis, for the policing of criminal dynasties.

The Calabrian 'Ndrangheta: mafia crimes, behaviours, structures, and mobility

There has been an enormous delay in classifying the Calabrian mafia as a mafia-type organization for the purposes of article 416-bis (mafia offence) of the Italian Penal Code; it only happened in 2010. The delayed recognition does not do any justice to a system of criminal power that is as old as the Italian state at the very least (Ciconte, 2011; Catino, 2020) and has historical roots in the many failures of governance and investments in the Calabrian region (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Eventually, as the clans use their power to intimidate, and they also instil fear and subjection into the population around them, in order to acquire financial or non-financial advantages, their status as a mafia organization could not be denied.

One of the reasons why the I-Can project has received so much traction is because judicial operations, in the past 20 years, have proved how the 'ndrangheta clans are today extremely versatile, in addition to being very mobile (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016), or actually 'hypermobile',

² Press release: <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2020/INTERPOL-hosts-police-chiefs-meeting-to-combat-Ndrangheta>.

considering that they are said to be present in over 35 nations around the world.³

The main business of Italian mafias is drugs (DIA, 2020). The 'ndrangheta's investment into the cocaine market dates back to the 1980s as many clans who had managed to accumulate cash through a series of kidnappings for ransom, climbed the ladder of criminal supremacy over other groups in Italy (primarily over the Sicilian mafia) (Ciconte, 2011; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). That cocaine is today the main revenue of the 'ndrangheta is a known fact (Calderoni, 2012; DIA, 2020). Considering the poly-crime capacity of some clans, analysts and researchers have questioned how such versatility can be sustained and justified: what are the agency factors (Sciarrone, 2009) of mafia growth? Socio-economic studies have looked at the ways in which 'ndrangheta money is moved around legal companies, businesses, and the financial system thanks to the support of the so-called grey area of professionals (Sciarrone and Storti, 2016; Sergi and South, 2016; Catino, 2018). Other studies have looked at factors for mobility of the clans (Calderoni et al, 2016; Dagnes et al, 2016). In particular, some studies have focused on countries where 'ndrangheta clans have a more stable basis, as they are territorially embedded, through the replication of some of their structures of organization and coordination, that is, Germany (Sciarrone and Storti, 2014), Australia (Bennets, 2016; Sergi 2019a,b), and Canada (Sergi, 2018b). In particular, these countries are considered countries of colonization (Varese, 2011; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Other countries, where mafia activities are instead displaced—delocalization countries—have been studied as privy to the intercontinental and globalized trades of the 'ndrangheta, that is, drugs (Sergi, 2019c). Also recent studies have explored the organization of the 'ndrangheta (Catino, 2019)

and the reach that some of the clans have into various aspects of social, economic, and political life in Calabria, in Italy, and beyond (Varese, 2006; Sergi, 2015, 2018a; Giacopelli, 2017; Chiodelli, 2018; Calderoni and Superchi, 2019).

One of the main issues with the 'ndrangheta is, unsurprisingly, the understanding of its organizational features and structures. On the one hand, as clarified in many recent criminal trials, the 'ndrangheta is an unlawful association rooted in the city of Reggio Calabria with a peculiar set of rituals, rules of aggregation, and structures of power that characterize the organization of the various clans and their interactions (Catino, 2019). On the other hand, however, the unification of the clans under an identifiable and recognizable organizational structure is a stretched concept. Especially abroad, 'ndrangheta structures take different forms, as a 2019 trial has proved in Canada as well⁴—the first trial sentencing an individual for its participation to the 'ndrangheta outside of Italy.

What many tend to agree upon, and judicial findings also converge here, is that the 'ndrangheta is a clan-based mafia; the 'ndrine are family cells. Surnames define reputation, which is also why alliances of families happen through marriage (Paoli, 2003; Pignatone and Prestipino, 2013). The family clans, which all are 'ndrangheta-type organizations in their own right, aim at acquiring socio-political and economic privileges and advantages through the expenditure of their surname and the capitalization on their reputation, usually built on violence, usually transmitted from one generation to the next through twisted forms of education and cultural manipulation (Schermi, 2015; Sergi, 2018a, 2020). This structure centred around family, but with the ability to operate cross borders for the purposes of transnational criminality or serious criminality abroad, is one of the main challenges for police forces.

³ Press release: <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2020/INTERPOL-hosts-police-chiefs-meeting-to-combat-Ndrangheta>.

⁴ <https://nationalpost.com/news/toronto-mafia-boss-colleague-given-extra-long-prison-terms-while-secretive-organization-gets-special-scrutiny>.

Methodological reflections

This paper has two objectives: first, this paper will make a case for a way of approaching the understanding of the 'ndrangheta clans as family run businesses, specifically family dynasties. Second, it will push this argument to propose policing strategies against 'ndrangheta dynasties. The paper does not draw upon fresh data, but upon literature, previous research conducted by the author, and from current policy documents.

Objective 1: the paper will argue for a new theoretical framework, which will be the combination between studies on the resilience of family dynasties, and studies on the 'ndrangheta, its norms, its structural characteristics; in brief, its criminal, behavioural, and organizational traits. This framework will be presented as a conceptual matrix. Within this matrix, the author will perform a thematic analysis on: (i) the characteristics of 'ndrangheta clans that qualify them as business family dynasties and (ii) intervening factors (as many as possible, but surely not all) that hinder or facilitate the success of 'ndrangheta dynasties—this will be called factors of 'familiness', in accordance with literature in this field. Overall, this matrix is a preliminary exercise to illustrate the value of such a combined framework in advancing our understanding of this mafia-type organization.

Objective 2: to link the new theoretical framework to inform policing approaches against the 'ndrangheta. In order to do so, this paper will operate two steps.

For the first step, the author will briefly sketch some of the principles and priorities guiding the countering of organized crime strategies in 6 out of the 11 countries participating to the I-Can project (Italy, Australia, Canada, USA, Germany, and Switzerland). This should not be considered an exhaustive research result, but rather an illustrative exercise to start identifying the main policing aims against organized crime across countries today. The six countries have been chosen on the basis of previous research and judicial results (DNA, 2019; DIA,

2020): they are those countries most concerned with the 'structures' and the family characters of the 'ndrangheta clans, as opposed to only their criminal activities. They are the countries of colonization, or at least where colonization has been somewhat proved or studied (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016; Catino, 2020). The remaining five countries in I-Can, where 'ndrangheta's reach seems to manifest mostly in relation to the drug trade, or, as in the case of France, in hybrid forms due to the proximity to the Italian borders (DIA, 2020), will obviously be interested in this discussion. In the remaining five countries the focus might be shifted on the business aspects of 'ndrangheta dynasties rather than on their structural resilience. In order to sketch the principles and priorities of organized crime countering strategies in the chosen six countries, the author has consulted the latest available communications from the authorities that participate to the I-Can project for each country. From the institutions' websites, the author has consulted the latest available reports on organized crime and/or the statements of intent that institutions declare at every internal policy cycle. The first five aims have been selected, as it was found that most of the times there were not more than four to six overall and there were repetitions as well.

For the second step, the author will link the matrix in Objective 1 with the most recurrent policing aims of the six countries as illustrated before. The results will be presented through a taxonomic analysis, where information on both domains will be classified in order to present and discuss their interaction (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The ultimate aim of this paper, as said, is to propose a new theoretical framework to look at 'ndrangheta clans, that is both critically informed as well as operationally valid for policing purposes.

Objective 1: 'Ndrangheta families as business family dynasties

As said, a lot, in the 'ndrangheta, is about family. Not only this mafia's basic unit is the family, but

also matters related to each ‘ndrina are usually dealt with through the recognized and uncontested authority of the ‘pater familias’ who often is a mafia boss as well (Paoli, 2003; Ciconte, 2011). Literature into the inter-generational organized crime involvement has pointed out that transmission of criminal careers in families are facilitated by mediating risk factors, such as the inadequate parenting skills of the mother, the reputation of the father, and deviant social learning (Spapens and Moors, 2020; van Dijk *et al.*, 2019). In ‘ndrangheta families, environmental factors contribute to a black pedagogy (Schermi, 2015): a sustained environmental conditioning of children around mafia ‘culture’, which helps replicate certain behavioural patterns (Sergi, 2018a). These behavioural patterns repeat family after family, ‘ndrina after ‘ndrina, to the point that the clans do organize their activities in coordination with one another as they recognise one another’s behaviours and territory. Because of such mutual recognition, the danger they pose is amplified. Additionally, these families are often praised for their entrepreneurialism, even though it is a form of criminal enterprise. They could, therefore, be looked at as family businesses and specifically family dynasties due to their enduring intergenerational composition.

Family dynasties are a subfield of studies in research on family business. The main point of contact between a study on the ‘ndrangheta and one of family dynasties is the recognition that dynasties, in both their business and political endeavours, benefit from a ‘brand name advantage’ that gives the family a significant edge over other non-dynastic partners/opponents (Feinstein, 2010). This advantage is one of the characteristics that sets apart a dynasty from a simple family business. Loyalty, tradition, resilience, and adaptability to change are values attributed to dynasties (Purdey and Purdey, 2016), which are also attributed to ‘ndrangheta families (Sergi, 2018a). As one of the main difference between a simple family business and a family dynasty lies in their ‘duration’, the

focus is often kept on next-generation learning from strategic planning, mistakes, and successes of their parents/relatives: both the methodology of the family business strategy and the personal skills and inclinations of individual count towards the sustainability of the dynasty (Lambrecht and Donckels, 2006). Indeed, in a dynasty, the family business is more than just a business: “balancing family aspects with those of purely management ascertains dynasty’s longevity” (Kansikas and Nemilentsev, 2010, p. 39). Multi-generational family businesses, which some of the most traditional ‘ndrangheta clans clearly are, can count on a growingly “stable corporate identity that facilitates organisational culture, while strengthening the shared beliefs’ structure” (Kansikas and Nemilentsev, 2010, p. 39).

Through a re-adaptation of Jaffe and Lane’s (2004) discussion on the ‘sustainability’ of a family dynasty, the constituent steps of a (successful) family business are identified as

‘Definition of business activities’—what does the dynasty do for a ‘living’?

- Modes of control—how are the activities run, what is the business model?
- Strategy—what are short, medium, and long-term plans?
- Enterprise Culture—is there a corporate philosophy? What are the dynasties’ values?
- Governance structure—how is power maintained to secure the legacy?

Enterprise culture has been added as an extra component to the initial script, in consideration of other authors’ additional suggestions (Denison *et al.*, 2004). Each of these steps, still following Jaffe and Lane (2004), can be matched with the most frequent traits attributed to ‘ndrangheta families throughout the years, in courts or research as well as their needs and choices when it comes to maintain their business as well as their identity alive.

Table 1 presents a matrix to summarize how ‘ndrangheta families develop the various steps of a

Table 1: Summary matrix on family business and dynasty and 'ndrangheta family and dynasty, with familiness factors for or against family's success

Constituents of Family business/dynasties	Choices/needs by 'ndrangheta families/dynasties	Familiness (intervening factors for or against family's success)
Activities and business form	Criminal entrepreneurship aimed at: profit-driven crime (i.e. illicit trades; infiltration in public procurement); power-driven crime (i.e. extortion; rackets; local political corruption).	Individual vision of founders. Individual capacities of siblings and offspring. Individual inclinations to business of siblings and offspring; individual charisma; effects of policing and legal actions on family business.
Modes of control (i.e. running the business)	Family branches in different locations; partnerships/teams with other families (e.g. ndrangheta 'locale'); endogamy.	Recognition of authority within the family; unification of voices across the family and family's partners around authority figures; potential use of intimidation or violence to restore order; establishment of protection rackets and corruption networks to reduce local costs; use of technology; face-to-face contacts; effects of policing and legal actions over modes of control.
Strategy	Sustain resilience and profits; reduce risks; avoid detection; minimize visibility of the criminal side of business; maximize social recognition; generate new wealth from proceeds of crime.	Education of next generations for implementation of progress strategies; investment in charitable causes; external consultancy of professionals; political proximity; proximity to ethnic enclaves; <i>ad hoc</i> partnerships with other groups abroad; implicit or explicit behavioural policies inside the family; strategic mobility; effects of policing and legal actions on strategies.
Enterprise culture	Social prestige; reputation; family identity across generations; historical legacy.	Rituals; jail time; <i>doti</i> (attribution of rankings); religious symbolism; cultural milieu; individual capacities of siblings and offspring; effects of policing and legal actions over the transmission of cultural norms.
Governance structure (i.e. maintaining power)	Hierarchical units of power ('ndrina); recognition of other families; horizontal coordination structures ⁵ ; mutual support and regulation ⁶ ; conflict management functions ⁷ ; reserved chambers for the elite. ⁸	Individual charisma of leaders; individual capacities/inclinations of siblings and offspring; use of technology; face-to-face contacts; conflict and mediation strategies; rule breaking; effects of policing and legal actions.

family dynasty business. The matrix identifies those factors that can facilitate or obstruct a mafia family's success. These factors constitute 'familiness'. Familiness has been considered as one of the components making up the essence of a family business (Chrisman *et al.*, 2005). Familiness is defined as the unique bundle of resources resulting from the interaction of the family and business systems (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Habbershon *et al.*, 2003). Familiness can determine the longevity of the dynasty or its end

(Cawson and Mussolino, 2014), resources, and capabilities of the family members and the family business overall, help sustain change while using family values as capital (Pearson *et al.*, 2008). Pearson *et al.* (2008) suggested that familiness has three dimensions: a 'structural' dimension (social interactions and networks); a 'cognitive' dimension (shared vision/purpose, unique language, stories, etc.); and a 'relational' dimension (made of trust, norms, obligations, and identity traits). The factors identified in Table 1 take on board these

⁵ The Locale or the Mandamento.

⁶ The Società.

⁷ The Crimine or Provincia.

⁸ The 'Santa'.

dimensions and present, although not exhaustively, how familiness can manifest in 'ndrangheta clans and influence or hinder the 'ndrina's success. In particular, attention is drawn to the results of the interaction between family values and vicissitudes with the social environment as they shape entrepreneurial choices (Cano-Rubio *et al.*, 2016). Table 1 will summarize the findings as presented in the following paragraphs. Obviously, the impact of legal actions and policing—that is, the disruption of criminal activities, the arrest of key individuals in the clan—can also have an effect on these choices and subsequent results.

When we consider 'business forms' taken by 'ndrangheta clans and dynasties, we can agree that a lot of what 'ndrangheta clans do for 'a living' falls into the definitions of organized crime, in the form of criminal entrepreneurship. We can differentiate profit-driven and power-driven choices; most dynasties are able and willing to operate in both forms of business. Profit-driven types of crime that usually involve 'ndrangheta dynasties are illicit trade (primarily drug trafficking) as well as infiltration into public procurement. Nevertheless, not all 'ndrangheta clans will have the same capacity, the same opportunities, and the same agency. From a family dynasty perspective, individual capacities and inclinations are key values of familiness that could make it more or less difficult for the dynasty to do well. This includes the individual vision and charisma of founders, leaders, and bosses. This also includes the inclinations and capabilities of offspring to continue the family business or to operate some elements of discontinuity.

When we consider the 'modes of control' of a 'ndrangheta dynasty—how the activities are actually run—we can point out that some clans work well in partnerships, while others will remain more self-involved, but maybe have branches elsewhere. The structure of a 'locale' of the 'ndrangheta, which is the coordination across three to five 'ndrine in the same territory, is certainly part of a conversation on modes of control, of both

businesses and territories. When a 'ndrangheta dynasty has branches abroad, there is a clear need to coordinate and to unify voices across the various 'branch' leaders, as well as with members of other organized crime groups in that location (non-ndrangheta). Failure to do so could be a serious threat to unity; it could lead to mafia feuds and to the need to resort to violence. The potential or actual use of violence, threats, and intimidation (commonly known as the mafia method) could be a way to impose or restore order and secure success of the dynasty. Similarly, the dynasty could be successful in establishing protection rackets or corrupted practices to lower the costs of their activities abroad. However, the dynasties choices in terms of how to maintain contacts from one location to the other (whether face to face or through technology) and the strategies, more or less conscious or tactical, to make sure that a problem in one location doesn't reverberate onto another location, will play a big role in the success of the clan.

When we look at the 'strategy'—short, medium, and long-term planning—we can focus on the willingness that some 'ndrangheta families have demonstrated to 'step up' into different markets. Many 'ndrangheta clans are resilient in their markets and activities of choice, notwithstanding legal actions against them. In order to sustain their place in the market, avoid detection, minimize risks, and maximize both profit and social recognition (i.e. showing a clean face for example), there are various intervening factors. Any future plan of a clan could be affected by the qualities, skills, and inclinations of the next generations. Education (of the next generations) to a mafia 'culture', promoting certain behaviours and expectations, might a strategic goal in some mafia families. Also, some clans might jump at the opportunity to expand their business abroad, but others might never have that opportunity to begin with. Additionally, the ability to maintain the clan in the proximity of (local) politicians and public administrators is also one of the strategic choices that can determine

whether or not a dynasty survives judicial scrutiny and/or succeeds in their power-oriented quests. If the clan has a foreign dimension (outside of Italy), this proximity might be realized through attendance and membership of Italian enclaves, such as Italian social clubs, Italian chambers of commerce, and Italian political parties abroad. This would facilitate access to funds, contracts, political circles within the Calabrian, and Italian communities of migrants elsewhere.

The element of ‘enterprise culture’—the corporate philosophy and core values—is also a constituent of a ‘ndrangheta dynasty. We could identify social prestige, as well as family identity across generations, as needs for a ‘ndrina to sustain their enterprise culture. The reputation, the brand, is fundamental for the ‘ndrina. And this reputation is built on different values, or actions or choices. In some cases, the ‘ndrina is well known for his historical attachment to rituals; in other cases, for its use of violence; and in other cases, for its particular success in maintaining a cross-border or local business. For many clans of the ‘ndrangheta, doing jail time is considered an honour and a necessary step in the career. Similarly, the use of rituals to attribute rankings, or symbolism to order sanctions, or the use of religious or traditional activities to cement relationships (e.g. baptism or ‘comparaggio’⁹). One of the intervening factors that could hinder the success of this aspect of the dynasty’s life is the ability of law enforcement to intervene in a way that would bruise the need for social prestige and the family identity kept throughout generations. If, for example, a family court orders for a child in a mafia family to be taken away from the family and for his father to lose his parental authority (Sergi, 2018a; Marchese, 2020), this can be considered a direct

attack to the social prestige of the dynasty as well as hindering the ‘correct’ transmission of family values and identity throughout generations.

When we ultimately consider the ‘governance structures’ chosen by the ‘ndrangheta dynasty—the ways in which power is maintained throughout the legacy—we notice that the combination between an ‘internal’ hierarchy within the clan together with an ‘external’ recognition by other dynasties, has been one of the main winning points of the ‘ndrangheta (Pignatone and Prestipino, 2013; Catino, 2019). While the ‘ndrina is usually hierarchical—with the capobastone, the head of the family—ruling above others, it is very important for the ‘ndrina to not only be recognized by other clans, but also to participate to coordination activities and structures in the ‘locale’, in the territory of reference. Through mutual recognition of each other and of each other’s leaders, the ‘ndrine take their place in other structures that serve different purposes. Coordination structures (e.g. the ‘Società’, the ‘Mandamento’, and the ‘Crimine’ or ‘Provincia’¹⁰) that operate to solve conflict and maintain order are also part of the reasons why the ‘ndrangheta overall, as an archipelago of clans within an organizational brand structure, has succeeded so far. They operate without interfering with business of each clan. Considering these needs, the factors that could affect success have to do with the ability of the clan—and in particular of the capobastone, the chief of the clan—of forging contacts, of showing leaderships, of being charismatic also for others. This will necessarily be also an inter-generational question, which necessarily will depend on the inclinations, ability, willingness, and—in a word—agency of offspring, their ability to follow the steps of their fathers or otherwise. Finally, the capacity

⁹ A tradition of many areas of Southern Italy; during weddings many couples nominate an important person to buy their wedding rings and become effectively a member of the newlyweds’ family; the compare (male) or comare (female) can also be the godfather or godmother of any child of the newlyweds.

¹⁰ These are all local coordination structures, above the locale and above the ‘ndrina, that operate different functions, including resolving conflicts, protecting the interests of the families by agreeing on sanctions, when needed, or supporting the resolution of bad blood between 2 or more clans.

of mafia dynasties to keep their power also needs to adapt to different communication forms (technology-led as well as face-to-face meetings). This is particularly relevant when part of the family business—or a branch—is abroad, or outside of Calabria more generally, but it is also interesting when compared with others in the same locale with whom the clan members interact on a daily basis.

By focusing on familiness—that is, on family values, events, and factors that influence family business—we can start an analysis of 'ndrangheta dynasties that has two main advantages. First, it allows to consider that not everything that relates to a mafia family is in fact criminal in nature. And in turn, this helps us to normalize the structures of these groups and to look at them as something more intimately connected with our social world. Both these advantages can be useful from a policing perspective aimed not just at repressing and disrupting, but also at understanding, preventing, and protecting.

Objective 2: policing 'Ndrangheta dynasties

After the massacre of six people from the village of San Luca in August 2007 in Duisburg (Germany)—because of a mafia feud among two families in Calabria—the greater public has been exposed not just to the presence of the 'ndrangheta abroad, but also to the limits of international cooperation in fighting this phenomenon cross-borders. Duisburg showed how the successful entrepreneurship of some 'ndrangheta clans abroad—including their ability to move across licit markets and dominate the cocaine trade—are often still ventures of individual dynasties, rather than more complex structures. In Calabria, these families act in coordination with one another and through recognition of each other's territory and business. As said, coordination structures are aimed at conflict resolution, at building alliances

when needed and feed into a common brand beneficial also to external reputation (Catino, 2019). Abroad, these dynasties have often very little strategy from Calabria ruling over their business agenda; most of the times, the links are maintained within the family, whose activities span across different branches, and not with the overall organization.

The difficulties of policing the 'ndrangheta abroad seem to be two-fold: on the one hand, there are general difficulties in policing transnational (organized) crimes, that is, coordination of policing efforts and exchange of information (Europol, 2013; Hufnagel, 2013; Sergi, 2017a). On the other hand, there are specific difficulties linked to the recognition of 'ndrangheta structures and power—political, social, economic—that eventually enable those crimes at the local level, also abroad (Sciarrone 2009; Sciarrone and Storti, 2016; Sergi, 2017b). There is, therefore, the need to understand how mafia power endures in exploiting family structures and by taking advantage, as best as they can, of the various family factors, also abroad.

Most countries fight mafias as specific forms of organized crime (Paoli, 2004; Kleemans, 2014). On the policing of organized crime, the literature is vast, and this is not the right place to recall the various debates. From an operational perspective, however, we know that the process of securitization of organized crime (Hobbs, 2013; Campbell, 2014; Carrapico, 2014) has led to calls for enhanced crime prevention and also calls for protection of communities by building resilience and by focusing on harm reduction (Von Lampe, 2011, 2016).

As said before, Objective 2 has two steps. First step is a quick scan done through the latest agendas, reports, and assessments on organized crime by authorities in Italy, Australia, Canada, Germany, USA (Federal), and Switzerland (Federal). As said, these are the six I-Can countries where the 'ndrangheta is believed to have a stable presence, that is clans that are settled there and

have their own activities there ('colonization'). The reason for this quick scan is conceptual: in fact, understanding the starting point of authorities and the institutional perceptions of organized crime, can help understanding choices and struggles in their fights against mafia-type organized crime (Sergi, 2017a). The law in action is influenced by the law in books.

Step 1 of Objective 2, therefore, is a thematic analysis across the self-declared strategic aims and objectives of these six countries in their fight against organized crime. These aims can be grouped in five macro-themes that bring these countries closer in their approaches have been identified: expose, pursue, protect, disrupt, and prevent. Due to the wide applicability of many of the objectives these six countries declare, it is safe to assume these macro-areas can be applicable and relatable to objectives of other countries too. Table 2 provides the summary of this quick scan, by giving details of each countries' declared objectives and how they can be grouped with objectives from other countries.

Indeed, countries wish to expose, pursue, protect, and prevent organized crime. Indeed, policing work is interconnected and pursues different strategies at once, especially when it is intelligence-led (Maguire and John, 2006; Ratcliff, 2016). These themes confirm the most common language used in policing national threats in recent times. National strategies against organized crime based on these macro-areas might lead to a reduction of the complexity of the phenomenon of organized crime (Sergi, 2017a), but they still are useful categories for the argument made in this paper. In particular, it is interesting to observe that these five main aims also call for strategic interventions in reducing the harm of organized crime in the short, medium, and long-term, recovering and removing access to the proceeds of crime, disrupting criminal networks and reducing their reach in licit and illicit markets as well as politics and finance, and improving the quality of information sharing.

Step 2 of Objective 2 wishes to link together the theoretical framework on the 'ndrangheta dynasties and its five components, with the five themes from the quick scan carried out in step 1, to advance a preliminary operational application of this framework to policing practices and objectives against organized crime. Table 3 presents the preliminary results of the taxonomic analysis carried out to mix the results of both exercises. This is a preliminary analysis showing how the novel theoretical framework seeing 'ndrangheta clans as family dynasties can contribute to the drafting of specific national policing strategies within more general strategic goals against organized crime that each state has. The table presents policies and interventions that authorities might consider across the different lines of interventions. At this stage, these are merely examples, even when they suggest specific policies. For example, when under the intersection between 'Enterprise Culture' and 'Prevent' there is a suggestion to 'Identify educational tools to break the chain of cultural transmission; offer alternatives', the reference could be to the Italian family law procedure that offers to sons and daughters in known mafia families an alternative of a different educational path, at times far away from the family and Calabria (Sergi, 2018a). This policy is not without criticism and cannot just be transferred everywhere, but its core objective might object of further discussion at policy level also abroad. This analysis is obviously non exhaustive; in fact, some cells have been left blank because some policies are complex and need to be explored in more details to go forward and apply to each country and each institution's needs and capabilities.

Conclusion

The 'ndrangheta is a complex mafia-type system based on family dynasties. Especially abroad, where the density of clans is scarcer, they often, but not always, work with other families, and often often engage in poly-crime businesses. Several factors are often overlooked when it comes to

Table 2: Summary of primary objectives and strategies in countering organized crime across six I-Can Project Partners

Italy ¹¹	Australia ¹²	Canada ¹³	Germany ¹⁴	USA ¹⁵	Switzerland ¹⁶
Define structures, articulations and connections across criminal groups, their MO and objectives through intelligence. (Expose)	Investigate complex, transnational, serious and organized crime through risk and threat management assessments (Expose)	Disrupt illicit markets by also reducing demand of illicit products (Disrupt)	Suppression of criminal activities (Pursue)	Elimination of (transnational) organized crime groups (Pursue)	Involve private-sector Partnerships (e.g. auditing and checks on companies) (Prevent)
Countering of economic crimes linked to organized crime. (Pursue)	Reduce the cost of organized crime (Protect/ Disrupt)	Improve criminal intelligence to paint more truthful pictures including economic crimes (Expose/prevent)	Prevention of criminal recruitment and involvement (Prevent)	Expand criminal accountability for a number of predicate offenders (Pursue)	Promote closer cooperation between the immigration authorities, tax authorities, and labour inspectorates. (Protect/Prevent)
Coordinate preventative policing activities to disrupt criminal plans (Prevent)	Disrupt criminal networks (Disrupt)	Reduce harmful effects of criminal activities. (Protect/ disrupt)	Prioritization of criminal investigations through specialized approaches (Pursue/ prevent)	Strategically remove access to illegal proceeds (Prevent)	Exchange information and ensure appropriate measures are taken at all levels. (Prevent/ disrupt)
Protect economy and society from infiltration and exploitation by organized crime. (Protect)	Build resilience in potential targets through a range of collaborative measures and partnerships (Protect)	Enhance public awareness about the effects of organized crime in society and economy. (Protect/ prevent)	Understanding of OCGs structures (clan crime, cyber-crime, networks, etc.) (Expose)	Reduce the influence and reach of OCGs in politics, economy and society at large (Protect/ disrupt)	Exploit the current language and cultural divide across criminal groups for policing/disrupting purposes (Pursue/expose)

understand this mafia system. Among the things that get overlooked, for example, is the capacity, alongside with the willingness, of single individuals within the different families to fulfil the vision and the path set out by their predecessors in the dynasty. Individual choices, their attitudes, and visions and ultimately their agency, can affect the ways in

which the family responds to changes and adapts to external social environments (i.e. policing interventions). By focusing on ‘familiness’—events and vicissitudes affecting family equilibria—as an essential component of the reasons why some mafia families excel and some perish or decline in power, can help identify patterns of change across families

¹¹ Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, institutional agenda, no date, website.

¹² Australian Federal Police, institutional strategy, 2019, website.

¹³ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, annual report, 2019, website.

¹⁴ BKA—Bundeskriminalam, statement agenda, no date, website.

¹⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, institutional strategy, no date, website.

¹⁶ Fedpol, annual report, 2019, website.

Table 3: Taxonomic analysis: examples of policing 'ndrangheta dynasties

	Activities and business form	Modes of control	Strategy	Enterprise culture	Governance structure
Pursue	Prosecute criminal activities (profit and power driven)		Target mafia investments in different markets		Prosecution of criminal enterprise and mafia modus operandi (mafia method and behaviours)
Prevent			Establish partnerships with local interest clubs (e.g. Italian Chamber of Commerce, Social clubs, etc.)	Identify educational tools to break the chain of cultural transmission; offer alternatives.	Enhance transparency in policies for political donations.
Disrupt	Exchange information across intelligence platforms cross-country	Promote <i>ad hoc</i> joint task forces across states	Strengthen anti-money laundering norms and enhance range of confiscation procedures		Identify 'weak' personalities in mafia dynasties
Protect		Promote partnerships with embassies and consulates abroad to enhance social recognitions of minorities		Identify civil/family law tools to break the chain of cultural transmission by protecting the children	Strengthen gifts and hospitality regulations mindful of cultural differences
Expose	Avoid limiting investigations only to 'serious' crimes, promote a whole-of-mafia behaviours countering strategy	Family network analysis (cross-country if needed)	Identify specific vulnerabilities in country's legislations that facilitate mafia infiltration at all levels of criminality	Make use of cultural analysts/ anthropologists to identify specific aspects of mafia culture and their transmission in specific families	Identify procedures to detect infiltration in public work

and also understand better the reasons for alliances, feuds, mobility, strategies, and also lack of strategies.

This paper probably stops right when the analysis is becoming more interesting. The paper wishes to be a preliminary exploration of the framework of family dynasties applied to mafia clans in the 'ndrangheta for the purposes of application to policing strategies. It wishes to prompt reflections on how some of the peculiarities of the 'ndrangheta can be read through the lenses of their

being family dynasties. In the past years, the author has observed a worrying tendency to over-personify the 'ndrangheta, as a unique structure with one voice, one type of agency throughout. From a critical perspective, it is extremely important to avoid that a new 'monster' gets created, while trying to fight against organized crime infiltration and structures. The 'ndrangheta is and remains a complex system of behaviours adopted by family dynasties and their coordination structures. It is still operated by real men and women

embedded in social and economic environments around them. Giving 'agency' to criminal organizations, as if they were unified and rational entities, strategically detached from the environments they live in, allows to identify them as 'enemies' and misses the point of their criminality overall. This is a very common outcome of securitization processes in national security policing (Hobbs and Antonopoulos, 2013; Legrand and Jarvis, 2014). This needs to be avoided as it tends to underplay the role that both internal and external factors play within these clans.

We have historically seen how mafia stigmatization can affect migrant communities by creating ethnic prejudices and division. This was certainly the case of Sicilians/Italians in America (Lupo, 2002) and also of Southern Italians in Australia (Ricatti, 2018). On the one side, the ethnic component of mafia power is often misunderstood and overstated; on the other side, the ability of mafia groups, including the 'ndrangheta, to manipulate and twist cultural codes cannot be dismissed. An approach that looks at familiness allows to identify many mafia behaviours as business choices within the dynasty's cultural milieu. This cultural milieu however is not homogenous, as it is the product of the family dynamics. This approach also allows countries where mafia dynasties are not settled but mainly or solely 'do business' to recognize this variety of mafia manifestations. Indeed, countries where 'ndrangheta clans mainly or only 'do business' could focus mostly on the business side of the clans, aware that a business carried out by a dynasty is never simply a business, but has the 'family' dimension in it.

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