

1) The Structure of Criminal Connections: The Russian-Italian Mafia Network

Federico Varese

Abstract:

The article analyses the extent to which organized crime groups that migrate to new territories develop into fluid networks of relations or into hierarchical organizational structures. The data come from an extensive police investigation into an attempt by a Russian mafia group to open a branch in Rome in the mid-nineties, and include a complete set of phone intercepts over nine months. Using quantitative content analysis, multiple correspondence analysis (*homals*) and actor-oriented models of network evolution, the paper reconstructs the motivation for migration and links it to the resulting organizational structure.

When a key motivation for the migration is to monitor investments in the legal economy, the group is likely to be hierarchically structured yet poorly integrated. The paper contributes to broader debates on globalization and organized crime by discussing agency dilemma, trust and the role of women.

2) The Quantitative Analysis of Phone Intercepts: a New Framework

Federico Varese and Paolo Campana

Abstract:

We present a new approach to the study of the activities and internal structure of criminal organizations based on the systematic analysis of wiretap evidence. We propose to analyze wiretaps applying four different methods: quantitative content analysis, correspondence analysis, network analysis and stochastic models for longitudinal network data. We believe that—in the presence of a large enough set of phone conversations—this approach is complementary and partially superior to traditional approaches used for the study of criminal organizations, such as fieldwork, retrospective interviews with convicted criminals, use of official statistics, use of court records and descriptive network analysis. It promises to yield insights into the internal division, the informal hierarchy, and factions of the group. Furthermore, a variety of hypotheses on tie formation at the micro level can be tested. Examples are mainly drawn from a study of a Russian mafia group operating in Rome in the 1990s.