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SILVIA CIVITELLA

INTELLIGENCE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL MAFIA-LIKE CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Preface by

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*If you are neutral in situations of injustice,
you have chosen the side of the oppressor.*

Desmond Tutu

*E così conoscere non è più una traccia di impegno morale.
Sapere, capire diviene una necessità. L'unica possibile
per considerarsi ancora uomini degni di respirare.*

Gomorra, Roberto Saviano

*A: "You need to remember there's what people wanna hear,
there's what people wanna believe, there's everything else,
then there's the truth".*

*E: "And since when is that okay? I can't even believe
you're saying this to me. The truth means responsibility".*

A: "Exactly, which is why everyone dreads it".

The international

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PREFACE

In short, ‘intelligence’ could be defined as the discipline that allows going beyond the facts. In other words, collecting, filtering, and integrating the data appropriately give the intelligence operator an overview of the scenario that could not be gotten otherwise.

Since the XX century, one of the major issues was finding the data to be collected and transferred to the central offices. After the creation of the Internet, the issue was exactly the opposite: collecting data was no longer a problem, as tons of it were available on the Web in seconds, but its categorization started to be critical. Storing bulk of data without any methodology would produce the loss of the data itself. Imagine you have hundreds of books but, instead of categorizing them with defined criteria (for example assigning a number and ordering them progressively), you just throw these volumes in a room without any order: that information would be lost. That is exactly what is happening in intelligence: books are arriving, but so far, no methodology has been applied to categorize them efficiently. Furthermore, analytical intelligence is a collective work: many operators collect and string data according to their personal views and end up considering some of this data relevant and others not. This is already confusing when operating at a national level; the work is even harder at a global level. Nowadays, one of the hardest challenges of intelligence is finding a unique way to lead all operators to collect and classify data.

The added value of this book is exactly this: a solid attempt to find out a criterion based on which complex phenomena (such as mafia-like

organizations) could be ordered and analyzed. A fundamental step is to identify those factors that make it possible to describe and catalog a phenomenon. The validity of a database thus depends on the accuracy of the chosen parameters. What are the factors that should be isolated to define how much a mafia-like family is dangerous (threat assessment)? Should be considered more threatening the criminal family with a larger number of members? It could be a valid factor, but even the crimes this family is used to perpetrate could be relevant. What about the expansion of its influence, or the companies that are used to perpetrate crimes such as money laundering? Which is more dangerous, a criminal family that traffics in drugs or a small group involved in money laundering and infiltrating politics?

This dissertation presents a model of analysis that includes all the data that is fundamental to analyze and then classify a complex phenomenon, such as the Italian mafias, from a global perspective. If such methodology would be globally used, different 'Ndrangheta criminal families could be compared among them to identify the best target on a strategic dimension. Also, keeping the list of the members of a single criminal family would allow us to recognize the ones arrested, and to determine the assets seized (to cripple criminal logistics). This would also enable different police agencies to have an up-to-date situation of the different criminal groups, such as their location, and the extension of their influence, in Italy or abroad. Although we have the right technology nowadays, we must not forget that nothing can replace human intelligence. And the knowledge of the enemy is essential in every struggle: "Know the enemy as you know yourself, and even in one hundred battles you will not be a loser".

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: criminal intelligence, model of analysis, mafia-like criminal organizations

The Italian Mafias no longer operate only at a national level, but their interests and traffics extend worldwide. They have taken advantage of globalisation by exporting their methods and activities and exploiting those territories with more favourable conditions. The globalised dimension of the Mafias inevitably requests countries to cooperate and take necessary measures. Therefore, criminal intelligence is important to understand the Mafias' complex structure, extension, and high level of infiltration of different sectors and help law enforcement develop effective contrast strategies. Although several countries have made a lot of progress in fighting against this type of criminality, some limitations and issues remain. For this reason, an innovative model of analysis is a possible solution to some of such limitations. The proposed model consists of a central database that can provide an overall view of mafia-like criminal organizations through the analysis of structured data. The organization of information in a structured way allows the analyst to identify the existing relations, understand the configuration and characteristics of a criminal group, and develop the most suitable strategy for the context. It also enables to examine the results of undertaken actions, direct future investigations, and monitor the mafia-like organizations' evolution over time. In the future, this model of analysis could give useful elements for intelligence not only at the tactical and operational levels but also at the strategic one. Furthermore, it could be adapted and used to analyse other forms of organized crime.

INTRODUCTION

The Italian Mafias no longer operate at a national level, but their interests and traffics extend worldwide. They have taken advantage of globalisation by exporting their methods and activities and exploiting those countries with more favourable conditions. The globalised dimension of the Mafias inevitably requests countries to cooperate and take necessary measures. For many years, the Italian judicial system and police forces have felt the necessity for increasing cooperation among all the institutional actors appointed to contrast mafia-like organizations. Therefore, criminal intelligence is important to understand the Mafias' complex structure, extension, and high level of infiltration of different sectors and help law enforcement develop effective contrast strategies. Although several countries have made a lot of progress in fighting against this type of criminality, some limitations and issues remain. The aim of this dissertation is to present a model of analysis as a possible solution to some of such limitations and thus support countries adopting effective strategies to contrast mafia-like organizations.

Basing this dissertation on the analysis of documents, reports, literature on the Mafias and the study of methodologies adopted in the field of intelligence against mafia-like criminal organizations, the chapters deal with the following.

The first chapter is about intelligence and the different phases of the intelligence cycle. It describes also how law enforcement agencies conduct intelligence activity to prevent actions from already known

crimes, to interpret criminal realities that are still evolving, and to take effective countermeasures to tackle them. Finally, it highlights the importance of criminal intelligence in understanding and countering mafia-like organizations.

The second chapter describes the four Italian Mafias' structures and characteristics: 'Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra, Camorra, and Sacra Corona Unita and organized crime in Puglia and Basilicata. It underlines how they have been able to take advantage of globalisation, exporting their methods and activities abroad. Particular focus is placed on the 'Ndrangheta, whose power and dangerousness emerge not only from the volume of business it achieves but also from its ability to infiltrate and influence civil society and public administrations.

The third chapter describes the importance of international police cooperation to analyse mafia-like organizations' extension and evolution and implement effective contrast strategies. It emphasises Italy's valid contribution to the international investigations and intelligence activity against the Mafias. Although countries have taken several initiatives to contrast mafia-like organizations, some limitations to intelligence gathering and analysis remain. Eventually, it underlines the necessity to adopt tools that can offer an answer to these problems.

The fourth chapter introduces a model of analysis of structured data as a possible solution to some of the limitations explained in the previous chapter. It explains how this innovative tool could work and allow to overcome the current shortcomings in anti-mafia intelligence.

CHAPTER I

THE INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

1.1. What is intelligence?

The word “intelligence” comes from the Latin *intelligo*, *inter-legere* (to choose, to select, to discern), and is connected to the Greek *lego*⁽¹⁾. Intelligence is a way of collecting and analysing information to support a decision-making process. Nowadays, intelligence is a tool used by many actors, such as States, businesses, and law enforcement agencies to collect and disseminate information relevant for the development of effective strategies. For example, intelligence can be used by State to ensure its national defence and security; by a business to understand the market trends and anticipate their competitors’ moves; and by law enforcement agencies to study a criminal phenomenon and its evolution to plan countermeasures.

To put it simply, the objective of intelligence is knowledge. Possessing knowledge can be equated with having power. Having the most up-to-date and accurate information on the adversaries’ intentions and capabilities, amongst other things, is key in order to obtain an advantage over them. Perhaps the earliest recognized text on intelligence-based actions is “The Art of War” written in the 5th Century BC by Sun Tzu.⁽²⁾ Here is a significant quote from his work: “There

(1) Di Paolo A. M., *Elementi di Intelligence e tecniche di analisi investigativa*, Laurus Robuffo, 2000.

(2) UNODC, *Criminal Intelligence Manual for Analysts*, United Nations, New York, April 2011.

is a saying: knowing the other one and yourself, a hundred battles without risks; not knowing the other one but yourself, sometimes a victory, sometimes a defeat; not knowing either the other one or yourself, every battle is a certain risk” (Sun Tzu, 5th Century)⁽³⁾. Although the work is presented as a treatise on military art, some principles are also applicable in other fields. Tactic and strategy are the key elements to gain victory, combined with the knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and oneself.

It is important to distinguish between the terms “analysis” and “intelligence”. Intelligence is commonly understood as a process that enables someone to give a meaning to all the information gathered, through the collection, evaluation, and analysis of information. Whilst analysis is a stage in the process, consisting in the interpretation of facts and the formulation of inferences.⁽⁴⁾ This process is continually developing and evolving in response to changes in social and cultural factors, technology, organizational needs, and new levels of analytical skill.⁽⁵⁾ The growth in technology has proved to be a massive change in the methods of information-gathering, which in turn created a demand for new approaches to analysis and intelligence.⁽⁶⁾ This has resulted in benefits in the speed of information gathering and dissemination, as well as in the number of sources available. But at the same time, it has led to some issues: the huge amount of collected data can be confusing, and it becomes more and more difficult to assess the quality of them.

Intelligence always involves a degree of interpretation resulting in an inevitable level of speculation and risk. The latter depends on the quality and quantity of information analysed.⁽⁷⁾ Intelligence is usually divided into two areas, concerning the timing and modalities of obtaining data:

(3) Sun-tzu, *L'arte della guerra*, Milano, RCS Libri 1997, p. 35. Original text: “C’è un detto: conoscere l’altro e se stessi – cento battaglie, senza rischi; non conoscere l’altro, ma conoscere sé stessi – a volte, vittoria, a volte, sconfitta; non conoscere l’altro, né sé stessi – ogni battaglia è un rischio certo”. (Freely translated by Silvia Civitella).

(4) Di Paolo A. M., op. cit., p. 22.

(5) UNODC, op. cit., p. 3.

(6) *Ivi*, p. 5.

(7) *Ivi*, p. 9.

- Operational intelligence: it focuses on short-term or immediate goals and specific cases;
- Strategic intelligence: it focuses on long-term aims and the study of phenomena in general, to plan policy activities and strategies.

Although the different methods and objectives, the operational and strategic intelligence are not to be considered separately because are interdependent: a good knowledge and development of the first one can provide an important source to better understand a phenomenon from a strategic perspective.

1.1.1. *The intelligence cycle*

Intelligence is a process consisting of different steps that form the intelligence cycle. Intelligence is an activity that includes tasking an assignment and planning the future action, collecting the information, processing and exploiting the gathered data, analysing the information and producing a report, and disseminating the results.



Figure 1. *The intelligence cycle* (Source: Google)