

**'Ndrangheta dynasties: a conceptual and operational framework for the cross-border policing of the Calabrian mafia**

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# 'Ndrangheta dynasties: a conceptual and operational framework for the cross-border policing of the Calabrian mafia

## 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 organised 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 Antimafia 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 borders<sup>i</sup>: I-Can (Interpol Cooperation Against the 'Ndrangheta), funded by the Italian Department of Public Security. In June 2020<sup>ii</sup>, 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.**

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3 Departing from studies conducted by the author on the ‘ndrangheta in Italy as abroad, in  
4 particular in Australia, North America and to a lesser extent also Europe, this paper will reflect on  
5 some of the challenges that law enforcement fighting the ‘ndrangheta might encounter. In fact, from  
6 a critical criminological perspective, the ‘ndrangheta is not a unitary system of power, with clear  
7 strategic lines of work. Rather, it is an organisation that is built on family trust, rituality, small  
8 entrepreneurialism (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016), and a particular ability, like any other mafia, to  
9 govern territories and markets (Varese, 2011). A lot of what makes the ‘ndrangheta clans particularly  
10 insidious, is in their relationship with the territories of Calabria (Sergi, 2018a) where the clans  
11 originate, in particular, in the areas around the capital city of the region, Reggio Calabria, and the  
12 close-by provinces of Crotona, Catanzaro and Vibo Valentia. From Calabria the clans receive  
13 protection and leverage for their activities elsewhere (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Even if the mobility  
14 of ‘ndrangheta clans, both in the rest of Italy and abroad, has been proved in both courts of law and  
15 research (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016; Varese, 2011; Sciarrone and Storti, 2014; Calderoni et al., 2016;  
16 2017; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b), it has proven, and remains, challenging to imagine a coordinated answer  
17 to such mobility outside of Calabria and Italy.

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29 This paper aims at bringing forward a theoretical and operational conversation on how to best  
30 approach, from a policing perspective, what is a complex clan-based criminality able to operate  
31 simultaneously in different states. **In order to do so this paper will argue two main points. First, this  
32 paper will be making a connection between family run enterprises, specifically family dynasties, and  
33 the ‘ndrangheta clan. Second, this paper will eventually argue that by looking at ‘ndrangheta clans  
34 through the lenses of family dynasties we can inform policing aims and strategies to fight this mafia  
35 also abroad. The paper will ultimately formulate a framework, in the form of a taxonomic analysis,  
36 for the policing of criminal dynasties.**

### 46 **The Calabrian ‘ndrangheta: mafia crimes, behaviours, structures and mobility**

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There has been an enormous delay in classifying the Calabrian mafia as a mafia-type  
organisation 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 (Catino, 2020; Ciconte, 2011) 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

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3 population around them, in order to acquire financial or non-financial advantages, their status as a  
4 mafia organisation could not be denied.  
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6 One of the reasons why the I-Can project has received so much traction is because judicial  
7 operations, in the past 20 years, have proved how the ‘ndrangheta clans are today extremely versatile,  
8 in addition to being very mobile (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016), or actually *hypermobile*, considering  
9 that they are said to be present in over 35 nations around the world<sup>iii</sup>.  
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13 The main business of Italian mafias is drugs (DIA, 2020). The ‘ndrangheta’s investment into  
14 the cocaine market dates back to the 1980s as many clans who had managed to accumulate cash  
15 through a series of kidnappings for ransom, climbed the ladder of criminal supremacy over other  
16 groups in Italy (primarily over the Sicilian mafia) (Ciconte, 2011; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). That  
17 cocaine is today the main revenue of the ‘ndrangheta is a known fact (Calderoni, 2012; DIA, 2020).  
18 Considering the poly-crime capacity of some clans, analysts and researchers have questioned how  
19 such versatility can be sustained and justified: what are the agency factors (Sciarrone, 2009) of mafia  
20 growth? Socio-economic studies have looked at the ways in which ‘ndrangheta money is moved  
21 around legal companies, businesses and the financial system thanks to the support of the so-called  
22 grey area of professionals (Sciarrone and Storti, 2016; Catino, 2018; Sergi and South, 2016). Other  
23 studies have looked at factors for mobility of the clans (Calderoni et al, 2016; Dagnes et al, 2016). In  
24 particular, some studies have focused on countries where ‘ndrangheta clans have a more stable basis ,  
25 as they are territorially embedded, through the replication of some of their structures of organisation  
26 and coordination, i.e. Germany (Sciarrone and Storti, 2014), Australia (Sergi 2019a; 2019b; Bennetts,  
27 2016); Canada (Sergi, 2018b). In particular, these countries are considered countries of colonisation  
28 (Varese, 2011; Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016). Other countries, where mafia activities are instead  
29 displaced – delocalisation countries - have been studied as privy to the intercontinental and globalised  
30 trades of the ‘ndrangheta, i.e. drugs (Sergi, 2019c). Also recent studies have explored the organisation  
31 of the ‘ndrangheta (Catino, 2019) and the reach that some of the clans have into various aspects of  
32 social, economic and political life in Calabria, in Italy and beyond (Sergi, 2015; 2018a; Varese, 2006;  
33 Chiodelli, 2018; Giacomelli, 2017; Calderoni and Superchi, 2019).  
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50 One of the main issues with the ‘ndrangheta is, unsurprisingly, the understanding of its  
51 organisational features and structures. On the one hand, **as clarified in many recent criminal trials,**  
52 the ‘ndrangheta is an unlawful association rooted in the city of Reggio Calabria with a peculiar set of  
53 rituals, rules of aggregation and structures of power that characterise the organisation of the various  
54 clans and their interactions (Catino, 2019). On the other hand, however, the unification of the clans  
55 under an identifiable and recognisable organisational structure is a stretched concept. Especially  
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3 abroad, ‘ndrangheta structures take different forms, as a 2019 trial has proved in Canada as well<sup>iv</sup>-  
4 the first trial sentencing an individual for its participation to the ‘ndrangheta outside of Italy.

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6 What many tend to agree upon, and judicial findings also converge here, is that the  
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8 ‘ndrangheta is a clan-based mafia; the ‘ndrine are family cells. Surnames define reputation, which is  
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10 also why alliances of families happen through marriage (Paoli, 2003; Pignatone and Prestipino, 2013).  
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12 The family clans, which all are ‘ndrangheta-type organisations in their own right, aim at acquiring  
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14 socio-political and economic privileges and advantages through the expenditure of their surname and  
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16 the capitalisation on their reputation, usually built on violence, usually transmitted from one  
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18 generation to the next through twisted forms of education and cultural manipulation (Sergi, 2020;  
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20 2018a; Schermi, 2015). This structure centred around family, but with the ability to operate cross  
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22 borders for the purposes of transnational criminality or serious criminality abroad, is one of the main  
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24 challenges for police forces.

## 25 26 27 **Methodological reflections**

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

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40 Objective One: the paper will argue for a new theoretical framework, which will be the  
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42 combination between studies on the resilience of family dynasties, and studies on the ‘ndrangheta, its  
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44 norms, its structural characteristics; in brief, its criminal, behavioural and organisational traits. This  
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46 framework will be presented as a conceptual matrix. Within this matrix, the author will perform a  
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48 thematic analysis on: a) the characteristics of ‘ndrangheta clans that qualify them as business family  
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50 dynasties; b) intervening factors (as many as possible, but surely not all) that hinder or facilitate the  
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52 success of ‘ndrangheta dynasties – this will be called factors of *familiness*, in accordance with  
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54 literature in this field. Overall, this matrix is a preliminary exercise to illustrate the value of such a  
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56 combined framework in advancing our understanding of this mafia-type organisation.

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58 Objective Two: to link the new theoretical framework to inform policing approaches against  
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60 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 organised crime strategies in 6 out of the 11 countries participating to the I-Can

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3 project (Italy, Australia, Canada, USA, Germany and Switzerland). This should not be considered an  
4 exhaustive research result, but rather an illustrative exercise to start identifying the main policing  
5 aims against organised crime across countries today. The 6 countries have been chosen on the basis  
6 of previous research and judicial results (DNA, 2019; DIA, 2020): they are those countries most  
7 concerned with the *structures and the family characters of the 'ndrangheta clans, as opposed to only*  
8 *their criminal activities*. They are the countries of colonisation, or at least where colonisation has been  
9 somewhat proved or studied (Sergi and Lavorgna, 2016; Catino, 2020). The remaining 5 countries in  
10 I-Can, where 'ndrangheta's reach seems to manifest mostly in relation to the drug trade, or, as in the  
11 case of France, in hybrid forms due to the proximity to the Italian borders (DIA, 2020), will obviously  
12 be interested in this discussion. In the remaining 5 countries the focus might be shifted on the business  
13 aspects of 'ndrangheta dynasties rather than on their structural resilience. In order to sketch the  
14 principles and priorities of organised crime countering strategies in the chosen 6 countries, the author  
15 has consulted the latest available communications from the authorities that participate to the I-Can  
16 project for each country. From the institutions' websites, the author has consulted the latest available  
17 reports on organised crime and/or the statements of intent that institutions declare at every internal  
18 policy cycle. The first five aims have been selected, as it was found that most of the times there were  
19 not more than 4-6 overall and there were repetitions as well.

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22 For the second step, the author will link the matrix in Objective One with the most recurrent  
23 policing aims of the 6 countries as illustrated before. The results will be presented through a  
24 taxonomic analysis, where information on both domains will be classified in order to present and  
25 discuss their interaction (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The ultimate aim of this paper, as said, is  
26 to propose a new theoretical framework to look at 'ndrangheta clans, that is both critically informed  
27 as well as operationally valid for policing purposes.

### 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 **Objective One: 'ndrangheta families as business family dynasties**

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49 As said, a lot, in the 'ndrangheta, is about family. Not only this mafia's basic unit is the family,  
50 but also matters related to each 'ndrina are usually dealt with through the recognised and uncontested  
51 authority of the *pater familias* who often is a mafia boss as well (Paoli, 2003; Ciconte, 2011).  
52 Literature into the inter-generational organised crime involvement has pointed out that transmission  
53 of criminal careers in families are facilitated by mediating risk factors, such as the inadequate  
54 parenting skills of the mother, the reputation of the father, and deviant social learning (van Dijk,  
55 Kleemans and Eichelsheim, 2019; Spapens and Moors, 2018). In 'ndrangheta families, environmental  
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3 factors contribute to a black pedagogy (Schermi, 2015): a sustained environmental conditioning of  
4 children around mafia ‘culture’, which helps replicate certain behavioural patterns (Sergi, 2018a).  
5 These behavioural patterns repeat family after family, ‘ndrina after ‘ndrina, to the point that the clans  
6 do organise their activities in coordination with one another as they recognise one another’s behaviours  
7 and territory. **Because of such mutual recognition, the danger they pose is amplified.** Additionally,  
8 these families are often praised for their entrepreneurialism, even though it is a form of criminal  
9 enterprise. They could, therefore, be looked at as family businesses and specifically family dynasties  
10 due to their enduring intergenerational composition.

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12 Family dynasties are a subfield of studies in research on family business. The main point of  
13 contact between a study on the ‘ndrangheta and one of family dynasties is the recognition that  
14 dynasties, in both their business and political endeavours, benefit from a *brand name advantage* that  
15 gives the family a significant edge over other non-dynastic partners/opponents (Feinstein, 2010). This  
16 advantage is one of the characteristics that sets apart a dynasty from a simple family business.  
17 Loyalty, tradition, resilience and adaptability to change are values attributed to dynasties (Purdey,  
18 2016), which are also attributed to ‘ndrangheta families (Sergi, 2018a). As one of the main difference  
19 between a simple family business and a family dynasty lies in their *duration*, the focus is often kept  
20 on next-generation learning from strategic planning, mistakes and successes of their parents/relatives:  
21 both the methodology of the family business strategy and the personal skills and inclinations of  
22 individual count towards the sustainability of the dynasty (Lambrecht and Donckels, 2008). **Indeed,**  
23 **in a dynasty, the family business is more than just a business:** “*balancing family aspects with those*  
24 *of purely management ascertains dynasty’s longevity*” (Kansikas and Nemilentsev, 2010: 39). Multi-  
25 generational family businesses, which some of the most traditional ‘ndrangheta clans clearly are, can  
26 count on a growingly “*stable corporate identity that facilitates organisational culture, while*  
27 *strengthening the shared beliefs’ structure*” (Kansikas and Nemilentsev, 2010: 39).

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29 Through a re-adaptation of Jeffe and Lane’s (2004) discussion on the *sustainability* of a family  
30 dynasty, the constituent steps of a (successful) family business are identified as:

- 31 • *Definition of business activities* - what does the dynasty do for a ‘living’?
  - 32 • *Modes of Control* – how are the activities run, what is the business model?
  - 33 • *Strategy* – what are short, medium, and long-term plans?
  - 34 • *Enterprise Culture* – is there a corporate philosophy? What are the dynasties’ values?
  - 35 • *Governance structure* – how is power maintained to secure the legacy?
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3 Enterprise culture has been added as an extra component to the initial script, in consideration  
4 of other authors' additional suggestions (Denison, Leif and Ward, 2004). Each of these steps, still  
5 following Jeffe and Lane (2004), can be matched with the most frequent traits attributed to  
6 'ndrangheta families throughout the years, in courts or research as well as their needs and choices  
7 when it comes to maintain their business as well as their identity alive.  
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11 Table 1 presents a matrix to summarise how 'ndrangheta families develop the various steps  
12 of a family dynasty business. The matrix identifies those factors that can facilitate or obstruct a mafia  
13 family's success. These factors constitute '*familiness*'. Familiness has been considered as one of the  
14 components making up the essence of a family business (Chrisman et al., 2005). Familiness is defined  
15 as the unique bundle of resources resulting from the interaction of the family and business systems  
16 (Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Habbershon et al., 2003). Familiness can determine the longevity of  
17 the dynasty or its end (Cawson and Mussolino, 2014); resources and capabilities of the family  
18 members and the family business overall, help sustain change while using family values as capital  
19 (Pearson, Carr, and Shaw, 2008). Pearson, Carr, and Shaw (2008) suggested that familiness has three  
20 dimensions: a *structural* dimension (social interactions and networks); a *cognitive* dimension (shared  
21 vision/purpose, unique language, stories etc); a *relational* dimension (made of trust, norms,  
22 obligations, and identity traits). The factors identified in Table 1 take on board these dimensions and  
23 present, although not exhaustively, how familiness can manifest in 'ndrangheta clans and influence  
24 or hinder the 'ndrina's success. In particular, attention is drawn to the results of the interaction  
25 between family values and vicissitudes with the social environment as they shape entrepreneurial  
26 choices (Cano-Rubio et al, 2016). Table 1 will summarise the findings as presented in the following  
27 paragraphs. Obviously, the impact of legal actions and policing – i.e. the disruption of criminal  
28 activities, the arrest of key individuals in the clan – can also have an effect on these choices and  
29 subsequent results.  
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45 When we consider *business forms* taken by 'ndrangheta clans and dynasties, we can agree that  
46 a lot of what 'ndrangheta clans do for 'a living' falls into the definitions of organised crime, in the  
47 form of criminal entrepreneurship. We can differentiate profit-driven and power-driven choices; most  
48 dynasties are able and willing to operate in both forms of business. Profit-driven types of crime that  
49 usually involve 'ndrangheta dynasties are illicit trade (primarily drug trafficking) as well as  
50 infiltration into public procurement. Nevertheless, not all 'ndrangheta clans will have the same  
51 capacity, the same opportunities, and the same agency. From a family dynasty perspective, individual  
52 capacities and inclinations are key values of familiness that could make it more or less difficult for  
53 the dynasty to do well. This includes the individual vision and charisma of founders, leaders and  
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3 bosses. This also includes the inclinations and capabilities of offspring to continue the family business  
4 or to operate some elements of discontinuity.  
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6 When we consider the *modes of control* of a 'ndrangheta dynasty - how the activities are  
7 actually run - we can point out that some clans work well in partnerships, while others will remain  
8 more self-involved, but maybe have branches elsewhere. The structure of a *locale* of the 'ndrangheta,  
9 which is the coordination across 3-5 'ndrine in the same territory, is certainly part of a conversation  
10 on modes of control, of both businesses and territories. When a 'ndrangheta dynasty has branches  
11 abroad, there is a clear need to coordinate and to unify voices across the various 'branch' leaders, as  
12 well as with members of other organised crime groups in that location (non-ndrangheta). Failure to  
13 do so could be a serious threat to unity; it could lead to mafia feuds and to the need to resort to  
14 violence. The potential or actual use of violence, threats, intimidation (commonly known as the mafia  
15 method) could be a way to impose or restore order and secure success of the dynasty. Similarly, the  
16 dynasty could be successful in establishing protection rackets or corrupted practices to lower the costs  
17 of their activities abroad. However, the dynasties choices in terms of how to maintain contacts from  
18 one location to the other (whether face to face or through technology) and the strategies, more or less  
19 conscious or tactical, to make sure that a problem in one location doesn't reverberate onto another  
20 location, will play a big role in the success of the clan.  
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22 When we look at the *strategy* – short, medium and long term planning - we can focus on the  
23 willingness that some 'ndrangheta families have demonstrated to 'step up' into different markets.  
24 Many 'ndrangheta clans are resilient in their markets and activities of choice, notwithstanding legal  
25 actions against them. In order to sustain their place in the market, avoid detection, minimise risks and  
26 maximise both profit and social recognition (i.e. showing a clean face for example) there are various  
27 intervening factors. Any future plan of a clan could be affected by the qualities, skills and inclinations  
28 of the next generations. Education (of the next generations) to a mafia 'culture', promoting certain  
29 behaviours and expectations, might a strategic goal in some mafia families. Also, some clans might  
30 jump at the opportunity to expand their business abroad, but others might never have that opportunity  
31 to begin with. Additionally, the ability to maintain the clan in the proximity of (local) politicians and  
32 public administrators is also one of the strategic choices that can determine whether or not a dynasty  
33 survives judicial scrutiny and/or succeeds in their power-oriented quests. If the clan has a foreign  
34 dimension (outside of Italy) this proximity might be realised through attendance and membership of  
35 Italian enclaves, such as Italian social clubs, Italian chambers of commerce, Italian political parties  
36 abroad. This would facilitate access to funds, contracts, political circles within the Calabrian and  
37 Italian communities of migrants elsewhere.  
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3 The element of *enterprise culture* – the corporate philosophy and core values – is also a  
4 constituent of a ‘ndrangheta dynasty. We could identify social prestige, as well as family identity  
5 across generations, as needs for a ‘ndrina to sustain their enterprise culture. The reputation, the brand,  
6 is fundamental for the ‘ndrina. And this reputation is built on different values, or actions or choices.  
7 In some cases, the ‘ndrina is well known for his historical attachment to rituals; in other cases, for its  
8 use of violence; in other cases for its particular success in maintaining a cross-border or local business.  
9 For many clans of the ‘ndrangheta, doing jail time is considered an honour and a necessary step in  
10 the career. Similarly, the use of rituals to attribute rankings, or symbolism to order sanctions, or the  
11 use of religious or traditional activities to cement relationships (for example baptism, or  
12 *comparaggio*<sup>1</sup>). One of the intervening factors, that could hinder the success of this aspect of the  
13 dynasty’s life is the ability of law enforcement to intervene in a way that would bruise the need for  
14 social prestige and the family identity kept throughout generations. If, for example, a family court  
15 orders for a child in a mafia family to be taken away from the family and for his father to lose his  
16 parental authority (Sergi, 2018a; Marchese, 2020), this can be considered a direct attack to the social  
17 prestige of the dynasty as well as hindering the ‘correct’ transmission of family values and identity  
18 throughout generations.  
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22 When we ultimately consider the *governance structures* chosen by the ‘ndrangheta dynasty –  
23 the ways in which power is maintained throughout the legacy - we notice that the combination  
24 between an *internal* hierarchy within the clan together with an *external* recognition by other  
25 dynasties, has been one of the main winning points of the ‘ndrangheta (Catino, 2019; Pignatone and  
26 Prestipino, 2013). While the ‘ndrina is usually hierarchical - with the capobastone, the head of the  
27 family – ruling above others, it is very important for the ‘ndrina to not only be recognised by other  
28 clans, but also to participate to coordination activities and structures in the *locale*, in the territory of  
29 reference. Through mutual recognition of each other and of each other’s leaders, the ‘ndrine take their  
30 place in other structures that serve different purposes. Coordination structures (e.g. the *Società*, the  
31 *Mandamento*, the *Crimine* or *Provincia*<sup>2</sup>) that operate to solve conflict and maintain order are also  
32 part of the reasons why the ‘ndrangheta overall, as an archipelago of clans within an organisational  
33 brand structure, has succeeded so far. They operate without interfering with business of each clan.  
34 Considering these needs, the factors that could affect success have to do with the ability of the clan -  
35 and in particular of the capobastone, the chief of the clan – of forging contacts, of showing  
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57 <sup>1</sup> A tradition of many areas of Southern Italy; during weddings many couples nominate an important person to buy their  
58 wedding rings and become effectively a member of the newlyweds’ family; the compare (male) or comare (female) can  
59 also be the godfather or godmother of any child of the newlyweds.

60 <sup>2</sup> 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.

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3 leaderships, of being charismatic also for others. This will necessarily be also an inter-generational  
4 question, which necessarily will depend on the inclinations, ability, willingness and - in a word –  
5 agency of offspring, their ability to follow the steps of their fathers or otherwise. Finally, the capacity  
6 of mafia dynasties to keep their power also needs to adapt to different communication forms  
7 (technology-led as well as face-to-face meetings). This is particularly relevant when part of the family  
8 business – or a branch - is abroad, or outside of Calabria more generally, but it is also interesting  
9 when compared to others in the same locale with whom the clan members interact on a daily basis.  
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22 By focusing on familiness – i.e. on family values, events and factors that influence family  
23 business – we can start an analysis of ‘ndrangheta dynasties that has two main advantages. First, it  
24 allows to consider that not everything that relates to a mafia family is in fact criminal in nature. And  
25 in turn, this helps us to normalise the structures of these groups and to look at them as something  
26 more intimately connected with our social world. Both these advantages can be useful from a policing  
27 perspective aimed not just at repressing and disrupting, but also at understanding, preventing and  
28 protecting.  
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### 38 **Objective Two: policing ‘ndrangheta dynasties**

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41 After the massacre of 6 people from the village of San Luca in August 2007 in Duisburg  
42 (Germany) - because of a mafia feud among two families in Calabria - the greater public has been  
43 exposed not just to the presence of the ‘ndrangheta abroad, but also to the limits of international  
44 cooperation in fighting this phenomenon cross-borders. Duisburg showed how the successful  
45 entrepreneurship of some ‘ndrangheta clans abroad - including their ability to move across licit  
46 markets and dominate the cocaine trade - are often still ventures of individual dynasties, rather than  
47 more complex structures. In Calabria, these families act in coordination with one another and through  
48 recognition of each other’s territory and business. As said, coordination structures are aimed at  
49 conflict resolution, at building alliances when needed and feed into a common brand beneficial also  
50 to external reputation (Catino, 2019). Abroad, these dynasties have often very little strategy from  
51 Calabria ruling over their business agenda; most of the times, the links are maintained within the  
52 family, whose activities span across different branches, and not with the overall organisation.  
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3 The difficulties of policing the ‘ndrangheta abroad seem to be twofold: on the one hand there  
4 are general difficulties in policing transnational (organised) crimes, i.e. coordination of policing  
5 efforts and exchange of information (Europol, 2013; Hufnagel, 2013; Sergi, 2017a). On the other  
6 hand, there are specific difficulties linked to the recognition of ‘ndrangheta structures and power –  
7 political, social, economic - that eventually enable those crimes at the local level, also abroad  
8 (Sciarrone and Storti, 2016; Sciarrone 2009; Sergi, 2017b). There is, therefore, the need to understand  
9 how mafia power endures in exploiting family structures and by taking advantage, as best as they  
10 can, of the various family factors, also abroad.

11  
12 Most countries fight mafias as specific forms of organised crime (Paoli, 2004; Kleemans,  
13 2014). On the policing of organised crime, the literature is vast, and this is not the right place to recall  
14 the various debates. From an operational perspective, however, we know that the process of  
15 securitisation of organised crime (Campbell, 2014; Hobbs, 2013; Carrapico, 2014) has led to calls for  
16 enhanced crime prevention and also calls for protection of communities by building resilience and by  
17 focusing on harm reduction (von Lampe, 2008; 2016).

18  
19 As said before, Objective Two has two steps. First step is a quick scan done through the latest  
20 agendas, reports and assessments on organised crime by authorities in Italy, Australia, Canada,  
21 Germany, USA (Federal) ad Switzerland (Federal). As said, these are the 6 I-Can countries where the  
22 ‘ndrangheta is believed to have a stable presence, that is clans that are settled there and have their  
23 own activities there (‘colonisation’). The reason for this quick scan is conceptual: in fact,  
24 understanding the starting point of authorities and the institutional perceptions of organised crime,  
25 can help understanding choices and struggles in their fights against mafia-type organised crime  
26 (Sergi, 2017a). The law in action is influenced by the law in books.

27  
28 Step one of Objective Two, therefore, is a thematic analysis across the self-declared strategic  
29 aims and objectives of these six countries in their fight against organised crime. These aims can be  
30 grouped in five macro-themes that bring these countries closer in their approaches have been  
31 identified: expose, pursue, protect, disrupt, prevent. Due to the wide applicability of many of the  
32 objectives these 6 countries declare, it is safe to assume these macro-areas can be applicable and  
33 relatable to objectives of other countries too. Table 2 provides the summary of this quick scan, by  
34 giving details of each countries’ declared objectives and how the can be grouped with objectives from  
35 other countries.

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

14  
15 Step 2 of Objective Two wishes to link together the theoretical framework on the 'ndrangheta  
16 dynasties and its 5 components, with the 5 themes from the quick scan carried out in step 1, to advance  
17 a preliminary operational application of this framework to policing practices and objectives against  
18 organised crime. Table 3 presents the preliminary results of the taxonomic analysis carried out to mix  
19 the results of both exercises. This is a preliminary analysis showing how the novel theoretical  
20 framework seeing 'ndrnagheta clans as family dynasties can contribute to the drafting of specific  
21 national policing strategies within more general strategic goals against organised crime that each state  
22 has. The table presents policies and interventions that authorities might consider across the different  
23 lines of interventions. At this stage, these are merely examples, even when they suggest specific  
24 policies. For example, when under the intersection between 'Enterprise Culture' and 'Prevent' there  
25 is a suggestion to 'Identify educational tools to break the chain of cultural transmission; offer  
26 alternatives', the reference could be to the Italian family law procedure that offers to sons and  
27 daughters in known mafia families an alternative of a different educational path, at times far away  
28 from the family and Calabria (Sergi, 2018a). This policy is not without criticism and cannot just be  
29 transferred everywhere, but its core objective might object of further discussion at policy level also  
30 abroad. This analysis is obviously non exhaustive; in fact, some cells have been left blank because  
31 some policies are complex and need to be explored in more details to go forward and apply to each  
32 country and each institution's needs and capabilities.

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## Conclusion

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5 The 'ndrangheta is a complex mafia-type system based on family dynasties. Especially  
6 abroad, where the density of clans is scarcer, they often, but not always, work with other families,  
7 and often engage in poly-crime businesses. Several factors are often overlooked when it comes to  
8 understand this mafia system. Among the things that get overlooked, for example, is the capacity,  
9 alongside with the willingness, of single individuals within the different families to fulfil the vision  
10 and the path set out by their predecessors in the dynasty. Individual choices, their attitudes and visions  
11 and ultimately their agency, can affect the ways in which the family responds to changes and adapts  
12 to external social environments (i.e. policing interventions). By focusing on *familiness* – events and  
13 vicissitudes affecting family equilibria - as an essential component of the reasons why some mafia  
14 families excel and some perish or decline in power, can help identify patterns of change across  
15 families and also understand better the reasons for alliances, feuds, mobility, strategies, and also lack  
16 of strategies.

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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 organised 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 organisations, 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 securitisation processes in national security policing (Lagrand and Jarvis, 2014; Hobbs & Antonopolous, 2013). This needs to be avoid as it tends to underplay the role that both internal and external factors play within these clans.

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We have historically seen how mafia stigmatisation 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 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

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3 within the dynasty's cultural milieu. This cultural milieu however is not homogenous, as it is the  
4 product of the family dynamics. This approach also allows countries where mafia dynasties are not  
5 settled but mainly or solely 'do business' to recognise this variety of mafia manifestations. Indeed,  
6 countries were 'ndrangheta clans mainly or only 'do business' could focus mostly on the business  
7 side of the clans, aware that a business carried out by a dynasty is never simply a business, but has  
8 the 'family' dimension in it.  
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<b>Constituents of Family Business/Dynasties</b>	<b>Choices/Needs by 'Ndrangheta Families/Dynasties</b>	<b>Familiness (intervening factors for or against family's success)</b>
<b>Activities &amp; business form</b>	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 & offspring; Individual inclinations to business of siblings and offspring; individual charisma; effects of policing and legal actions on family business.
<b>Modes of control (i.e. running the business)</b>	family branches in different locations; partnerships/teams with other families (e.g. <i>ndrangheta locale</i> ); 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.
<b>Strategy</b>	Sustain resilience and profits; reduce risks; avoid detection; minimise visibility of the criminal side of business; maximise 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; ad-hoc partnerships with other groups abroad; implicit or explicit behavioural policies inside the family; strategic mobility; effects of policing and legal actions on strategies.

<b>Enterprise culture</b>	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 & offspring; effects of policing and legal actions over the transmission of cultural norms.
<b>Governance structure (i.e. maintaining power)</b>	Hierarchical units of power ('ndrina); recognition of other families; horizontal coordination structures <sup>v</sup> ; mutual support and regulation <sup>vi</sup> ; conflict management functions <sup>vii</sup> ; reserved chambers for the elite <sup>viii</sup> .	Individual charisma of leaders; individual capacities/inclinations of siblings & offspring; use of technology; face-to-face contacts; conflict and mediation strategies; rule breaking; effects of policing and legal actions.

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

Italy <sup>ix</sup>	Australia <sup>x</sup>	Canada <sup>xi</sup>	Germany <sup>xii</sup>	USA <sup>xiii</sup>	Switzerland <sup>xiv</sup>
Define structures, articulations and connections across criminal groups, their MO and objectives through intelligence. <b>(Expose)</b>	Investigate complex, transnational, serious and organised crime through risk and threat management assessments <b>(Expose)</b>	Disrupt illicit markets by also reducing demand of illicit products <b>(Disrupt)</b>	Suppression of criminal activities <b>(Pursue)</b>	Elimination of (transnational) organised crime groups <b>(Pursue)</b>	Involve private-sector Partnerships (e.g. auditing and checks on companies) <b>(Prevent)</b>
Countering of economic crimes linked to organised crime. <b>(Pursue)</b>	Reduce the cost of organised crime <b>(Protect/Disrupt)</b>	Improve Criminal Intelligence to paint more truthful pictures including economic crimes <b>(Expose/Prevent)</b>	Prevention of criminal recruitment and involvement <b>(Prevent)</b>	Expand criminal accountability for a number of predicate offenders <b>(Pursue)</b>	Promote closer cooperation between the immigration authorities, tax authorities and labour inspectorates. <b>(Protect/Prevent)</b>
Coordinate preventative policing activities to disrupt criminal plans <b>(Prevent)</b>	Disrupt criminal networks <b>(Disrupt)</b>	Reduce harmful effects of criminal activities. <b>(Protect/Disrupt)</b>	Prioritisation of criminal investigations though specialised approaches <b>(Pursue/Prevent)</b>	Strategically remove access to illegal proceeds <b>(Prevent)</b>	Exchange information and ensure appropriate measures are taken at all levels. <b>(Prevent/</b>

					<b>Disrupt)</b>
Protect economy and society from infiltration and exploitation by organised crime. <b>(Protect)</b>	Build resilience in potential targets through a range of collaborative measures and partnerships <b>(Protect)</b>	Enhance public awareness about the effects of organised crime in society and economy. <b>(Protect/ Prevent)</b>	Understanding of OCGs structures (clan crime, cyber-crime, networks etc) <b>(Expose)</b>	Reduce the influence and reach of OCGs in politics, economy and society at large <b>(Protect/ Disrupt)</b>	Exploit the current language and cultural divide across criminal groups for policing/disrupting purposes <b>(Pursue/ Expose)</b>

Table 2: Summary of primary objectives and strategies in countering organised crime across 6 I-Can Project Partners.

	<b>Activities and Business Form</b>	<b>Modes of Control</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Enterprise Culture</b>	<b>Governance Structure</b>
<b>Pursue</b>	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)
<b>Prevent</b>			Establish partnerships with local interest clubs (e.g. Italian Chamber of Commerce,	Identify educational tools to break the chain of cultural transmission;	Enhance transparency in policies for political donations.



			Social clubs, etc)	offer alternatives.	
<b>Disrupt</b>	Exchange information across intelligence platforms cross-country	Promote ad- hoc joint task forces across states	Strengthen anti-money laundering norms and enhance range of confiscation procedures		Identify 'weak' personalities in mafia dynasties
<b>Protect</b>		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
<b>Expose</b>	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

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

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<sup>i</sup> 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>

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

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

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

<sup>v</sup> The Locale or the Mandamento

<sup>vi</sup> The Società

<sup>vii</sup> The Crimine or Provincia

<sup>viii</sup> The ‘Santa’

<sup>ix</sup> Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, institutional agenda, no date, website

<sup>x</sup> Australian Federal Police, institutional strategy, 2019, website

<sup>xi</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, annual report, 2019, website

<sup>xii</sup> BKA – Bundeskriminalam, statement agenda, no date, website

<sup>xiii</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, institutional strategy, no date, website

<sup>xiv</sup> Fedpol, annual report, 2019, website

<b>Constituents of Family Business/Dynasties</b>	<b>Choices/Needs by 'Ndrangheta Families/Dynasties</b>	<b>Familiness (intervening factors for or against family's success)</b>
<b>Activities &amp; business form</b>	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 & offspring; Individual inclinations to business of siblings and offspring; individual charisma; effects of policing and legal actions on family business.
<b>Modes of control (i.e. running the business)</b>	family branches in different locations; partnerships/teams with other families (e.g. <i>ndrangheta locale</i> ); 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.
<b>Strategy</b>	Sustain resilience and profits; reduce risks; avoid detection; minimise visibility of the criminal side of business; maximise 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; ad-hoc partnerships with other groups abroad; implicit or explicit behavioural policies inside the family; strategic mobility; effects of policing and legal actions on strategies.
<b>Enterprise culture</b>	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 & offspring; effects of policing and legal actions over the transmission of cultural norms.
<b>Governance structure (i.e. maintaining power)</b>	Hierarchical units of power ('ndrina); recognition of other families; horizontal coordination structures; mutual support and regulation; conflict management functions; reserved chambers for the elite.	Individual charisma of leaders; individual capacities/inclinations of siblings & offspring; use of technology; face-to-face contacts; conflict and mediation strategies; rule breaking; effects of policing and legal actions.

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

<b>Italy<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Australia<sup>ii</sup></b>	<b>Canada<sup>iii</sup></b>	<b>Germany<sup>iv</sup></b>	<b>USA<sup>v</sup></b>	<b>Switzerland<sup>vi</sup></b>
Define structures, articulations and connections across criminal groups, their MO and objectives through intelligence. <b>(Expose)</b>	Investigate complex, transnational, serious and organised crime through risk and threat management assessments <b>(Expose)</b>	Disrupt illicit markets by also reducing demand of illicit products <b>(Disrupt)</b>	Suppression of criminal activities <b>(Pursue)</b>	Elimination of (transnational) organised crime groups <b>(Pursue)</b>	Involve private-sector Partnerships (e.g. auditing and checks on companies) <b>(Prevent)</b>
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Coordinate preventative policing activities to disrupt criminal plans <b>(Prevent)</b>	Disrupt criminal networks <b>(Disrupt)</b>	Reduce harmful effects of criminal activities. <b>(Protect/ Disrupt)</b>	Prioritisation of criminal investigations through specialised approaches <b>(Pursue/ Prevent)</b>	Strategically remove access to illegal proceeds <b>(Prevent)</b>	Exchange information and ensure appropriate measures are taken at all levels. <b>(Prevent/ Disrupt)</b>
Protect economy and society from infiltration and exploitation by organised crime. <b>(Protect)</b>	Build resilience in potential targets through a range of collaborative measures and partnerships <b>(Protect)</b>	Enhance public awareness about the effects of organised crime in society and economy. <b>(Protect/ Prevent)</b>	Understanding of OCGs structures (clan crime, cyber-crime, networks etc) <b>(Expose)</b>	Reduce the influence and reach of OCGs in politics, economy and society at large <b>(Protect/ Disrupt)</b>	Exploit the current language and cultural divide across criminal groups for policing/disrupting purposes <b>(Pursue/ Expose)</b>

Table 2: **Summary** of primary objectives and strategies in countering organised crime across 6 I-Can Project Partners.

<sup>i</sup> Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, institutional agenda, no date, website

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Federal Police, institutional strategy, 2019, website

<sup>iii</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, annual report, 2019, website

<sup>iv</sup> BKA – Bundeskriminalamt, statement agenda, no date, website

<sup>v</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, institutional strategy, no date, website

<sup>vi</sup> Fedpol, annual report, 2019, website

	<b>Activities and Business Form</b>	<b>Modes of Control</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Enterprise Culture</b>	<b>Governance Structure</b>
<b>Pursue</b>	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)
<b>Prevent</b>			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.
<b>Disrupt</b>	Exchange information across intelligence platforms cross-country	Promote ad-hoc joint task forces across states	Strengthen anti-money laundering norms and enhance range of confiscation procedures		Identify 'weak' personalities in mafia dynasties
<b>Protect</b>		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
<b>Expose</b>	Avoid limiting investigations only to 'serious'	Family network analysis	Identify specific vulnerabilities in country's	Make use of cultural analysts/	Identify procedures to detect

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5	crimes,	(cross-country	legislations	anthropologists	infiltration in
6	promote a	if needed)	that facilitate	to identify	public work
7	whole-of-		mafia	specific	
8	mafia		infiltration at	aspects of	
9	behaviours		all levels of	mafia culture	
10	countering		criminality	and their	
11	strategy			transmission in	
12				specific	
13				families	
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Table 3: Taxonomic analysis: examples of policing 'ndrangheta dynasties

For Peer Review