

# **MAFIA AND DRUGS**

## *Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Italy*

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44th Carnegie seminar

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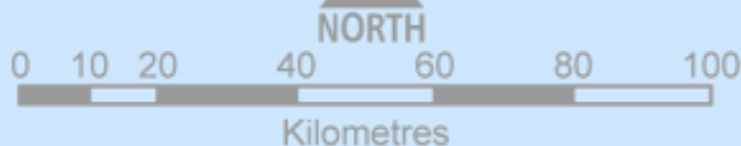
# TOPICS

- **Historical origins and characters of:**
  - Cosa Nostra
  - Camorra
  - Sacra Corona Unita
- **‘Ndrangheta (Calabrian Mafia)**
- **The Fifth Mafia: all roads lead to Rome**



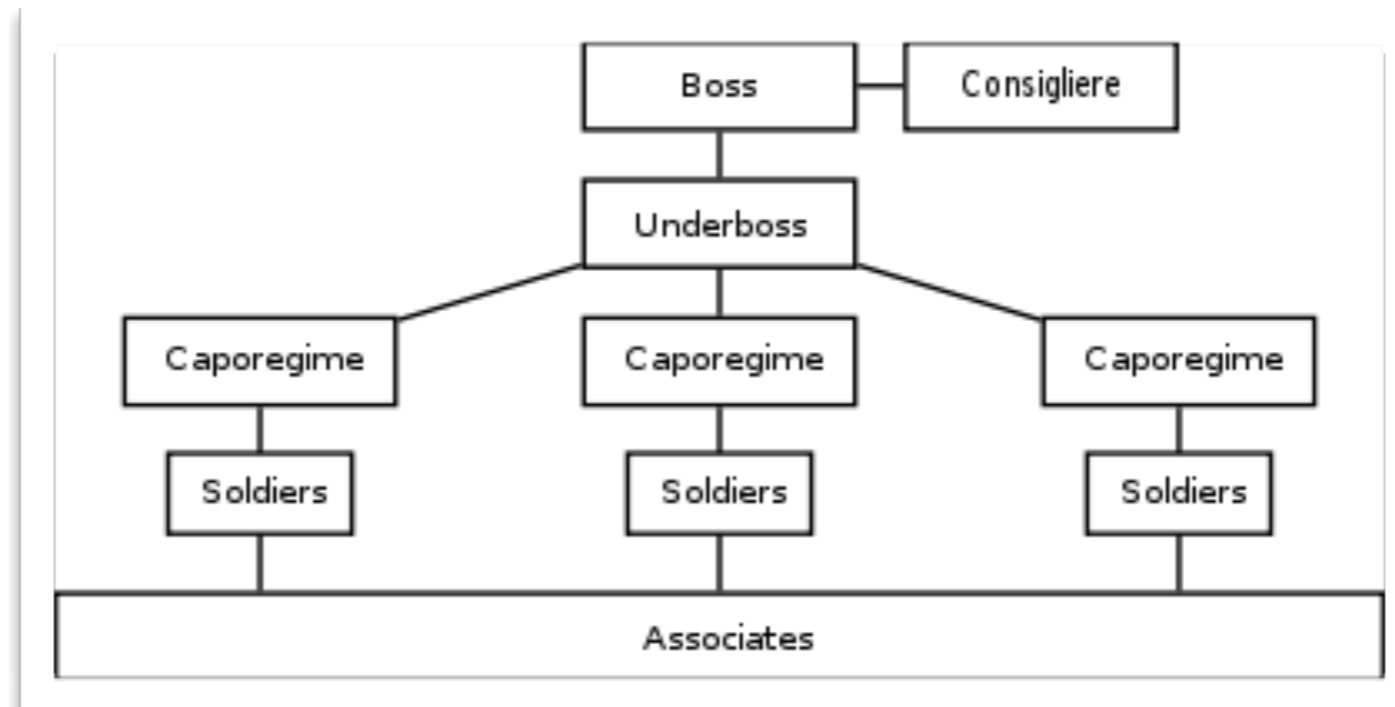
# COSA NOSTRA

- **"Cosa Nostra" is a Sicilian criminal society. The first document was in 1864, when Niccolò Turrisi Colonna, leader of the Palermo National Guard, wrote of a "sect of thieves" that operated across Sicily.**
- **An 1865 dispatch from the prefect of Palermo first officially described the criminal phenomenon as a "Mafia".**
- **Other than its members, Cosa Nostra makes extensive use of "associates". These are people who work for or aid a clan (or even multiple clans) but are not treated as true members. These include corrupt officials and prospective mafiosi.**



# COSA NOSTRA / 2

## Clan hierarchy



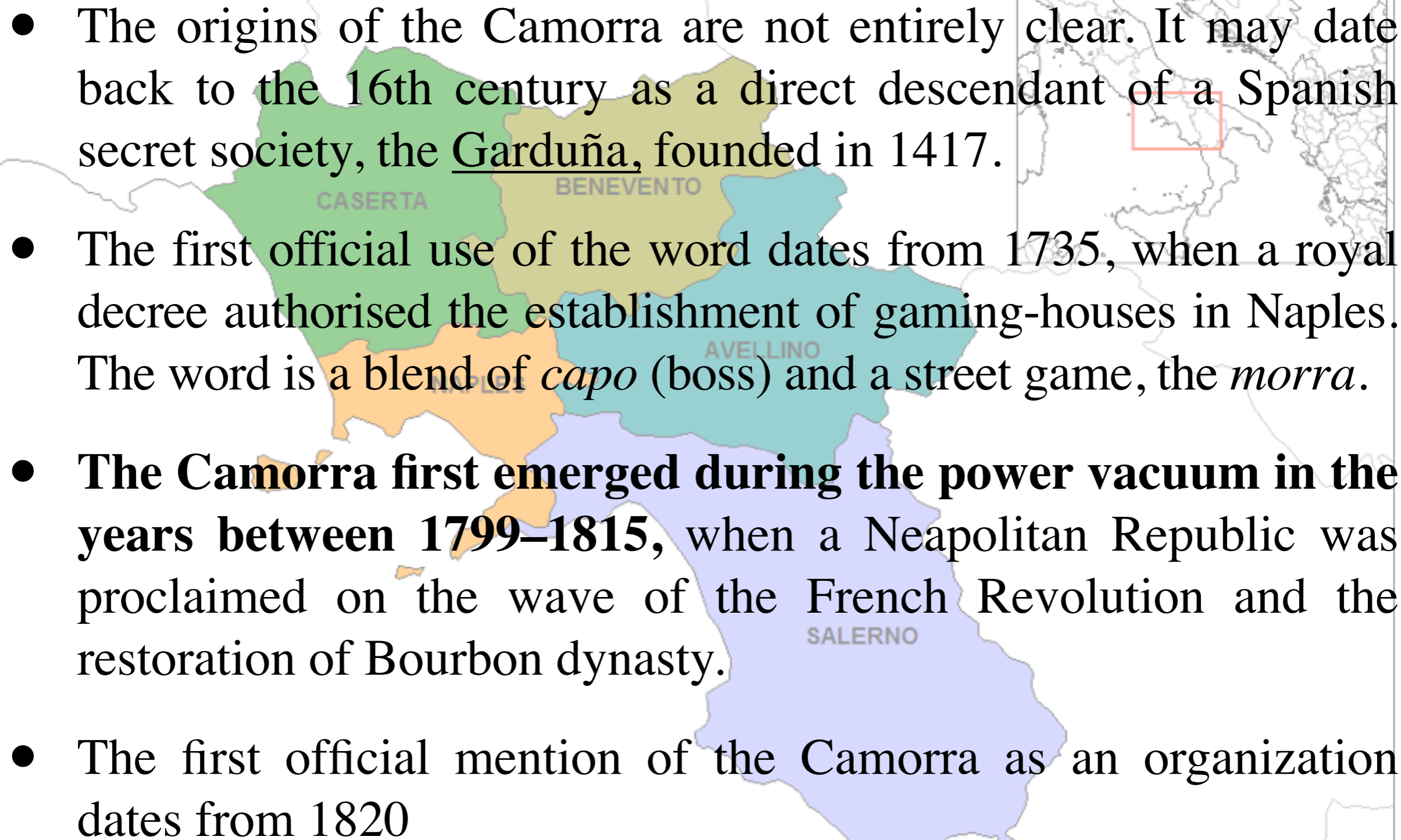
- For many years, the power apparatuses of the individual clans were the sole ruling bodies within the association, and they have remained the real centers of power even after superordinate bodies were created in Cosa Nostra beginning in the late 1950s (the Sicilian Mafia Commission also known as *Commissione*).
- Protection rackets - Arms trafficking - Loan sharking - Extortion - Control of contracting - **Drug trafficking**

## COSA NOSTRA / 3

- **Starting in 1975, Cosa Nostra set up heroin refineries across the island.** As well as refining heroin, Cosa Nostra also sought to control its distribution. Sicilian mafiosi moved to the United States to personally control distribution networks there.
- **By 1982, the Sicilian Mafia controlled about 80% of the heroin trade in the north-eastern United States.**
- Heroin was often distributed to street dealers from Mafia-owned pizzerias, and the revenues could be passed off as restaurant profits (the so-called *Pizza Connection*).
- **Through the heroin trade, Cosa Nostra became wealthier and more powerful than ever.**

## COSA NOSTRA / 4

- **The important role of the *Pentiti*.**
- *Pentito* (who has repented) designates people who collaborate with the judicial system to help investigations.
- The judicial category of the *pentiti* was first created to fight terrorism in the 1970s.
- After the testimonies of Tommaso Buscetta, (1984-87) it designated former members of the Cosa Nostra who have abandoned their organisation and started helping in investigations.
- Buscetta, the first important *pentito*, who was very helpful in describing the *Cupola*, the leadership of the Sicilian Mafia, and identifying the main operational channels that the mafia used and uses for its business.

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- The origins of the Camorra are not entirely clear. It may date back to the 16th century as a direct descendant of a Spanish secret society, the Garduña, founded in 1417.
  - The first official use of the word dates from 1735, when a royal decree authorised the establishment of gaming-houses in Naples. The word is a blend of *capo* (boss) and a street game, the *morra*.
  - **The Camorra first emerged during the power vacuum in the years between 1799–1815**, when a Neapolitan Republic was proclaimed on the wave of the French Revolution and the restoration of Bourbon dynasty.
  - The first official mention of the Camorra as an organization dates from 1820

# CAMORRA

## CAMORRA / 2

- **The Camorra was never a coherent whole, a centralised organization.** Instead it has always been a loose confederation of different, independent groups or families.
- **Each group was bound around kinship ties and controlled economic activities which took place in its particular territory.** Each family clan took care of its own business, protected its territory, and sometimes tried to expand at another group's expense.
- **Although not centralized, there was some minimal coordination,** to avoid mutual interference. The families competed to maintain a system of checks and balances between equal powers. Camorra clans act independently of each other.

## CAMORRA / 3

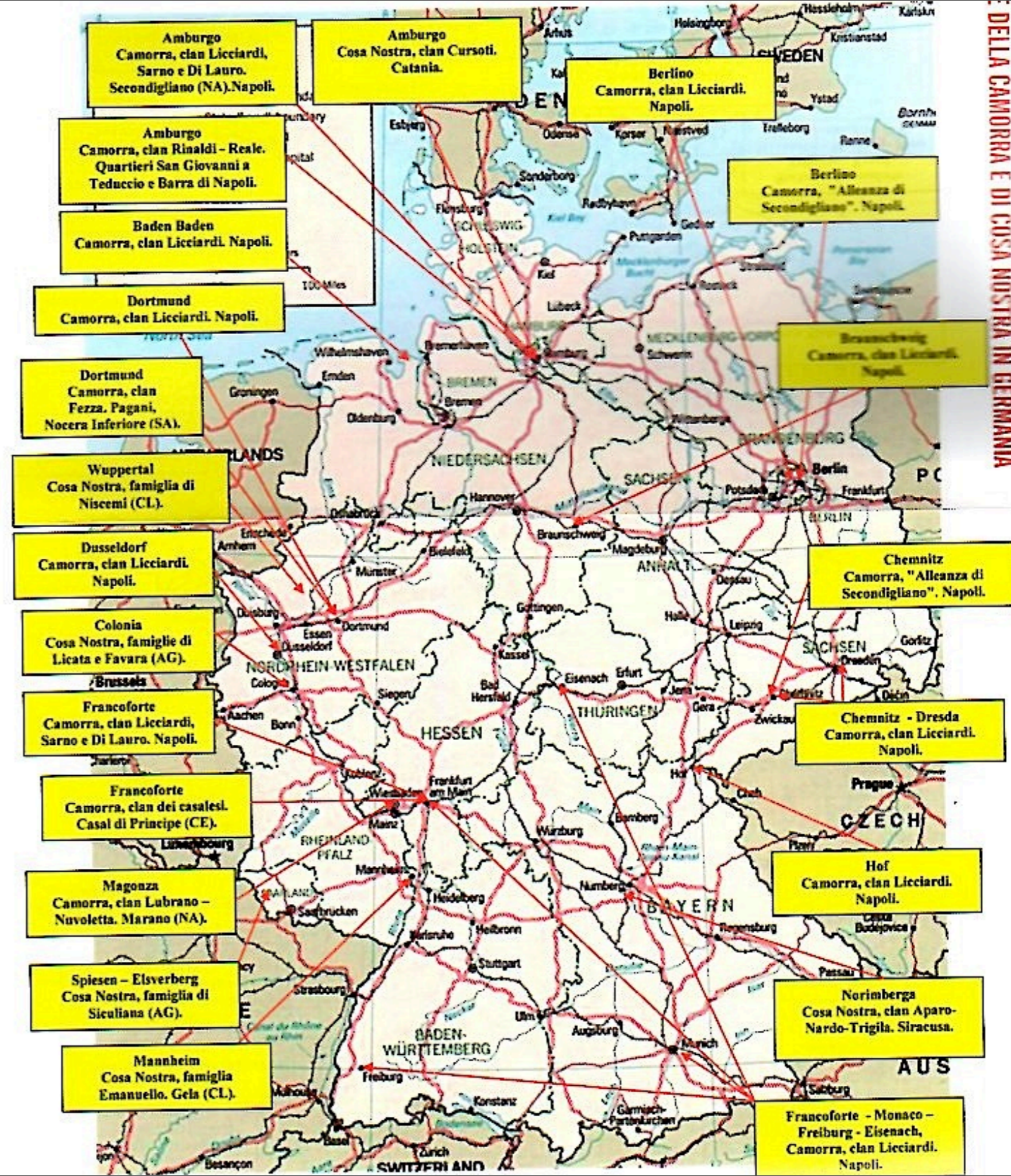
- **In the 1980s Raffaele Cutolo made an attempt to unify the Camorra families in the manner of the Sicilian Mafia, by forming the *Nuova Camorra Organizzata* but this proved unsuccessful. Currently it is estimated there are about 111 Camorra clans.**
- **In recent years various Camorra clans have been forming alliances with Nigerian drug gangs and the Albanian Mafia, even going so far as to intermarry.**
- **The first town that the Camorra gave over to be completely governed by a foreign clan was Castel Volturno, which was given to the Rapaces, clans from Lagos and Nigeria. This allowed them to traffic cocaine across the whole of Europe.**
- **There is a limited law enforcement activity in an environment which has a long history of criminal tolerance and acceptance.**

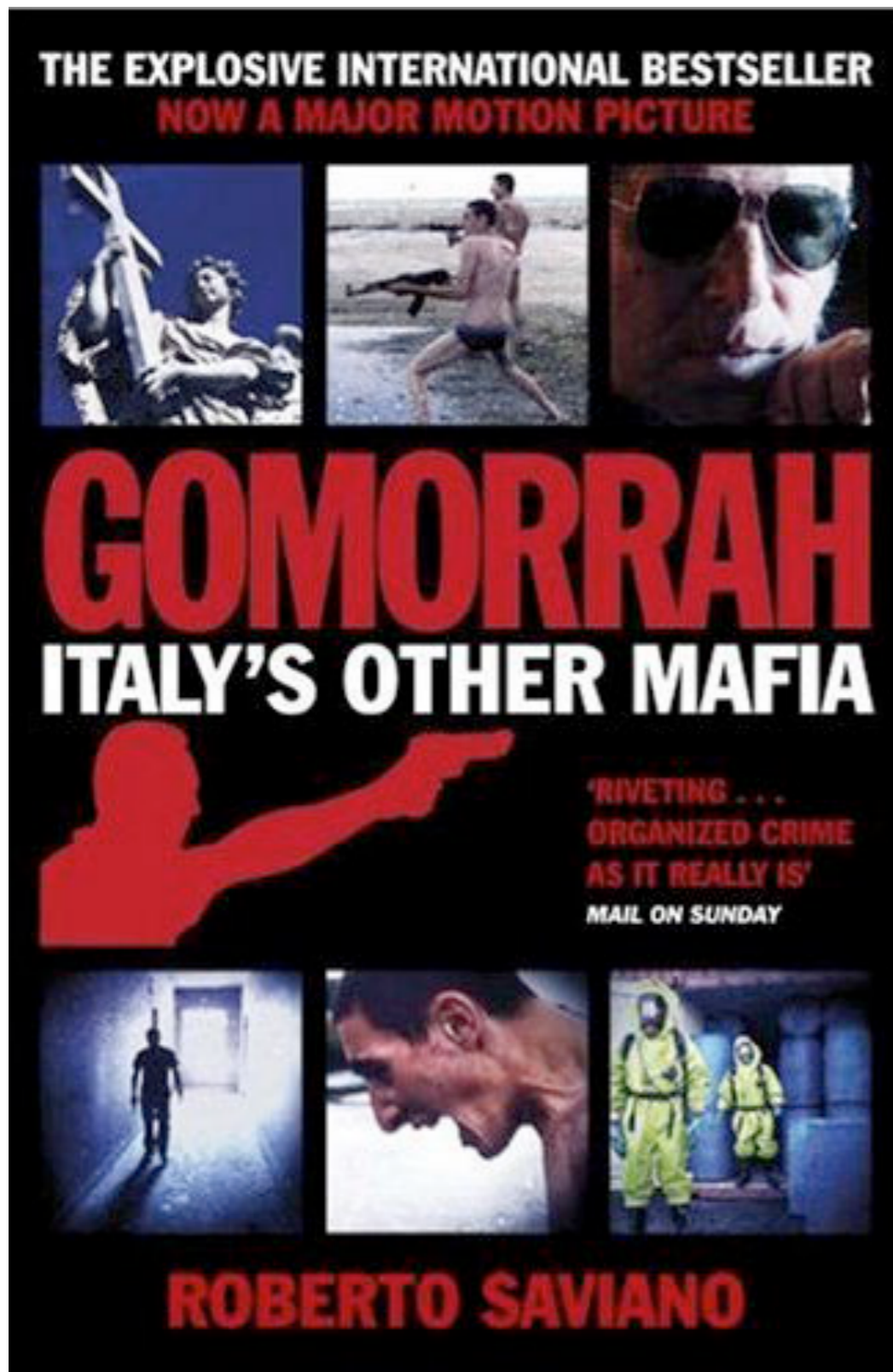
# Camorra and Cosa Nostra in Germany

The camorra is the most solid criminal organization in Europe.

For every Sicilian Mafioso there are five Camorristi, eight for every 'Ndranghetista.

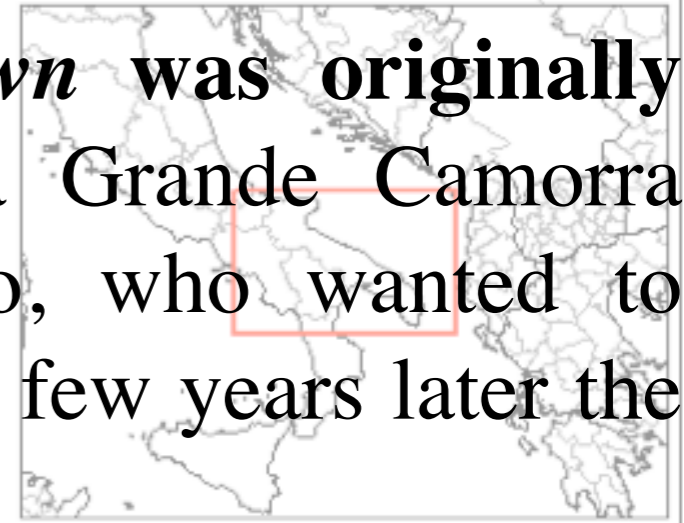
Map from Francesco Forgione, "Mafia Export", Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2009, Milano.





- Saviano book describes in the right way the brutality of the Camorra way-of-life, but also gives us a lot of informations about:
- their disponibility of any kind of heavy weapons in quantity
- innovative ways to sell drugs
- new strategies for pricing
- Selling deregulation
- The lower middle class and its “circles” instead conventional pushers.

- **Sacra Corona Unita, *United Sacred Crown* was originally founded in the late 1970s** as the Nuova Grande Camorra Pugliese by Camorra boss Raffaele Cutolo, who wanted to expand his operations into Puglia. However a few years later the organization became operating all on its own.
- Originally preying on Puglia's substantial wine and olive oil industries, the SCU is made up of three distinct levels.
- The lowest level, the *Società Minore*, is made up by criminals who do street-level activities.
- The second level, the *Società Maggiore*, is given only to members that have killed at least three people.
- The final level is the *Società Segreta*, the core of the organization where key decisions are made.



**SACRA CORONA UNITA**

## SACRA CORONA UNITA / 2

- The Sacra Corona Unita consists of about 50 Clans with approximately 2,000 members and specializes in smuggling cigarettes, drugs, arms, and people.
- The Sacra Corona Unita collects payoffs from other criminal groups for landing rights on the southeast coast of Italy.
- This territory is a natural gateway for smuggling to and from post-Communist countries like Croatia, Serbia, and Albania.
- **With the decreasing importance of the Adriatic corridor as a smuggling canal (thanks to the normalization of the Balkans area) and a series of successful police and judicial operations against it, in recent years the Sacra Corona Unita has been considered, if not actually defeated, reduced to a fraction of its former power, which peaked around the mid-1990s.**

# 'NDRANGHETA

- The Greek origin of the name 'Ndrangheta derives from the Griko language - an ancient Greek dialect which is spoken by people in Calabria.
- **The first certain evidence of 'Ndrangheta derives from shortly after Italian unification (1861).**
- Since the late 19th century, well-organized groups of criminals have been documented in Calabria, often being referred to as *Camorra*, since there was no formal name at the time.
- The roots of the 'Ndrangheta are often traced to the *Onorata Società*, organized group in the areas of Calabria. **These secret societies** were distinct from the anarchic forms of banditry and **were organized hierarchially** with a strict code of conduct according to a sentence from the court in Reggio Calabria in 1890.



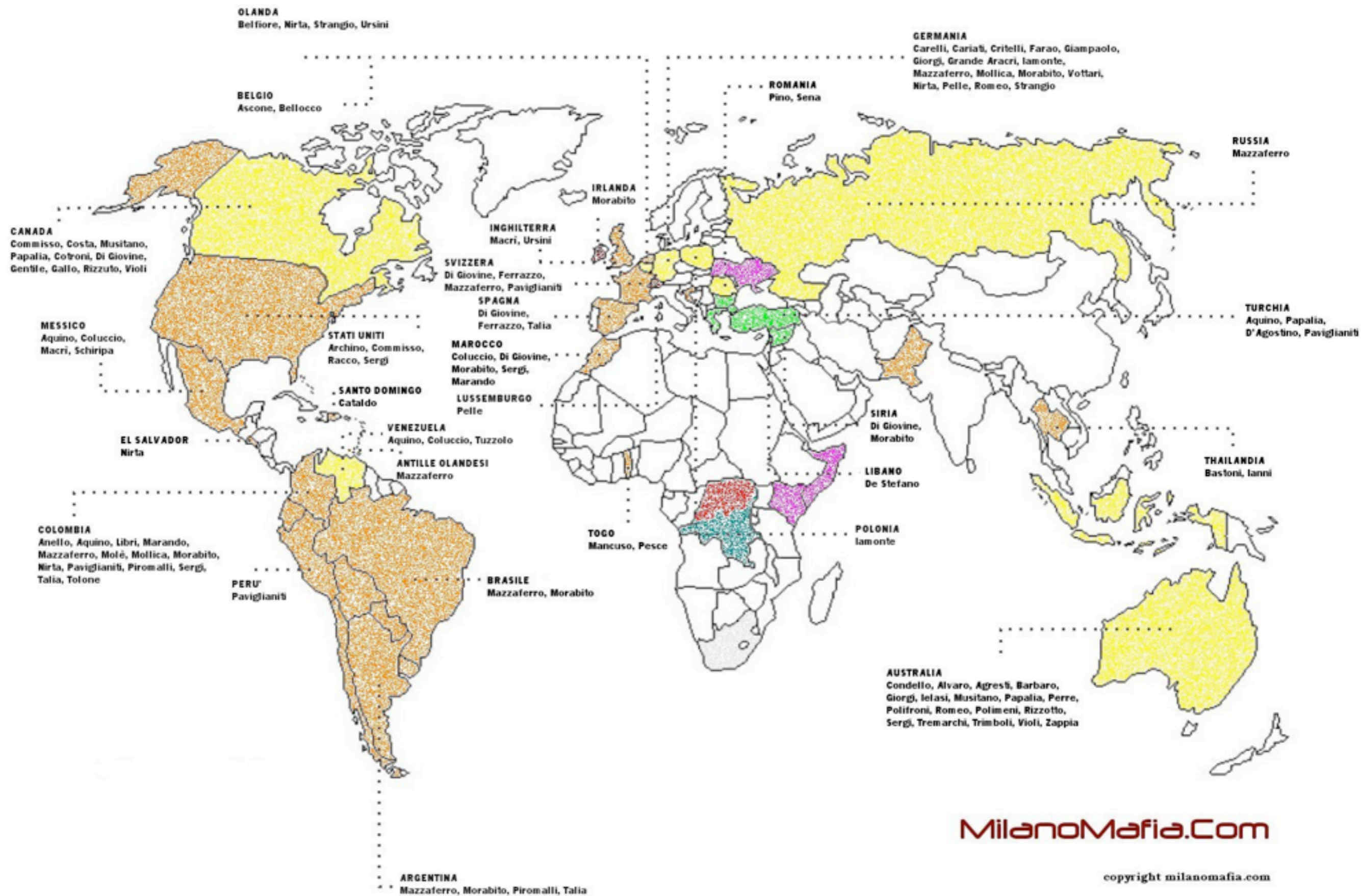
## 'NDRANGHETA / 2

- Until 1975, the 'Ndrangheta restricted their Italian operations to Calabria, mainly involved in extortion, blackmailing then started to kidnap rich people from northern Italy for ransom.
- **In the 1976 a gang war started**, killing 300 people from the criminal organization. A **Second 'Ndrangheta war** raged **from 1985 to 1991**.
- The bloody six-year war between the Condello-Imerti-Serraino-Rosmini clans and the De Stefano-Tegano-Libri-Latella clans left more than **600 deaths**.
- In the **1990s** the organization **started to invest in the illegal international drug trade**, mainly importing cocaine from Colombia.

## 'NDRANGHETA / 3

- The 'Ndrangheta is loose **confederation** of about one hundred mafia groups, called *cosche* or families, each of which claims sovereignty over a territory.
- **The '*ndrina* is the basic organizational unit.** Each '*ndrina* is autonomous on its territory and no formal authority stands above the '*ndrina* boss. If more than one '*ndrina* operates in the same town, they form a locale.
- By and large, the '*ndrine* consist of men belonging to the same family lineage.
- One becomes a member for the simple fact of being born in a mafia family although non-kin have also been admitted. **Marriages help cement relations within each '*ndrina* and to expand membership.**

# LE 'NDRINE NEL MONDO - 2010



MilanoMafia.Com

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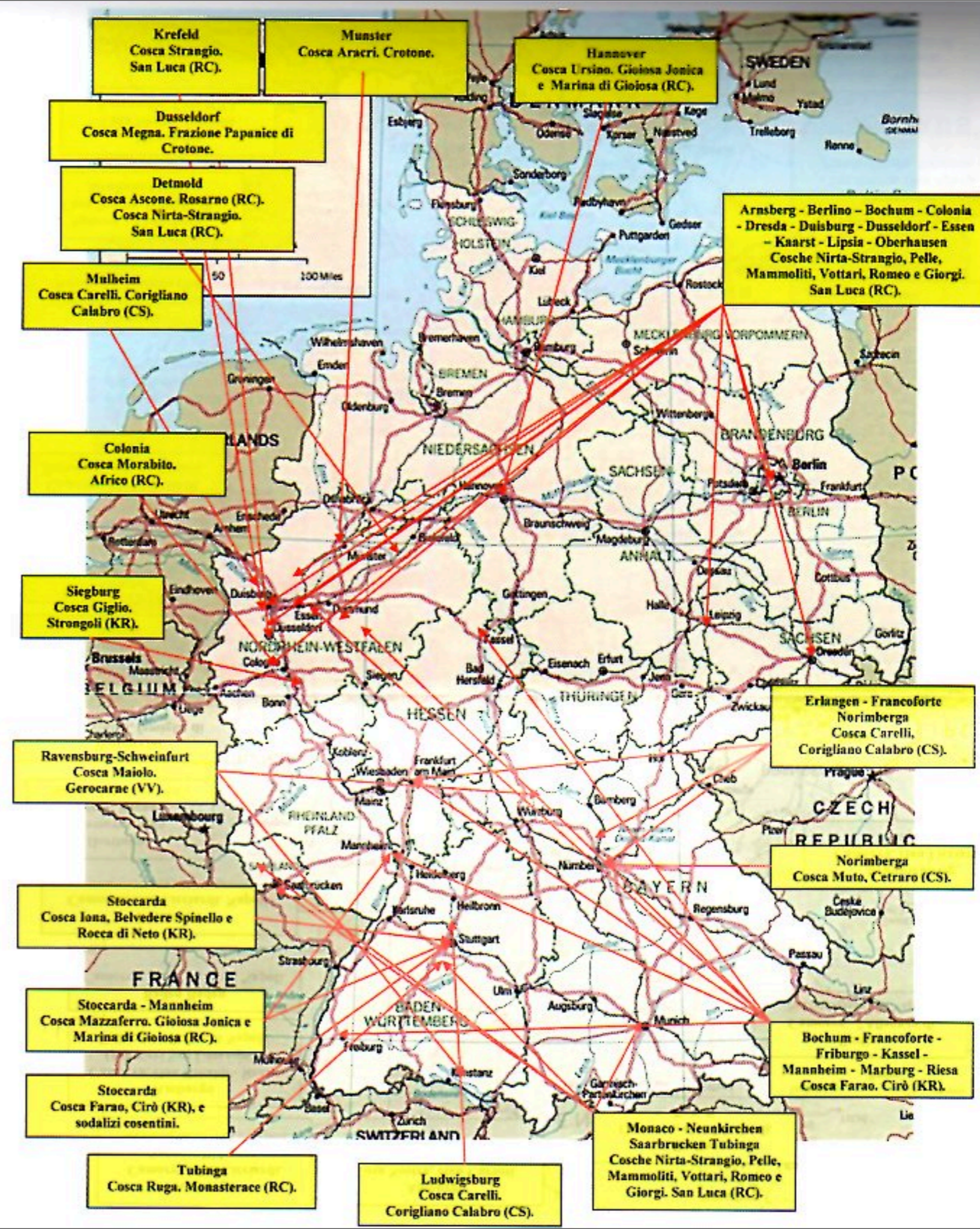
● Cocaina 
 ● Eroina 
 ● Armi 
 ● Riciclaggio - investimenti immobiliari 
 ● Traffico di rifiuti 
 ● Traffico di coltan 
 ● Traffico di materiale radioattivo 
 ● Diamanti

## 'NDRANGHETA / 5

- The bloody ambush outside a pizzeria in Duisburg, some gunmen from one 'Ndrangheta family killed six members of a rival clan, show the extent to which the mafia had settled in Germany.
- **The fall of the Berlin Wall was a turning point.** In conversations recorded by police, members of the Calabrian mob plotted a mad buying spree in the newly available former Soviet bloc". And today they know no borders.
- **All the international activities have their origins in Italy.**
- Few weeks after the Duisburg killings the Dia of Reggio Calabria arrested in the countryside near Nettuno and Aprilia, both near Rome, one man and one woman accused to have provided all the weapons for the killers in Germany.

## 'Ndrangheta in Germany

In 2009, a report by the *Bundeskriminalamt* said some **229 'Ndrangheta families (900 people)** were living in Germany, and were involved in money laundering, drug-dealing, as well as legal businesses as owners of hundreds of restaurants, and being major players in the property market in the former East.



## 'NDRANGHETA / 7

- **Each family assigns a member to a certain criminal enterprise;** if a son is good in math, he might get the loan-shark business, whereas an engineer would handle the acquisition of lucrative state building contracts.
- **The tightness of the family network also has thwarted efforts by authorities to infiltrate the crime gang.**
- When the government offered reduced jail time to mafiosi who would inform on their cohorts, few people associated with the 'Ndrangheta agreed to become turncoats.
- *"Every clan is a little Sparta"* militarized and willing to fight to the end, often egged on by the women of the family, said a famous anti-mafia prosecutor, Alberto Cisterna.

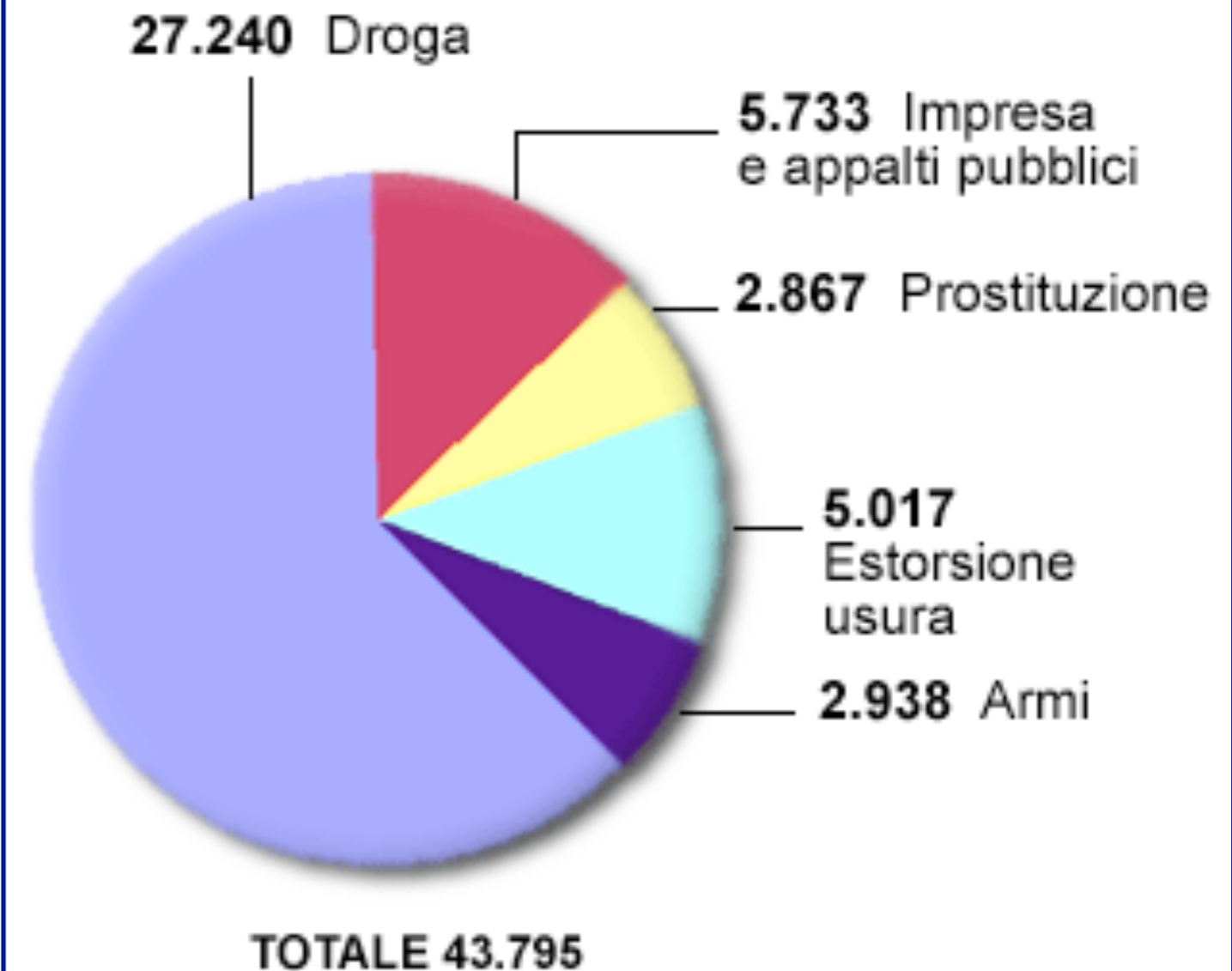
## 'NDRANGHETA / 8

- **The chiefs of the 'Ndrangheta *locali*, from every region of the world, meet regularly in Italy, every year, near a Sanctuary in the municipality of San Luca during the September Feast.**
- These annual meetings, known as the *crimine*, have traditionally served as a forum to discuss future strategies and settle disputes among the *locali*.
- **Security concerns have led to the creation in the 'Ndrangheta of a secret society within the secret society: *La Santa*. It allowed bosses to establish connections with state representatives.**

Italian anti-organized crime agencies estimated in 2007 that the 'Ndrangheta has **annual revenue of about 43 billion of Euro**, which amounts to approximately **3.5% of the GDP of Italy**. This comes mostly from illegal drug trafficking.

## Il giro d'affari della "Ndrangheta Holding"

Attività illecite valori assoluti in milioni di euro, stima 2007



Fonte: Centro Documentazione Eurispes

## 'NDRANGHETA / 10

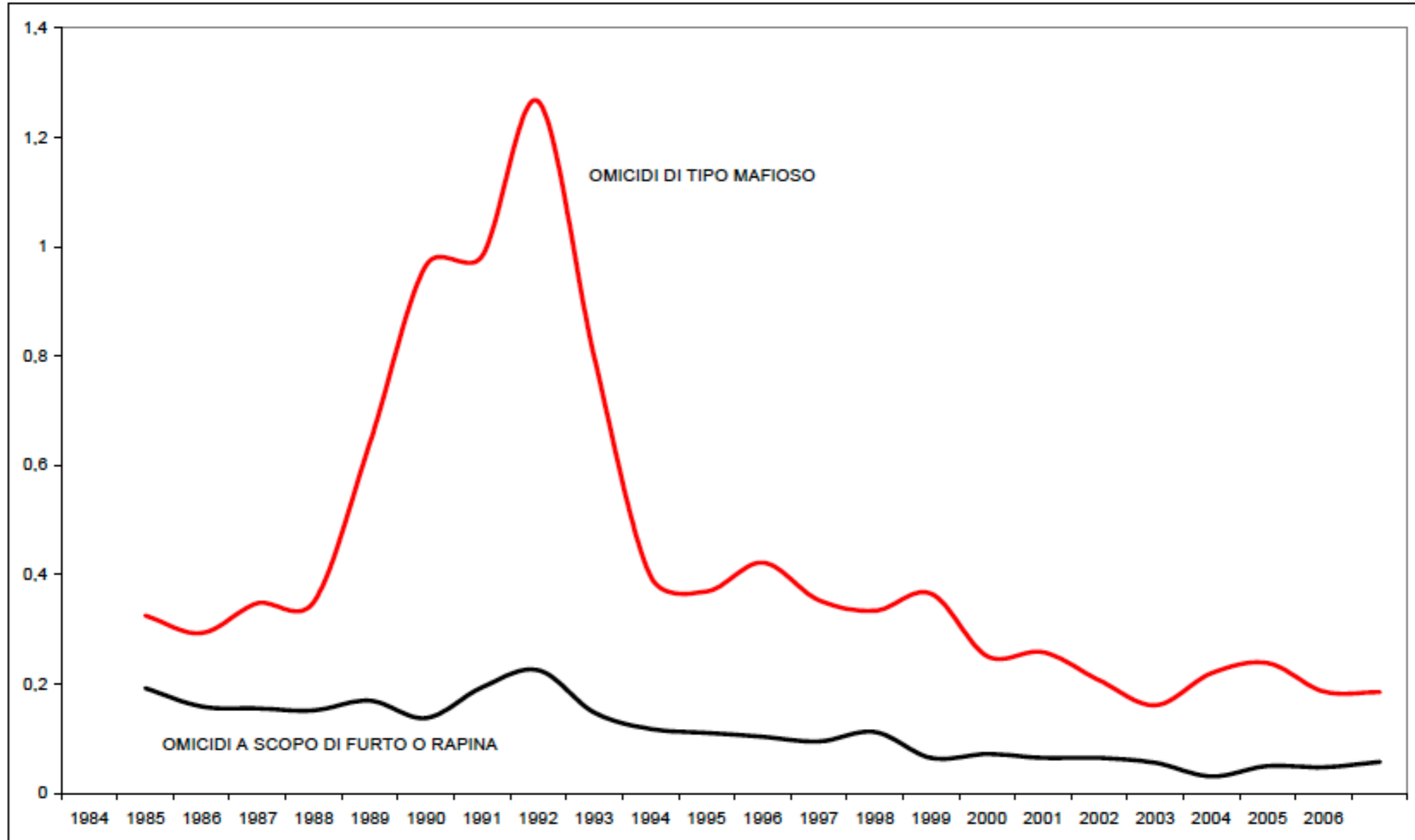
- **Over the last two decades, the syndicate has deployed its members to strategic locations** along trafficking and distribution routes, in Colombia and Venezuela, Canada, Africa, Spain and as far as Australia.
- **It takes orders from buyers in Europe** (including other mafiosi) and brokers deals with the suppliers in Colombia.
- **The 'Ndrangheta** gained the confidence of the Colombians, **eliminated the middlemen** and dealt as readily with the leftist guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-FARC as with the right-wing paramilitaries of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia - AUC.
- Roberto Pannunzi married his son Alessandro into a notorious family from Colombia's Medellin cartel as a way to cement the bonds.

## 'NDRANGHETA / II

- Italian investigators estimating that **80% of Europe's cocaine** passes through the **Calabrian port of Gioia Tauro**. Of the estimated **3,500 cargo containers** that arrive **daily, only about 25 are opened** for inspection.
- In February 2008 the Italian parliamentary Antimafia Commission concluded that the 'Ndrangheta *“controls or influences a large part of the economic activity around the port and uses the facility as a base for illegal trafficking.”*
- In its report it said that *“the entire gamma of internal or sub-contracted activities is mafia-influenced, from the management of distribution and forwarding to customs control and container storage.”*

# Percentage of mafia related killings per 100.000 italian citizens (red line) Mafia has no more need to kill, as in the past, to gain power ?

**Graf. I.2 Omicidi legati alle attività della criminalità organizzata e della criminalità comune in Italia; tassi per 100.000 abitanti; 1984-2006**



Fonte: elaborazione su dati Istat e del Dipartimento della P.S..

# Transnational links to italian mafie



# The FIFTH MAFIA

Italy's four main Mafia organisations are believed to have put aside their deadly differences to form a new and dangerous "fifth mafia" in Rome.

- Mafiosi are now targeting Rome and the surrounding region of Lazio.
- This 'New Mafia' is more business-oriented and its members put aside their differences and their different origins to accumulate wealth networking without stepping on each other's feet. The gangsters were laundering the proceeds of crime by buying into legitimate enterprises.
- “Godfathers” have struck alliances with Chinese, Russian, Albanian, Nigerian and Romanian organised criminals in Rome.

- **The first investigation about a new mafia operating in Lazio** region by the Bardellino family and involving politicians is the “Formia connection” **in 2004.**
- **The italian cannabis trafficking is now Lazio located.** A recent police operation shut down a gang composed by half member from Rome and the other half from Campania.
- **There are 450 laziali under persecution for organized crimes** arrested in others italian regions, mostly in Campania but also in Abruzzo, Emilia, Toscana, Sardegna, Umbria.
- **Rome is the first city in Italy for number of anti drug operations (2.263 in the 2008),** the second one for drug seizures (1,3 tons) and again the city number one for overdose deaths (68).

Last year in Rome 965 people member of foreign criminal organizations were arrested.

Nigerians are dedicated to cocaine, people from Algeria and Marocco are behind cannabis, serbians sell services on balcanic routes, colombians provide logistic for cocaine market with 'ndrangheta.

Pushers from Albania create sinergies with their italian collegues, terrorist from Colombia have their rapresentatives for cocaine, while 'ndranghesti are focusing on brokering and transport in Europe, all toghether meeting in some of the many "drug embassys" opened in the italian Capital.



Map from Limes, "Esiste l'Italia?", n. 2/2009.



## THE FIFTH MAFIA / 5

- Drug trafficking workers come from abroad Italy but the leaders are local and involved in local governments.
- *"This organisation is now all over Europe and even has a hand in politics"* said the *national anti-mafia* prosecutor **Mr Pietro Grasso**.
- He added that *"no country in the world"* would stop it, until the international banking system became less opaque.
- **"We can find the drugs and the people, but we cannot track the money."** mr. Grasso asked.

## THE FIFTH MAFIA / 6

- **Antonio Maria Costa-UNODC** has seen evidence that the proceeds of organised crime were "*the only liquid investment capital*" available to some banks on the brink of collapse last year. He said that a majority of the **\$352bn of drugs profits was absorbed into the economic system** as a result.
- Costa said evidence that illegal money was being absorbed into the financial system was first drawn to his attention by intelligence agencies and prosecutors.  
*"In many instances, the money from drugs was the only liquid investment capital. In the second half of 2008, liquidity was the banking system's main problem and hence liquid capital became an important factor"* he said.
- **The money is now a part of the official system and had been effectively laundered.**

Drugs is a threat to the Governance of any country, in Third World as well in Europe.

- The **U.N. Security Council**, on 8 December 2009, adopted a presidential statement that **called for greater action to combat drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and security.**
- In the statement, "*the Security Council invites the Secretary General to consider mainstreaming the issue of drug trafficking as a factor in conflict prevention strategies, conflict analysis, integrated missions' assessment and planning a peacebuilding support*".
- Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** warned that "*drug trafficking is evolving into an ever graver threat that is affecting all regions of the world*".

**MAFIA AND DRUGS**  
**Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Italy**

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