

Organization Attributes Sheet: La Camorra (Operations and Ties to Latin America)

Author: Michael Smith

Reviewed by: Phil Williams

A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Camorra is one of Italy's oldest criminal organizations and has operated in one form or another for over two centuries.• It is unclear for exactly how long the Camorra has operated in Latin America. However, in the 1980s, Umberto Ammaturo is thought to have established a virtual monopoly on cocaine trafficking from Peru to Italy.¹ According to the DEA, Ammaturo's purchases were so large that, in essence, he became a financier of the rebel movement Sendero Luminoso.²• At present, the Camorra continues to traffic cocaine from Latin America, however routes and the meeting places have changed. Evidence suggests that the pattern changed when the United States increased narcotics interdiction in the Caribbean and began initiatives like Plan Colombia. Now, Colombian groups looking to offload large shipments meet in with Camorra clans in Europe, predominantly Italy and Spain.³ Moreover, the routes have changed. Direct shipments from Latin America to Europe are often routed through West Africa as a means to confound interdiction efforts and avoid detection.⁴
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narcotics trafficking, murder, extortion, human trafficking, trafficking in human remains, counterfeiting haute couture.
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trafficking cocaine from Colombia through Colombian intermediaries via connections in Spain.⁵• Trafficking narcotics via intermediaries in the United States.⁶• Trafficking hashish via north African Groups.⁷• Trafficking human remains via the port of Naples.⁸• Trafficking and unlawful disposal of hazardous chemicals and waste.⁹
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sources account for an incredibly large and complex system of clans, alliances, and operations in multiple countries across the globe.¹⁰ According to the FBI, the Camorra operates over 100 individual clans with over 7,000 members; with 200 hundred groups operating in the U.S. alone.¹¹
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New South Wales and Sydney, Sydney Australia; Cuba; Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil; Ecuador; Saudi Arabia; North Africa; Aberdeen, Scotland; Madrid, Spain; New York, The United States; Chicago, the United States; Miami Beach, the United States; New Jersey, the United States; Montreal, Canada; the area in and around Naples, Italy; Sardinia, Italy.¹²
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organization holds no direct leaders; each clan has a leader or leaders which operate independently as part of a larger system.¹³
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)

- Leadership style depends on the clan, clans such as the Castelesi and Di Lauro's tend to be more autocratic; while clans such as the Nuvoletta's and the Castelmare groups tend to be more diffuse.¹⁴

E. Organizational Structure

a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

- The structure of the organization is cellular. Individual clans operate within a network known as the "Secondigliano System", derived from a neighborhood in city-center Naples. Each clan makes up one part of a loose federation known as the system, which operates more like business committees than organized crime groups.¹⁵

b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?

- There is both formal and informal membership in the Camorra. Many activities carried out in Naples and Sardinia are Camorra-controlled, rather than camorra run; i.e. they are run under the auspices/management of the Camorra but actual Camorristi are not directly involved. These activities are often small time enterprises such as selling drugs, illegal gambling, and the sale of counterfeit goods.¹⁶
- Those with official membership as Camorristi often take on larger macro-level projects such as coordinating the trafficking of drug shipments, the movement of counterfeit goods, the production of haute-couture clothing, the operation of legitimate front businesses, etc.¹⁷

c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)

- Decentralized. Each clan has some role to play in the system, buying and coordinating drug shipments, distribution, quality control, control of the ports etc. Accordingly each clan has its own particular style when carrying out its business. Occasionally, a larger federal body comes together to make decisions, this group is known as the directory.¹⁸

F. Resources

a. Financial

- As a whole, the Camorra operates a multi-billion dollar criminal organization. To give just a small example of how much the organization makes on cocaine, in 1990 the Neapolitan drug market was worth an estimated \$3.2 billion a year.¹⁹ In 1992, police seized assets from the La Torre clan worth over \$400 million.²⁰

b. Human

- The Camorra operates via a number of human resources. Non-associated individuals do the bulk share of the grunt work, from offloading ships with contraband goods, to production of Haute-Couture clothing, to the distribution of drugs, to the removal and bunkering of chemical waste.²¹ The group has also been known to use small time couriers to smuggle cocaine via air transit shipping, specifically into a hospital in Sardinia.²²
 - The organization employs legitimate waste brokers who are well versed in European Union environmental law.²³ These people act as middlemen between the clans and various businesses who need to dispose of waste and hazardous material. Their knowledge of EU environmental law allows them to find the loopholes and charge fees for waste removal.
 - Immigrants are often employed to sell counterfeit goods and do the work Italians won't do.
 - The Camorra doesn't operate large military wings; however they recruit kids from the
- Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

poorer neighborhoods to sell drugs and train as soldiers.²⁴

- Individual bosses and businessmen such as Umberto Ammaturo are important in maintaining the ties between groups operating in Colombia and the Camorra.

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- The Camorra strongholds are largely centered in the Campania region of Italy with individual clans operating safe houses through large villas and apartments in city center Naples.²⁵
- No sources indicate safe houses in Latin America, but the groups operate and live there and South American countries have been safe havens for Italian criminals for some time.

ii. Key routes

- Key routes for shipping are through corridors from Latin America through West Africa and north Europe.²⁶
- Key Shipping routes adopted via the former trafficking triangle known as the “French Connection” still operate in Northern Italy and Southern France.²⁷

d. Transportation

i. Land

- Within Italy, the group often moves goods via couriers using motorcycles.²⁸

ii. Sea

- The organization uses its control of the Port of Naples and front shipping companies to move goods into and out of Italy via intermodal containers²⁹

iii. Air

- Shipping packages filled with Cocaine via commercial air shipping companies.

iv. Intermodal container

- Intermodal containers are a key method of shipment in and out of the port of Naples.³⁰

G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

a. Corruption

- Often the Camorra doesn't use corruption; it simply uses its financial largesse to purchase legitimate companies which operate as fronts.

b. Concealment

- Members of the Camorra often hide in plain sight, normally in Villas or apartments in their home neighborhoods. Often the surrounding community has a stake in hiding cammoristi from police officials.

c. Deception

- The group uses a number of methods to hide cocaine and contraband goods, including hiding the product inside other, seemingly mundane shipment items such as footballs (soccerballs).³¹

d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)

- No information available

H. Prior / Existing Relationships

a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)

- The group has been known to work cooperatively with other organized crime groups in Italy and is alleged to have connections with groups operating in Colombia but no sources provide specific names.³²
- A 2009 drug conspiracy case linked suspects to what the DEA alleged was a “Camorra

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

Associate” operating in the United States. The case implicated Mexican American and Mexican nationals with ties to Mexico’s cartels in the case and suggests links to other groups in region.³³

b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.

- According to Behan, the Camorra has never colluded with the state to the same degree as the Sicilian Mafia, La Cosa Nostra. However, it has used connections with local politicians to gain access to lucrative construction and administrative contracts for trash collection and other public services.³⁴
- In 2008 an investigation was underway into alleged voter fraud committed by Camorra groups hoping to influence upcoming elections in their favor.³⁵ No particular party is indicated.

c. Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.

- In 2005 a report indicated that the Camorra was helping smuggle Al-Qaeda operatives into Europe via the network of safe houses the organization operates throughout Europe.³⁶ However, after the initial report in 2005 and various academic articles citing that same source, no other information was found regarding potential links to terrorist groups.

I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)

- While no specific source indicates ethnic orientation, most actual cammoristi come from the neighborhoods in and around Naples proper. Also, many clans, such as the Di Lauros, are multi-generational clans with father, son, and even grandsons becoming part of the business.

J. Technical Sophistication

- The Camorra is incredibly sophisticated with regards to organization and business operations. As a whole, the Camorra operates on a global scale in multiple markets in both licit and illicit enterprises. Its leaders manage to disambiguate themselves successfully from major criminal activities and have been known to avoid interdiction for decades at a time.

K. Penchant for Innovation

- With regards to innovation the group is incredibly innovative in terms of its business and organizational structure. The group is horizontally integrated with each clan or cell on equal footing with the other, working cooperatively as opposed to in opposition with the each other.

L. Activities in United States

a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities

- Drug Trafficking, front businesses

b. Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities

- Selling and trafficking of counterfeit and legitimate haute couture. Trafficking drugs and narcotics via connections with U.S. groups.³⁷

c. Linkages with US groups

i. Market/transaction links

- Latin Kings, United Blood Nation, Neta, Outlaws Motorcycle Gang, Pagans³⁸

ii. Stable supplier

- It appears that their stable suppliers are mostly Colombian groups, though no specific group has been named.

iii. Franchise arrangement

- No information found

iv. HQ and Branch office

- No information is found

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.
All research conducted according to the project manual.

M. Evaluations

a. Strengths

- The strength of the Camorra lies in how it is structured. The networked, cellular structure allows for business to continue on a macro-scale, even after major interdictions and arrests are made. Even when the Secondigliano System is upset by internal strife, war, or major arrests or interdictions, the system as a whole remains strong. There is no head to cut off, no one key figure that can bring the organization to its knees.
- The Camorra is incredibly efficient and focused more on business than on pride and honor. This makes them incredibly dangerous to deal with, any hint of impropriety between groups or with outsiders often leads to a violent end.
- The Camorra is also incredibly large but no clear estimate exists for exact numbers. The FBI estimates that over 200 Camorra clans operate in the U.S. alone.³⁹ This doesn't include their holdings in Italy, Spain, Scotland, England, Australia, Latin America, Russia, Eastern Europe or Asia.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- Strengths are also weaknesses, because there is very little formal control from an overarching governing body, often conflicts between two opposing clans can lead to bloody and protracted wars as occurred in the Secondigliano War.

c. Additional insights

- The Camorra is interested in the bottom line. It is one of the world's largest Criminal Multi-National Corporations, interested in profits however they can be made. It is possible that, given its lack of concern for environmental issues and its involvement in the smuggling and disposal of chemical and biological waste from factories, the group would be capable of smuggling CBRN material.
- However, Camorra clans would be more capable of moving CBRN material through its networks in Europe. Its networks in the U.S. are not as strong as Latin American groups and the drug trafficking business only seems to work one way from the Americas to Europe. However, the Camorra maintains connections with groups in West Africa and Latin America and given the large amounts of autonomy granted to individual clans within the Secondigliano System, it is plausible that the Camorra could traffic CBRN material from Europe to Latin America or inside Europe itself.
- Moreover, there has been a report that the Camorra has smuggled known Al-Qaeda operatives into Europe via their network of safe houses, so it is plausible that they might potentially help them do more.

Other Notes

- The Camorra's activities with Latin America seem to be largely limited to brokering deals with groups already operating in the region. Namely they appear to buy in bulk via intermediaries like Ammaturo who then coordinate shipments internationally. As the case in 2009 indicates, the group operates through associates planted in country who then can forge the appropriate networks and make the necessary deals required to ship the goods abroad.

¹ Behan, Tom. *The Camorra* (New York: Routledge, 1996) p.132.

² Ibid, p.132.

³ Jameison, Alison "Cooperation between organized crime groups around the World" *Jahrbuch für internationale Sicherheitspolitik* 1999,p.66. http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/03_jb99_04.pdf (May 23, 2011).

-
- ⁴ Cockayne, James and Williams, Phil. *The Invisible Tide: Towards an International Strategy to Deal with Drug Trafficking through West Africa* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2009) p.5.
- ⁵ "Top Drug Trafficker of Neapolitan Camorra Nabbed in Madrid" *Latin American Herald Tribune*. <http://laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=357707&CategoryId=12395> (May 23, 2011).
- ⁶ ⁶ "Mexican Cartels Unloading Drugs to Italian Mafia; Shipments Moving through U.S." *Cleveland.Com*. http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2009/04/mexican_cartels_unloading_drug.html (May 31, 2011).
- ⁷ Ibid, <http://laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=357707&CategoryId=12395> (May 23, 2011).
- ⁸ Saviano, Roberto. *Gomorra* (Milan: Mondadori Publishing, 2006) p.11.
- ⁹ Ibid, p.318.
- ¹⁰ Behan, p.128.
- ¹¹ "Italian Organized Crime" *The Federal Bureau of Investigation*. http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/organizedcrime/italian_mafia (May 23, 2011).
- ¹² Saviano, p.51.
- ¹³ Ibid, p.49.
- ¹⁴ Behan, p.111.
- ¹⁵ Saviano, p.55.
- ¹⁶ Behan, p.113.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, p.113.
- ¹⁸ Saviano, p.50.
- ¹⁹ Behan, p.123.
- ²⁰ Ibid, p.130.
- ²¹ Saviano p.16, p.311.
- ²² "Highlights: Venezuela Crime, Narcotics, Issues 15-17 Feb11" " *OSC Report In Spanish* (Internet Version- WWW)in Spanish, February 15-17, 2011, OSC: LAP20110217039001
- ²³ Saviano, p.318
- ²⁴ Ibid, p.104.
- ²⁵ Ibid, p.245.
- ²⁶ Cockayne and Williams, p.5.
- ²⁷ "Big cocaine trafficking trial opens in south of France" *AFP Domestic Service* (Internet Version-WWW) June 5, 2007, OSC: EUP20070605950035
- ²⁸ Saviano, p.31.
- ²⁹ Ibid, p.12.
- ³⁰ Ibid, p.12
- ³¹ "Alleged Italian Mobster Arrested in Ecuador for Drug Trafficking" *Antimafiaduemila.com* (Internet Version-WWW) in Italian, May 25, 2009, OSC: EUP20090526174001
- ³² "Italian Police General Says Mafia, Colombian Cartels Cooperating in Spain" *El Pais* (Internet Versio-WWW)in Spanish, January 19, 2009, OSC: EUP20090119178002
- ³³ "Mexican Cartels Unloading Drugs to Italian Mafia; Shipments Moving through U.S." *Cleveland.Com*. http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2009/04/mexican_cartels_unloading_drug.html (May 31, 2011).
- ³⁴ Behan, Tom. *See Naples and Die: The Camorra and Organized Crime* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002) 105.
- ³⁵ "More on Italian Voter Fraud Under Investigation" *La Repubblica* (Internet Version-WWW) in Italian, April 13, 2008, OSC: EUP2008041305800
- ³⁶ Pontoniere, Paolo. "In Italy, Al-Qaeda Turns to Organized Crime" *News America Media* October 25, 2005. http://infowire.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=f38d897f8f8818412fb11cc2c68b7912 (May 31, 2011).
- ³⁷ "Attorney General's Report to Congress on the Growth of Violent Street Gangs in Suburban Areas," *National Drug Intelligence Center* April 2008. <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs27/27612/appendc.htm> (May 23, 2011).
- ³⁸ Ibid, <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs27/27612/appendc.htm> (May 23, 2011)
- ³⁹ "Italian Organized Crime" *The Federal Bureau of Investigation*. http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/organizedcrime/italian_mafia (May 23, 2011).