

A Response to “The Mobility of Criminal Groups”

**A reflection in light of recent research on
the functional diversification of a Camorra clan**

by

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Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The present discussion paper will briefly review the push and pull framework outlined by Morselli et al. (2010), according to which two separate types of factors underlie the mobility of criminal groups: (a) push factors, which ‘refer to a force which drives criminal groups away from a setting’; and (b) pull factors, which ‘refer to forces which draw criminal groups to a setting’. The paper shall identify and address some limitations of the framework, and present some suggestions for the development of an enhanced version. The push and pull framework will then be applied to a recent case study on the movement of a Camorra crime group from Campania (Italy) to Scotland and the Netherlands. The concluding section summarizes the findings and provides law enforcement officials and policy makers with a series of recommendations.

Findings

The push and pull framework is a relevant analytical tool for understanding the factors underlying the mobility of criminal groups, but it should be refined taking into account: (a) the nature of a given criminal group; and (b) the nature of the movement. A distinction is made here between purely predatory groups (PP-Groups) and groups that may provide some kind of illicit goods and services (GS-Groups). As regards to the nature of the movement, a distinction is made between three different types: (a) the movement of one or a few members over a limited period of time; (b) the opening up of a branch in the new locale; and (c) the moving of headquarters, boss and common funds from the old to the new locale. The nature of both the group and its movement may have a substantial impact on the type of push and pull factors, and therefore should be taken into account.

The evidence on the movement of a Camorra criminal group (the ‘La Torre’ clan) from Italy to Scotland and The Netherlands shows that push and pull factors may interact. Criminals may be pushed to leave a given territory, and at the same time, they may choose the new area according to the expected licit and illicit opportunities. In the La Torre case, the following pull factors played a role: for Scotland, (a) the lack of an Anti-Mafia legislation, and therefore the powerlessness of the Italian authorities to extradite any suspect; and (b) the presence of a fairly vibrant economy, driven by the oil and gas industry operating offshore in Aberdeen; for Amsterdam, (c) the strategic location of the city at the intersection of many drug trafficking routes, (d) the presence *in situ* of criminal brokers involved in trafficking of drugs and other illegal goods, and (e) the presence of other two entrepreneurs originally from Mondragone (with economic interests in the food sector, legal gambling, and drug trafficking). The study also shows that Mafia groups tend to be highly localized and dependent on their territory of origin; yet, they may operate

along the lines of a functional diversification across territories, for instance, opening hubs abroad. Furthermore, each hub may operate in a different way from how the group operates in its territory of origin.

Policy implications and recommendations

Finally, the following policy implications and recommendations may be drawn from the current review and analysis:

- Economic sectors in which the share of untraceable transactions is high should be monitored closely, since they may be at risk of money laundering.
- A given territory may be made less attractive by sending credible signals to criminals about the willingness of local authorities to combat crime, and by promptly reacting to any attempt to seize a criminal opportunity made by a certain group.
- When dealing with groups involved in the supply of illegal goods or services (GS-groups), measures may be taken in order to ensure that demand and supply meet at a higher equilibrium price, thus reducing the number of potential customers (provided that the demand is sufficiently elastic).
- Keeping the illegal markets competitive – as suggested by Morselli et al. – is certainly a good strategy for preventing the growth of criminal groups, but it may have a drawback that law enforcement agencies should be prepared to face: a potential increase in the level of violence in a given area.
- Given the fact that criminal groups may diversify their activities and operational strategies, there is a need to develop a diversified response by the authorities.

1. The Mobility of Criminal Groups

The movement of criminal organizations has received increased attention from scholars, practitioners, and journalists, who have often described it in apocalyptic terms. Recently, the Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment, compiled by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (2010), claimed that ‘the growth of global crime is a threat to the rule of law’ and that ‘transnational criminal markets crisscross the planet [...], hundreds of billions of dollars in dirty money flow through the world every year, distorting local economies, corrupting institutions and fuelling conflict’ (p. 19). Beyond the apocalyptic tone, there is a strong need for developing a powerful analytical tool to help scholars and practitioners in dissecting and explaining transnational criminal phenomena. The framework outlined by Carlo Morselli, Mathilde Turcotte and Valentina Tenti (2010) is a significant step forward in this direction.

The work of Morselli et al. provides scholars and practitioners in the field with an excellent review of the literature on the topic of criminal group mobility. The authors went well beyond a mere collection of case studies and theories, offering the reader a stimulating re-interpretation of previous research through the lens of a relevant ‘push/pull’ framework. According to this framework, two separate types of factors may have an impact on the mobility of criminal groups: (a) push factors, which ‘refer to a force which drives criminal groups away from a setting’; and (b) pull factors, which ‘refer to forces which draw criminal groups to a setting’ (p. 6). Undoubtedly, it is a framework of great analytical value, and highly relevant for policymakers as well.

Correlated with the push and pull factors are two types of criminal mobility, also labelled ‘contexts’, namely (a) strategic and (b) emergent. In the first scenario (‘Strategic Mobility’), criminal groups strategically organize themselves around available opportunities, taking control of new markets or expanding their business in new areas with little or no constraints. As Morselli et al. point out, the ‘popular image of organized crime

generally perceive participants to be strategic (or intentional) in their actions. More often, such claims are preceded by the premise that mobility is an effortless task for any group or organization” (p. 7). In the second scenario (‘Emergent Mobility’), the focus is on the vulnerability of a given context, and the criminal opportunities that such a context may offer to criminal groups. As explained by the authors, ‘a criminogenic environment establishes the pull factors or context in which criminal groups may emerge. [...] The vulnerabilities in such settings allow criminal groups to form and evolve, as well as offering opportunities that may attract established groups in other geographical locations’ (p. 7). Morselli et al. argue that in the mainstream depiction of organized crime, the strategic behaviour of criminal groups is often excessively amplified, while the criminogenic factors of a given context are usually downplayed.

The framework outlined in Morselli et al.’s paper should enable scholars and practitioners to further avoid such risks of misinterpretation, and lead them to a better understanding of the factors underlying the mobility of criminal groups. Many scholars have stressed the relevance of an analytical approach to the study of complex social phenomena (e.g. Hedström 2005; Hedström and Bearman 2009), and the push/pull framework is arguably a powerful tool to be used for both academic and policing purposes. Notwithstanding its relevance for researchers and policymakers, the push/pull framework (and the associated strategic/emergent taxonomy) reveals some limitations on which I would like to elaborate. In the next section I shall provide the reader with a critical assessment of these limitations.

2. Refining the Push/Pull Framework

In Morselli et al.’s work, two key analytical issues related to the push/pull framework have not been adequately addressed: (a) the nature of the criminal group under scrutiny; and (b) the nature of the movement we are seeking to account for. As I shall discuss below, both these aspects have a direct impact on the push and pull factors, and therefore they should be taken into account when explaining the mobility of a given criminal group.

The Nature of a Criminal Group

Let me start by addressing the first point, that is to say the nature of the criminal group under scrutiny. Despite the fact that Morselli et al.'s work does not provide the reader with an explicit definition of 'criminal group', it should be safe to assume that this concept is taken in its broadest sense, which includes every form of criminal organization, regardless of the type of offence committed by its members. Such a definition has the feature of covering the vast majority of the phenomena that take place in the underworld. As maintained by Morselli (2009: 1), criminal organizations may vary along a quite extensive continuum, ranging from 'simple co-offending decisions [...] to sophisticated designs to monopolize a given market or geographical territory'. However, precisely because the underworld is populated by such a variety of different criminal phenomena, an excessively broad concept risks being rather ineffective, or even misleading. For instance, a group that attempts to monopolize a market and a gang of robbers arguably embody two distinctive criminal phenomena, and should be classified accordingly. Instead of using a concept that represents their lowest common denominator, we should seek some relevant features that differentiate the phenomena taking place in the underworld. A conceptual framework built on such features will ultimately be more analytically powerful.

We may have several kinds of *fundamentum divisionis*. For instance, one could be the attempt of a given criminal group to monopolize a certain market, following a well-recognized argument put forward by the Nobel Prize winner Thomas Schelling (1971). For our purpose, I would suggest a different one, based on two categories:

- Groups that are purely predatory (PP)
- Groups that may provide some kind of illicit goods and services (GS).

Although simple, this typology should help scholars and practitioners to differentiate between two kinds of criminal groups that I consider to be deeply different. A gang of

burglars is a classical example of PP-groups: they do not satisfy any genuine demand in the new locale, as opposed to a hypothetical group of drug dealers. Gangs of Eastern European burglars are active in many Western European countries, including Italy and Spain. Surely, this typology can be elaborated further, for instance by dividing the groups that provide private protection (Mafias: Gambetta 1993) from the other GS-groups. It may also be argued that, in reality, the nature of a criminal phenomenon is never as clear as that. Yet, as a sort of Weberian ideal-type, the typology remains of great help in discriminating among criminal groups whose goals and activities are largely different.

Why does this typology matter so much for the explanation of criminal mobility? Because it can be argued that the type of push and pull factors varies depending on the nature of a given group. It may be argued that a certain criminogenic factor might have an effect on the mobility of a PP-group, but not on a GS-group. For instance, a mass demand for some illegal goods might account for the mobility of GS-groups, but not of PP-groups; and the same goes for push factors like 'poorly regulated economic sectors', or other criminogenic conditions that may be present in legitimate sectors (Morselli et al. 2010: 27). Contrariwise, some pull factors that might account for the mobility of PP-groups, like the technology of anti-intrusion systems in the new area, may not have any impact on the mobility of GS-groups.

A joint analysis of push/pull factors and the type of criminal groups (PP/GS) would greatly increase the analytical value of the framework, and may disclose important policy implications.

The Nature of the Movement

Not only the nature of a criminal group should be better defined, but also the nature of the movement. As for the type of criminal groups, movements may be classified according to a vast variety of characteristics, for instance the distance between the points of departure and arrival. For our purposes, I would suggest the following typology:

- Type A: movement of one or a few members over a limited period of time;
- Type B: opening up of a branch of the group in the new locale;
- Type C: moving of the headquarters, boss and common funds from the old to the new locale.

In the Type B mobility, the core business tends to remain located in the territory of origin; contrariwise, in the Type C mobility, the core business of a given group is also relocated to the new area. Push and pull factors may change according to the type of mobility.

Movements may indeed be facilitated by the nature of borders (thick / porous), although the impact of the latter on the first is far from straightforward as we often tend to believe. For instance, the porousness of a given border may be a facilitating factor for some specific criminal activities such as smuggling and trafficking, but these activities do not necessarily imply the movement of criminal organizations involved (in its place, we can find strategic alliances among groups or repeated cooperative exchanges). Furthermore, the nature of borders may facilitate some kinds of movements and not others: for instance, it may be argued that porous borders might have a greater impact on the movement of individual criminals or on Type A movements, rather than on Type B or C. In the same vein, the type of criminal activity carried out by the group should be taken into account. The nature of borders is just one of the pull factors that may explain the mobility of a given group, and it does not necessarily always play a role. A broader discussion about the impact of the nature of borders (including regulatory frameworks and policy) on the movement of criminals and criminal groups is a theme that deserves more research and perhaps another paper.

3. Assessing a Camorra Colony in Scotland

Having discussed (and refined) the push and pull framework at a theoretical level, let us now turn to an empirical application of such a framework. In the following pages, I shall trace the history and activities of a Camorra group that operated across at least three countries (Italy, Great Britain, and The Netherlands), running a protection racket as well as dealing with some so-called transnational illegal activities (drug trafficking; the trafficking of counterfeit money; international money laundering). I will, in turn, apply the push and pull framework to account for the mobility of this group. Furthermore, reviewing case studies such as this one is also a means of inductively identifying new push and pull factors, and thus further refining the framework.

‘Camorra’ is the term commonly used to refer to a fairly vast set of Mafia-like groups based primarily in Campania, a region in Southern Italy (whose capital is Naples). According to an estimate by the Italian Anti-Mafia Investigative Bureau (*Direzione Investigativa Antimafia*: Dia 2008), the number of groups currently active is 142, of whom 32 are classified as ‘minor’. Camorra groups are also referred to as ‘clans’. They are not equally spread across the region, but mainly concentrated in two provinces: Naples (95 groups) and Caserta (from 11 to 21, depending on the estimate). As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Campana 2010), they show a relatively low degree of coordination – much lower than in the case of the Sicilian Cosa Nostra or Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta. There is no evidence of a centralized structure, or anything that resembles the Sicilian Provincial Commission (leaving aside the Regional Commission; for the Sicilian case, see Gambetta 1993). Yet, there is evidence of some cartels among groups¹: one of the biggest and most

¹ I take ‘cartel’ as an alliance (or explicit agreement) among criminal families developed with the purpose of establishing monopoly control over the provision of certain illicit goods or services in a given area.

powerful is the Casalesi cartel, which comprises around 15 groups (the number varies from 11 to 16, depending on the estimate: Dia 2003, vol. 2: 87).

Although the Camorra families are still deep-rooted in the Campania region, some groups have attempted over the years to move outside their territory of origin. One example is the 'La Torre' clan (named after the founder, Francesco Tiberio La Torre), whose members moved to Aberdeen (Scotland) and Amsterdam (The Netherlands) starting from the 1980s onward. The movement abroad of the La Torre group has received fairly extensive coverage in two books recently published, the fortunate bestseller by Roberto Saviano, *Gomorra* (2007), and a contribution by the former chair of the Italian Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission, Francesco Forgione (*Mafia Export*: 2009). Both authors emphasize the strategic aspects of the movement, and give the reader the impression that organized crime groups are sort of quasi-omnipotent organizations, thus able to gain control of any market almost everywhere. As Morselli et al. suggest, this is seldom the case, and it is therefore worth taking a closer look at the La Torre case.

From Mondragone to Aberdeen (and Amsterdam)

Mondragone is a town of 27,000 inhabitants in the Campania region, located about 50 kilometres from Naples. In Roman times, it was renowned for its beautiful villas and baths, and was one of the favorite destinations of Cicero, when he was looking for relaxation outside Rome. Today, Mondragone's economy is mainly based on public sector jobs, small trading, farming, construction and manufacturing. Compared to the Italian national average, Mondragone shows an over-representation of three sectors: (a) public sector; (b) construction; and (c) agriculture (a result in line with the findings of Lavezzi 2008 for Sicily).

From at least the 1970s onwards, the La Torre clan has had its base in Mondragone (RCC 2000). In 1991, the central authorities dismantled the city council on the grounds that it

was under heavy pressure from organized crime members (the so-called ‘Mafia infiltration’)².

In the early 1980s, the eldest son of the founder – Antonio La Torre – left Mondragone and moved to Aberdeen (Scotland), where he married a Scottish girl (in 1982). He was then followed by one of his cousins, together with his cousin’s wife. In the early 1990s, another cousin of Augusto and Antonio moved first to Milan (Northern Italy) and then to Amsterdam (The Netherlands), where he lived in a flat near the Amsterdam South railway station (from where it is possible to reach Schiphol Intercontinental Airport in only eight minutes). Occasionally, some fugitives from Mondragone were hosted in both Amsterdam and Aberdeen, sometimes for significant periods of time. Abroad, the La Torre group even managed to recruit a British citizen, Brandon Queen. According to Saviano (2007), he was the first Brit to receive full membership to a Camorra clan. He has been on the payroll of the group for years, and was entitled to receive a monthly salary (also during his period in prison; RCC 2000). At the time of the police investigation (1998–1999), six members were living and conducting business abroad: two in Aberdeen, one in Woking (Southern England, near Heathrow Airport) and two in Amsterdam (plus one in a British jail). Besides these, Antonio La Torre should also be virtually added to the ‘expats’. Despite the fact that he was forced to temporarily move back to Italy when his brother Augusto, the then boss of the group, received a 22-year definitive sentence, he nevertheless still kept holding substantial economic interest in Aberdeen, and exchanged regular phone contact with his cousins in Scotland (Antonio’s family also never moved back to Italy). Given the evidence discussed so far, one might be tempted to conclude that the La Torre clan managed to strategically expand its activities abroad and that this movement led to a stable presence in the new locale (a phenomenon completely different from a simple ‘hit and run’

² According to Italian legislation, it is possible to dismantle a city council when links between local politicians and organized crime groups emerge. The decision is taken by the government, following a request from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

or Type A movement in the typology discussed in Section 2). However, such a simple assessment of the events would remain largely unsatisfactory.

Through a systematic analysis of the phone conversations wiretapped by the police, I have reconstructed not only those activities that have been carried out by each member, but also where. All the information has been double checked with other court files, and additional interviews with police officers, prosecutors and journalists have been carried out. The results of this empirical analysis are extremely telling.

At the end of the 1990s, the La Torre group was running a protection racket in Mondragone, where the majority of its members were still based (more than 80%)³. As mentioned before, six members (plus Antonio La Torre) were living and operating abroad. However, the group never managed to expand its core business – the protection racket – outside its territory of origin. The presence of some key figures in Aberdeen, including the son of the founder – who in turn became the boss – two of his cousins and even a British tough guy, has not proved sufficient for this purpose. Instead, the group operated along the lines of functional diversification.

In Aberdeen, they set up legal companies in the food and catering sector (including two restaurants), the building sector and real estate. Aberdeen turned out to be a hub mainly devoted to the investments in the legal economy: a place where the group was able to launder its money and make some additional profits from it. Conversely, Amsterdam was a hub devoted to the investments in the illegal economy, mainly drugs and counterfeiting money. There is no evidence of any protection activity in Aberdeen or Amsterdam.

³ Incidentally, this finding supports the view that the La Torre group can be interpreted as a Mafia-type organization, where a Mafia is defined as ‘a specific economic enterprise, and industry which produces, promotes, and sells private protection’ (Gambetta 1993: 1). For more details, see Campana 2010.

Drawing on the information collected by the police and included in the court files, I was also able to reconstruct the criminal record of each member. Out of the six members who left Italy, five had previous convictions at the time of moving and/or were wanted by the police. When he left Mondragone, Antonio La Torre was wanted by the Italian authorities and officially deemed 'untraceable'. Also, his cousin Michele was under investigation for his involvement with a Mafia-type association when he moved to Aberdeen; and the same went for the third cousin who had moved to Amsterdam. The only 'expat' with a clean criminal record was the one based in Southern England and strategically located close to Heathrow Airport. He was entrusted with transporting the money from Naples to Britain, and a clean criminal record was an essential requirement for this task.

Let us now turn to the push and pull factors related to the La Torre case. The following points have emerged:

- The members of the group who left Italy were pushed to do so, mainly because of pressure from the law enforcement agencies;
- However, even if they might not have strategically and rationally decided to leave Italy, it seems that they strategically chose their destination, at least to some extent.
- In the choice of destination country, pull factors certainly mattered. In the case of Scotland, there were two main factors: (a) the lack of an Anti-Mafia legislation, and therefore the powerlessness of the Italian authorities to extradite any suspect from Scotland⁴; and (b) the presence of a fairly vibrant economy, driven by the oil and

⁴ Before the European Arrest Warrant came into force (from 2004 onwards), the membership of a Mafia-type organization was not considered a criminal offence under Scottish Criminal

gas industry operating offshore in Aberdeen. In the case of Amsterdam, the main pull factors were: (a) the strategic location of the city at the intersection of many drug trafficking routes; (b) the presence *in situ* of criminal brokers involved in trafficking of drugs and other illegal goods; and (c) the presence of other two entrepreneurs originally from Mondragone (with economic interests in the food sector, legal gambling and drug trafficking).

- A given area might offer criminal opportunities or favourable local conditions (pull factors), but how did the criminals happen to know them in this case? Though the evidence on this point is not decisive, some interesting suggestions still emerge from the La Torre case. According to the Italian Carabinieri, two entrepreneurs from Mondragone have been conducting business in Amsterdam since the 1980s (where they owned restaurants and casinos, but were also involved in drug trafficking). Both have maintained strong ties with Mondragone over the years, flying in and out on a regular basis (one of the two also owned a bathing beach and restaurant in Mondragone). The Carabinieri maintain that both Augusto and Antonio La Torre knew the two entrepreneurs, and eventually started to do business together. Therefore, it is likely that the La Torres had received detailed inside information from them on opportunities in The Netherlands.
- It is harder to identify how the information circulated from Aberdeen to Mondragone. All what we know is that Antonio La Torre met his future Scottish wife at the beginning of the 1980s (however, we still do not know where) and, at the same time, at least another person originally from the Naples area was working in Aberdeen (where he moved in the late 1970s and eventually became a

Law, and therefore defendants charged with Mafia-type offences could not be prosecuted or extradited to Italy.

restaurateur after a first job as an offshore diver – he was then arrested and extradited in 2007 for Mafia-related offences committed with Antonio La Torre).

- Whilst it is crucial to analytically assess push and pull factors separately, it should also be borne in mind that they may easily interact. In the La Torre case, for instance, both push and pull factors should be taken into account when seeking a full explanation for the mobility and its distinctive features (in a nutshell, where the criminals moved to and for what purpose).
- The study also showed that Mafia groups tend to be highly localized and dependent on their territory of origin. Moving the protection racket is not an easy task, and a fairly rare occurrence (a finding consistent with Varese's theory of transplantation; Varese 2006; 2011). Rather, instances of diversification seem to be much more frequent. This does not imply that the diversification process does not have any impact on the economies of the new areas, but simply that the same phenomenon may appear in different forms depending on the area.
- Each hub may operate in a different way from how the group does in its territory of origin (e.g., a Mafia group might not seek to monopolize the markets in which it operates abroad, contrary to what happens in the territory of origin).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The critical assessment of Morselli et al.'s work and the empirical analysis of the movement of a Camorra group have revealed some noteworthy aspects:

- In order to make the push/pull framework a more powerful tool, two crucial aspects should be better spelled out: (a) the nature of the criminal group under scrutiny; and (b) the nature of the movement we are seeking to account for. Regarding the first point, I would suggest making a distinction between groups that are purely predatory (PP) and groups that may provide some kind of illicit goods and services (GS). Regarding the nature of movement, at least three different types should be taken into account: (i) movement of one or a few members over a limited period of time; (ii) opening up of a branch in the new locale; and (iii) shifting of the headquarters, boss and common funds from the old to the new locale.
- The nature of both the group and movement may have a substantial impact on the kind of push and pull factors that can account for the mobility of a given group. It is therefore crucial to redefine the framework including those specifications to better grasp the variety of the push and pull factors that may operate in the underworld.
- Push and pull factors may interact and should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Once a researcher has spelled out and separately assessed the relevant push and pull factors, he/she should also consider their potential interaction and model it accordingly. Likewise, the categories of 'emergent' and 'strategic' movement are also not mutually exclusive, and interactions between the two may take place.
- Unlike many popular accounts, strategic behaviour should not be overestimated. Yet, it still plays a role, particularly in the case of purely predatory groups (e.g. the groups of burglars which may strategically choose to travel to an area rather than

- Mafia groups tend to be local in scope and highly dependent on their territory of origin (a finding consistent with Reuter 1985 and Gambetta 1993). This does not necessarily imply that they may not operate abroad. As proved by Varese (2006; 2011), under certain conditions Mafia groups may be successful in moving the protection racket to a new locale; he also suggested using the term ‘transplantation’ in referring to these instances. Alongside a few cases of transplantation, there are many more cases in which the Mafia groups moved abroad but did not manage to expand their core business in the new areas. I would use the term ‘diversification’ in referring to these instances.

The movement of criminal groups and the policy implications that eventually follow may vary greatly depending on the nature of the group involved and the markets in which it operates (or aims to operate). For instance, a demand/supply approach may be useful to interpret and contrast the movement of GS-groups, but it is of very little help with regards to PP-groups. Nevertheless, despite its brevity and the fact of being a single-case study, the previous discussion has unveiled some policy implications:

- Economic sectors in which the share of untraceable transactions is high should be monitored closely, since they may be at risk of money laundering.
- Investments of illegal proceeds in the legal economy may be difficult to trace, especially when the crime and the investment are carried out in different countries. Suspicious business practices should be monitored closely (the La Torres opened and then suddenly closed at least seven companies in Aberdeen only).

- A given territory may be made less attractive by sending credible signals to criminals about the willingness of local authorities to combat crime, and by promptly reacting to any attempt to seize a criminal opportunity made by a certain group.
- More generally, when dealing with groups involved in the supply of illegal goods or services (GS-group), measures may be taken in order to ensure that demand and supply meet at a higher equilibrium price, thus reducing the number of potential customers (provided that the demand is sufficiently elastic). For instance, increased pressure from law enforcement agencies may result in driving up the costs that a given group has to face, and thus the selling price of a certain illegal good. If the demand for the illegal good is quite elastic – meaning that consumers are sensitive enough to a price change, as in the case of occasional cocaine or ecstasy users – law enforcement agencies will be successful in reducing consumption. However, such measures can be ineffective when applied to goods whose demand is rather inelastic, because customers are not so price sensitive (e.g. heroin addicts), and therefore willing to buy about the same amount of the good even at sensibly high prices (note that, in this case, the extra cost generated by the increased law enforcement pressure will ultimately be passed on to the customers).
- Morselli et al. (p. 37) suggest that the pressure of law enforcement agencies on criminal groups results in keeping the illegal market competitive, and thus prevents the growth of criminal organizations; yet, this strategy may have a drawback that law enforcement agencies should be prepared to face: a potential increase in the level of violence in a given area (e.g., as a consequence of power vacuums).
- Finally, given the fact that criminal groups may diversify their activities and operational strategies, there is a need to develop a diversified response by the authorities.

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