

## EXTORTION IN ITALY

Extortion racketeering in Italy is a complex criminal phenomenon due to the types of perpetrators involved and the relationships they create with the victims (Transcrime, 2009). Historically, the Italian mafia-groups (Camorra, Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta) have been deeply involved in extortion racketeering against legal and illegal actors within those areas where they had originated and exerted a strong control over territory and people (Gambetta, 1993; Paoli, 2003; Scaglione, 2008). However, since the last two-three decades, as mafias have spread also over Central and Northern Italian regions so has extortion racketeering (Asmundo, 2011; Gunnarson, 2015; Transcrime, 2013).

Existing studies reveal that extortion racketeering in Italy is systemic (La Spina et al., 2014; Lisciandra, 2014; Scaglione, 2008; Transcrime, 2009). This means that it is rooted and extended across territories and represents an important part of organised crime activities (Savona and Sarno, 2014). OCGs involved in extortion racketeering have hierarchical structures and tend to create parasitic and symbiotic relationships with their victims (Filocamo, 2007; SOS Impresa – Confesercenti, 2008; Transcrime, 2009). OCGs also engage in other criminal activities such as fraud, drug trafficking/production, forgery, crimes against the public administration and illegal activities related to prostitution (Transcrime, 2009). Extortion racketeering in Italy is also perpetrated by foreign OCGs – from Eastern European countries or from Far Eastern countries (e.g. China) – who extort their fellow-nationals and businesses set up within their ethnic communities (Becucci, 2015; Transcrime, 2009).

Italian mafias use extortion racketeering as a way to control the territory by infiltrating legitimate economy and restricting the activities of criminal actors (such as drug dealers) that do not belong to their organisations (La Spina et al., 2014; Lisciandra, 2014; Savona and Sarno, 2014). According to judicial evidence, extortion racketeering of businesses by Italian mafias consists in the imposition of regular or ad hoc payments or other types of transactions, such as supplying raw materials, services or workers to the victims (Lisciandra, 2014; Sciarrone, 2009; Transcrime, 2013).

The Italian *Criminal Code* defines extortion racketeering in Article 629 §1 and Article 629 §2. The former focuses on general extortion as follows: “Any person who, with violence or threat, forces another person to do or not to do something which involves an unlawful gain for the offender or another person and causes loss for others is punished with an imprisonment of between 5 and 10 years and with a fine of between €1,000 and €4,000.” The latter punishes extortion racketeering: “Imprisonment of between 6 and 20 years and a fine of between €5,000 and €15,000 if the crime is committed under the circumstances cited in the last paragraph of article 628”, which include violence and threat committed by a person belonging to an organisation as described under article 416-*bis*, which defines mafia-type associations.

The official statistics on extortion racketeering are collected by the Ministry of Interior within the SDI (Sistema d'Indagine) database.<sup>1</sup> However, these data refer to the wider phenomenon of extortion, which entails not only extortion racketeering but also other typologies of extortion (e.g. kidnapping for extortion, occasional extortion among individuals, etc.), which usually represent the majority of reported cases. Therefore, statistics on extortion should not be considered reliable for analysing the extent of extortion racketeering in Italy. Besides official statistics, alternative data to analyse the extent of the phenomenon in Italy may be retrieved by victimisation surveys and estimates on the illegal revenues earned by Italian OCGs (Lisciandra, 2014; Mugellini, 2012; Transcrime, 2013).

In 2008, Transcrime carried out the first Italian business victimisation survey (Mugellini, 2012). The main key findings concerning extortion racketeering against businesses were the following:

- 10.9 % of businesses in Italy were worried about being victims of extortion racketeering, with a higher share (20 %) for businesses located in the Southern regions of the country (8.3 % in the North);
- 1.7 % of businesses had been victims of extortion racketeering, and 29.1 % of them had been victims of protection racketeering;
- 1.4 % of businesses located in the Southern provinces and 0.1 % of those situated in the rest of the country had experienced at least one extortion episode;
- 6.6 % of Italian businesses declared that they had reported an extortion episode to the police, while 19.8 % replied that they had informed the police without formal reporting. 73.6 % of the victimised businesses had not reported to the police.

Lisciandra estimated both the most affected economic sectors (Table 1) and Italian regions (Table 2) in terms of monetary extortions and illegal revenues accrued by the Italian mafias (Lisciandra, 2014; Transcrime, 2013). As Table 1 shows, wholesale and retail sectors are the most affected businesses, with overall revenues ranging from €1,370 to €2,430 million and the greatest number of observations. Construction is the second most extorted sector and its share varies between 20.1 % in the lower bound down to 14.3 % in the upper bound. As Table 2 shows, the most exposed regions are traditional areas of influence of OCGs: Campania, Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia. They account together for the 65 % of national revenues of extortions. However, some non-traditional areas (Northern and Central Italy) show a significant presence of extortion racketeering: Veneto, Piedmont, Lombardy, Lazio, and Tuscany.

Since the 1990s, the Italian legislation has developed several administrative measures addressed to victims of extortion racketeering.<sup>2</sup> Their aim is to protect and financially support victims and witnesses who decided to report to police forces.<sup>3</sup> Since the

<sup>1</sup> SDI provides the yearly number of crimes reported by the police to the judicial authorities.

<sup>2</sup> The first administrative measure was created in 1992: Decreto Ministeriale 12<sup>th</sup> August 1992, n. 396, followed by Law 18 November 1993, n. 468.

<sup>3</sup> This is the case of the law n. 44/1999, which institutes a solidarity fund for the victims who have reported extortion.

**Table 1. Observations and estimates of overall extortion amounts in the most affected economic sectors**

Sector	No. observations		Total estimates	
	Periodic	One-time	Lower (million €)	Upper (million €)
Manufacture of food products	26	17	78.5	523.6
Construction	-	-	553.6	1,107.2
Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	73	27	137.6	212.7
Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles	78	32	248.7	376.1
Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles	301	117	983.7	1,836.8
Land transport and transport via pipelines	18	10	99.8	293.5
Food and beverage service activities	87	33	186.1	263.8
Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities	33	16	97.9	217.3
Other personal service activities	10	2	153.6	897.7

Source: Lisciandra 2014; Transcrime 2013.

**Table 2. Estimated revenues from extortion racketeering per region (million €)**

Region	Total revenue		Region	Total revenue	
	Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Abruzzo	32.1	84.1	Marche	58.9	164.2
Apulia	260.0	773.2	Molise	0.99	25.7
Basilicata	13.4	34.2	Piedmont	130.8	374.4
Calabria	322.9	929.9	Sardinia	19.7	51.1
Campania	821.7	2,255.9	Sicily	395.8	1,117.4
Emilia Romagna	69.0	194.1	Trentino Alto Adige	113.2	323.5
Friuli Venezia Giulia	21.9	59.9	Tuscany	22.1	57.5

**Table 2. Estimated revenues from extortion racketeering per region (million €) (continued)**

Region	Total revenue		Region	Total revenue	
	Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Lazio	116.4	300.6	Umbria	14.0	38.3
Liguria	32.0	86.2	Valle D'Aosta	0.76	19.6
Lombardy	119.7	345.6	Veneto	109.9	306.6
			<b>Italy</b>	<b>2,762.1</b>	<b>7,743.0</b>

Source: Lisciandra 2014.

adoption of the first anti-racket measures, small firms created anti-racketeering associations that merged into the Federazione Antiracket Antiusura Italiana (FAI) in 1996, which aims to provide help and assistance to victimised entrepreneurs (FAI, 2015). Two other associations were established. In Sicily, the association Addiopizzo which is composed of a branch dedicated to victims' assistance with 996 associates in the region was created in 2004 (Addiopizzo, 2015). Furthermore, in 2010 the association "Libera – Associations, names and numbers against mafias" implemented the SOS GIUSTIZIA project. It is a network of eighteen branches assisting the victims of OCGs-related crimes, including extortion racketeering (SOS Giustizia, 2015).

Besides anti-extortion measures and anti-racket associations, several special bodies have been established to counter extortion racketeering in the country. The most important one is the Special Commissioner,<sup>4</sup> who coordinates the fight against extortion racketeering in the country.<sup>5</sup> Several special units within the Italian police dealing with organised crime and extortion racketeering have been established. For the most serious crimes, there are the Special group of the Anticrime Central Direction of the Police (SCO), the Special Operations Group of Carabinieri (ROS) and the Central Investigation Service on organized crime of the Guardia di Finanza (SCICO). In addition to the above-mentioned services, the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA)<sup>6</sup> is in charge of carrying out preventive investigations against organised crime and mafia-type offences.

<sup>4</sup> Commissario straordinario del Governo per il coordinamento delle iniziative antiracket ed antiusura, see Article 14 of *Law 400/1988*.

<sup>5</sup> The Commissioner is responsible for coordinating anti-extortion and anti-racket initiatives nationwide. He chairs the Committee of solidarity for the victims of extortion and usury, established by the Ministry of the Interior, which examines and deliberates on requests for access to the Solidarity Fund.

<sup>6</sup> The Direzione Investigativa Antimafia created in 1991 in the framework of the Public Security Department, is an investigative service specialized in activities against organized crime.

## THE CRIMINAL CONTEXT

Territories and regions with the highest presence of organised crime and mafias are most vulnerable to the involvement of such groups in the legal economy and mafia-related crimes (Caneppele, Riccardi, and Standridge, 2013; Riccardi, 2014; The Dutch Parliament, 1996; Vander Beken, 2004; Varese, 2011).

Some data on OC-related crimes are available at the national and regional levels (NUTS-2). The SDI database contains information for the following crimes: extortion, mafia-type association and arson. Moreover, data on corruption cases<sup>7</sup> against public officials are published by the Anticorruption and Transparency Service (SAeT, 2010).

Table 3 highlights that OC-related crimes tend to concentrate in the southern Italian regions, where mafias originated and exert closer control over territory and population, as previous researches on extortion racketeering and OC have already stressed (DIA, 2014; La Spina et al., 2014; La Spina, 2008; Lisciandra, 2014; Transcrime, 2013; 2009). Still, such practices have a high incidence in other regions of the country (e.g. Lombardy, Lazio, Liguria, Piedmont), where mafias have expanded over the last twenty years and their presence has been well-proved by recent investigations<sup>8</sup> (DIA, 2013b; DNA, 2010; 2012; Gunnarson, 2015; Transcrime, 2013; 2009; Varese, 2011).

**Table 3. Number of crimes reported by the police to the judicial authority by region, 2013**

Region	Extortion*		Mafia-type association		Arson****		Corruption	
	AV**	%***	AV	%	AV	%	AV	%
Abruzzo	136	2.0	0	0.0	240	1.6	5	1.4
Apulia	81	1.2	4	7.1	2,627	17.3	36	10.3
Basilicata	296	4.4	0	0.0	149	1.0	1	0.3

<sup>7</sup> The Italian *Criminal Code* has several provisions against corruption. For the purpose of the analysis, the following provisions are considered: Corruption for an official act (art. 318: a public official who, to commit an act of his duty, receives, for himself or for a third party, money or other benefits that are not due); Corruption for an act contrary to official duties (art. 319: a public official who receives for himself or for a third party, money or other benefit, for omitting or delaying or for having omitted or delayed an act of his office, performing or having performed an act contrary to his official duties); Corruption in judicial proceedings (art. 319-ter: if the facts set out in the articles 318 and 319 are committed to favour or damage a party in a civil, criminal or administrative proceeding); Corruption of a public servant (art. 320: the provisions of art. 319 shall apply also in charge of a public servant; those of art. 318 also apply to the person responsible for a public service); Incitement to corruption (art. 322: whoever offers or promises money or other benefits not due to a public official or a representative of a public service, to induce him to commit an act contrary to his duties).

<sup>8</sup> For instance, operation Infinito in 2010 detected the well-rooted presence of 'Ndrangheta in Lombardy, whereas operation Minotauro in 2011 revealed the 'Ndrangheta in Piedmont.

**Table 3. Number of crimes reported by the police to the judicial authority by region, 2013 (continued)**

Region	Extortion*		Mafia-type association		Arson****		Corruption	
	AV**	%***	AV	%	AV	%	AV	%
Calabria	986	14.6	6	10.7	1,306	8.6	8	2.3
Campania	439	6.5	24	42.9	1,161	7.7	96	27.6
Emilia-Romagna	84	1.2	0	0.0	644	4.3	7	2.0
Friuli Venezia Giulia	640	9.5	1	1.8	126	0.8	5	1.4
Lazio	151	2.2	5	8.9	1,030	6.8	37	10.6
Liguria	944	14.0	0	0.0	335	2.2	37	10.6
Lombardy	160	2.4	0	0.0	1,436	9.5	43	12.4
Marche	33	0.5	0	0.0	197	1.3	2	0.6
Molise	446	6.6	0	0.0	64	0.4	1	0.3
Piedmont	631	9.4	2	3.6	708	4.7	17	4.9
Sardinia	166	2.5	0	0.0	966	6.4	5	1.4
Sicily	726	10.8	13	23.2	2,893	19.1	5	1.4
Trentino-Alto Adige	363	5.4	1	1.8	124	0.8	1	0.3
Tuscany	47	0.7	0	0.0	511	3.4	23	6.6
Umbria	88	1.3	0	0.0	93	0.6	11	3.2
Valle d'Aosta	23	0.3	0	0.0	17	0.1	0	0.0
Veneto	294	4.4	0	0.0	523	3.5	8	2.3
<b>Italy</b>	<b>6,734</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15,150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

\* includes not only extortion racketeering but also other types

\*\* absolute value

\*\*\* percentage above the national figure

\*\*\*\* arson cases include non-forest arsons and property damage caused by arson

Source: Authors' elaboration on SDI and SAeT data.

Besides official statistics, which could provide a misleading representation, estimates on the mafia presence in a given territory and the share of the shadow economy are alternative data to analyse the OC phenomenon and also extortion racketeering in Italy (Asmundo, 2011; Asmundo and Lisciandra, 2008; Calderoni, 2011; La Spina, 2008; Scaglione, 2008; Schneider and Williams, 2013; Transcrime, 2013). For instance, the mafia presence across territories has been estimated by Transcrime (2013), who developed the so-called Mafia Index (Table 4). This index results from the combination of the following variables:

- Mafia murders and attempted mafia murders (2004-2011);
- Persons charged with mafia association (2004 – 2011);
- Municipalities and public authorities dissolved for mafia infiltration (2000 – 2012);
- Property confiscated from criminal organisations (2000 – 2011);
- Active mafia groups reported in reports by DIA and DNA (2000 – 2011).

There are also estimates of the shadow economy at national and regional level (NUTS-2).<sup>9</sup> According to Schneider and Williams (2013), the shadow economy in Italy amounted to €333 billion in 2012, which corresponded to 21.6 % of the national GDP. The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) estimates the extent of the shadow economy across Italian regions on the basis of several variables regarding the irregular labour market. The most commonly used figures are about irregular labour units and the incidence of added value derived from irregular labour (Table 4). The irregular labour units in Italy are 12.2 % of the total labour units, whereas the incidence of the added value derived from irregular working is at 6.5 % of the national GDP. Regional data in Table 4 support both official statistics and previous studies. Indeed, they confirm that the regions most affected are the Southern regions (e.g. Apulia, Calabria, Campania, Sicily), where mafias originated and exert tight control over territory and population, and the new areas of infiltration (e.g. Lombardy, Lazio, Liguria, Piedmont), where mafias have expanded over the last two decades.

**Table 4. Mafia Index and shadow economy by region.  
Share of irregular labour units, 2010**

Region	Mafia Index	Irregular labour units (%)	Added value to GDP (%)*
Abruzzo	0.74	13.5	7.0
Apulia	17.84	21.1	14.6
Basilicata	5.32	31	18.3
Calabria	41.76	18.6	9.0
Campania	61.21	8.3	4.6
Emilia Romagna	1.44	10.6	6.1
Friuli Venezia Giulia	0.42	11.4	4.9
Lazio	16.83	12.5	6.5
Liguria	10.44	7.6	4.5
Lombardy	4.17	9.9	6.4
Marche	0.67	23.2	12.6

<sup>9</sup> Shadow economy comprises all currently undeclared economic activities that would contribute to the officially calculated gross national product if the activities were recorded (Schneider and Williams 2013). Although the shadow economy has been investigated for a long time, data collection and analysis is difficult because of its very nature.



**Table 4. Mafia Index and shadow economy by region.  
Share of irregular labour units, 2010 (continued)**

Region	Mafia Index	Irregular labour units (%)	Added value to GDP (%)*
Molise	0.31	11.2	5.7
Piedmont	6.11	18.2	11.8
Sardinia	0.70	21	12.1
Sicily	31.80	20.7	11.2
Trentino Alto Adige	0.37	9.1	5.0
Tuscany	2.16	7.7	4.5
Umbria	1.68	12.1	6.6
Valle d'Aosta	0.57	11.6	4.8
Veneto	0.41	8.4	5.0

\* added value to the total number of labour units and to GDP.

Source: *Transcrime 2013; ISTAT.*

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE MOST AFFECTED REGIONS

The six most regions most affected by extortion can be grouped in two categories – the less developed regions in the South and the richer regions in the North.

Located in Southern Italy, Campania, Sicily, Calabria and Apulia share some common economic and social features and have the highest illegal revenues generated by extortion racketeering (see Table 2). They are among the least developed economies in the country and represent the areas where traditional Italian mafias originated. Their GDP per capita and employment rate of persons aged 20-64 are below the national level, with a decreasing trend compared to 2008 (the beginning of the economic crisis).

### Campania

Campania has 5,861,529 inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> It is one of the biggest and most populated Italian regions and it is divided into five provinces: Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Naples and Salerno. Naples and its province are the major urban and economic areas of the region.

In 2013, Campania had the fourth lowest GDP per capita among the Italian regions, equal to €17,014 per inhabitant (the national figure was €26,694).

<sup>10</sup> The data refers to the resident population on 1 January 2015.



Moreover, the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was about 42.6 % and the second lowest in the country in 2014 with a decreasing of 8.1 % compared to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 337,775 active businesses in Campania.<sup>11</sup> The hospitality sector (accommodation and food service activities) accounts for the 6.9 % of the regional economy with 23,369 active businesses (405 businesses per 100,000 population).

Campania has almost 500 km of seaboard and hosts several major archaeological sites (e.g. Pompeii, Paestum, Ercolano). The region had almost 4.4 million visitors in 2013 equal to 17.7 million overnight stays (4.7 % of the overnight stays all around the country). The majority of tourists visiting Campania come from Italy (56.9 %), although data show that the number of foreigners has constantly increased between 2008 and 2013. The yearly number of visitors shows a roughly stable trend comparing to 2008, whereas the number of overnight stays has decreased only in 2013 (-5.3 %).

### **Sicily**

Sicily is the biggest Italian island with 5,092,080 inhabitants in 2015. The region is divided into nine provinces: Agrigento, Caltanissetta, Catania, Enna, Messina, Palermo, Ragusa, Siracusa, and Trapani. Palermo and its province are the major urban and economic areas of the region.

Sicily had the third lowest GDP per capita among the regions in 2013, equal to €16,515 per inhabitant (the national value was €26,694). Moreover, in 2014 the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was about 42.4 % and the lowest in the country with a decreasing of 10.1 % compared to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 271,714 active businesses in Sicily. The hospitality sector accounts for 6.8 % of the regional economy with 18,583 active businesses (372 businesses per 100,000 population).

The region is has 1,600 km of seaboard and hosts several archaeological sites, especially from Ancient Greece. Sicily had slightly less than 4.5 million visitors in 2013 spending almost 15 million overnights (3.8 % of the overnight stays all around the country). The majority of tourists visiting Sicily come from Italy (55.2 %), although data show that the number of foreigners has constantly increased between 2008 and 2013. The annual number of visitors and visitor days has shown the same trend (respectively +6.4 % and +4.0 %).

### **Calabria**

Calabria had 1,976,631 inhabitants in 2015. The region is divided into 5 provinces: Cosenza, Catanzaro, Reggio di Calabria, Crotona and Vibo Valentia. Cosenza and its province are the major urban and economic areas of the region.

The region had the lowest GDP per capita among the Italian regions in 2013, equal to €15,455 per inhabitant (the national value was €26,694). Moreover, the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was about 42.6 % and the second

<sup>11</sup> The data refers to the national census of businesses and services carried out in 2011.

lowest in the country in 2014, with a decreasing of 11.7 % compared to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 109,987 active businesses in Calabria. The hospitality sector accounts for the 8.2 % of the regional economy with 9,066 businesses (463 businesses per 100,000 population).

Calabria has 750 km of seaboard and several archaeological and cultural sites. The region hosted slightly less than 1.5 million visitors in 2013, which corresponded to 8 million overnight stays (2.1 % of the overnights all around the country). The vast majority of tourists visiting Calabria come from Italy (82.7 %). The annual number of visitors and visitor days has decreased over the last 5 years available (by -3.6 % and -5.8 % respectively).

### **Apulia**

Apulia had 4,090,105 inhabitants in 2015. The region is divided into 6 provinces: Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani, Brindisi, Foggia, Lecce and Taranto. Bari and its province are the major urban and economic areas of the region.

The region had the second lowest GDP per capita among the Italian regions in 2013, equal to €16,208 per inhabitant (the national figure was €26,694). Moreover, the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was about 45.7 % and the fourth lowest in the country in 2014 with a decreasing of 6.5 % compared to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 252,203 active businesses in Apulia. The hospitality sector (accommodation and food services) accounts for the 6.8 % of the regional economy, including 17,176 businesses (424 businesses per 100,000 population).

Apulia has almost 900 km of seaboard and several archaeological and cultural sites. The region hosted slightly more than 3 million visitors in 2013, which corresponded to 13.3 million overnight stays (3.5 % of the overnights all around the country). The vast majority of tourists visiting Apulia come from Italy (81 %). The annual number of visitors and overnights shows an increasing trend between 2008 and 2013 (respectively +9.1 % and +9.7 %).

Fifth and sixth in terms of the estimated illegal revenues generated by extortion racketeering are two Northern regions – Lombardy and Piedmont – both with a much stronger economic performance than the four regions described above.

### **Lombardy**

Lombardy is located in the North of the country, has 10,002,615 inhabitants (2015) and is divided into 12 provinces: Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Lecco, Lodi, Mantova, Milano, Monza e della Brianza, Pavia, Sondrio and Varese. Milan and its province are the major urban and economic areas of the region. In 2015, they accounted for 32 % of the resident population in Lombardy with 3,196,825 inhabitants.

Lombardy has one of the strongest economies among the Italian regions – it is the first region in Italy in terms of contribution to the national GDP. It is also the home of many of the major industrial, commercial and financial businesses of the country. Lombardy has the third highest GDP per capita among all the Italian

regions in 2013, equal to €36,273 per inhabitant. This is significantly higher than the national value of €26,694. Moreover, in 2014 the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was about 69.5 % and the fifth highest in the country with a stable trend compared to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 811,666 active businesses in Lombardy. The hospitality sector accounts for 5.3 % of the regional economy with 43,023 businesses (443 businesses per 100,000 population).

Lombardy has the Alps in the north, as well as lakes and several cultural attractions and sites. The region hosted 13.6 million visitors in 2013, with almost 34 million overnight stays, which accounted for 9.1 % of the overnight stays all around the country. The majority of tourists visiting Lombardy come from abroad (51.3 %). Data show that both the number of Italians and foreigners (as well as the length of their stay) had constantly increased between 2008 and 2013 (respectively +14.7 % and +40 %).

### **Piedmont**

Piedmont is also in the Northern part of the country, adjacent to the west of Lombardy. In 2015, the region had 4,424,467 inhabitants and it is divided into eight provinces: Alessandria, Asti, Biella, Cuneo, Novara, Torino, Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and Vercelli. Turin and its province are the major economic and urban areas.

Similar to Lombardy, Piedmont has one of the strongest economies among the Italian regions. It is among the first regions in Italy for economic importance, in terms of contribution to the national GDP. It is also the home of rice cultivation and of many of the major industrial activities. Piedmont has the tenth highest GDP per capita among all the Italian regions in 2013, equal to €28,482 per inhabitant. This is higher than the national value of €26,694. Moreover, the employment rate of people aged 20-64 was 66.7 %, with a roughly stable trend comparing to 2008. According to ISTAT, there are 336,338 active businesses in Piedmont. The hospitality sector accounts for 6.2 % of the regional economic activities with 20,781 businesses (477 businesses per 100,000 population).

Piedmont also includes sections of the Alps, lakes, several cultural attractions and food farming activities. The region hosted almost 4.3 million visitors in 2013 equal to 12.7 million overnights, which accounted for 4.1 % of the overnights all around the country. The majority of tourists visiting Piedmont are Italian (65.1 %). Data show that both the numbers of Italians and foreigners (as well as the length of their stay) had had an unstable trend between 2008 and 2013 (with peaks in 2010 and 2011).

## EXTORTION IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

According to the Italian classification of economic sectors (ATECO 2007), the hospitality sector includes facilities that provide accommodation for short periods to visitors and travellers, as well as food and drink prepared for consumption. There are 302,067 active businesses<sup>12</sup> in the sector, which is 6.8 % of the total number of active businesses in the country. It ranks as the fifth sector by company capacity, fourth in terms of employment capacity with 1,220,529 workers, and accounts for the 7.4 % of the Italian workforce.

The analysis of extortion racketeering within the hospitality sector in Italy focuses on seventeen case studies. In order to collect the cases, seven requests of collaboration were sent to magistrates, judges, chief constables and scholars. The results of the requests are the following:

- 4 persons out of 7 did not answer;
- 3 persons out of 7 forwarded several documents for 13 cases of extortion.

Of these 13 case studies, four were discarded because they did not meet the criteria:

- 3 cases were not extortion racketeering;
- in 1 case the extortion was not perpetrated by an OCG;

Moreover, 344 police operations from Transcrime's archive were analysed. After an in-depth analysis, 8 cases were selected as meeting the criteria (extortion racketeering against hospitality companies and the most recent cases). Of the 17 final cases included in the analysis there were:

- 2 bars;
- 4 hotels/resorts;
- 10 restaurants;
- 1 food truck.

Furthermore, nine in-depth interviews with prosecutors, police officers, managers of branches for legal reporting and scholars were conducted.

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<sup>12</sup> The data refers to the national census of businesses and services carried out in 2011 by ISTAT. All data on businesses and employment were retrieved from the ISTAT database.

## THE PERPETRATORS

Drawing on the case studies collected, this section describes the profile of extortion racketeering perpetrators, including the main characteristics of OCGs involved, and their *modus operandi*.

### Characteristics of OCGs

The case studies collected involved perpetrators belonging to all the main four Italian mafias (i.e. Apulian OC, Camorra, Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta), confirming that extortion racketeering is a typical illegal activity carried out by OCGs (see Introduction). According to the information collected through the case studies, the main characteristics of OCGs perpetrating extortion racketeering in Italy are the following:

- **Hierarchical structure.** All the case studies concern an episode of extortion racketeering carried out by local groups (known under designations such as clan, family, locale) that belong to one of the main Italian OCGs. These groups seem to fit the most common OCG definition which consist in a “single leader and a relatively clearly defined hierarchy. Systems of internal discipline are strict and strong social or ethnic identities can be present” (UNODC 2002, 34-35). OCGs coordinate the extortion activities by giving different roles to their members: some of them are responsible for the demands, others collect the money, and others are in charge of intimidating and damaging victims’ premises. The division of tasks within the OCG is clearly identifiable in IT-H10, where the different steps are present. The victim was approached by young extortionists and after his refusal to pay, a senior member of the clan persuaded him to comply with the demand. Shortly after, another member demanded payment and, at his refusal, a fourth member came and damaged the restaurant.
- **Geographical scale** of extortion racketeering. Almost all the OCG groups involved in the extortion racketeering activity have a stable presence in the area and based their power on the control of the territory (from IT-H1 to IT-H17, IT-H16 excluded). These characteristics are confirmed by the fact that extortion racketeering has long been considered a typical local level crime committed by “local OCGs especially when the purpose is to gain control over a specific territory” (Transcrime 2009, 27).
- **Relation with the victims.** Extortion racketeering mainly affects victims belonging to the same ethnic group of the perpetrators, i.e. Italian.<sup>13</sup> The case studies revealed that the Italian OCGs tend to demand the payments over a long period. Scholars define this type of relation as parasitical (Savona and Sarno 2014). Especially in IT-H10, the “relation” between the victim and the extorters lasted fifteen years and consisted in the payment of three instalments during feast days.<sup>14</sup> In the case IT-H16, the victim became the accomplice of the fraud

<sup>13</sup> This is true also for the Chinese communities although the cases reviews showed evidence of joint venture among different ethnic groups.

<sup>14</sup> Refers to the Catholic calendar of saints. Mafia members used to collect payments from victims on Christmas day, Easter day and Assumption day (15<sup>th</sup> of August).

made by his “protectors”, which produced illicit benefits for both. Gambetta (2000) identifies it as a symbiotic relation.

Table 5 summarises the main characteristics of the perpetrators involved in the case studies collected. Despite the scarcity of information available within the sources, it seems that Italian OCGs usually extort victims in-group (in most of the cases they were between 3 and 5 people). The perpetrators were men and of the same nationality as the victims (all Italian). Besides extortion racketeering, the recurrent core activities perpetrated by the OCGs involved in the analysis were drug trafficking, money laundering and counterfeiting. OCG members do not usually involve public officials as mediators between them and the victims.

**Table 5. Main characteristics of perpetrators**

Case ID	OCG	No. of perpetrators	Nationality	Core business	Involvement of civil servants
H1	'Ndrangheta	2	Italian	Extortion racketeering, illicit exploitation of the local economic resources, crimes against property, crimes against people	n/a
H2	Cosa Nostra	5	Italian	Extortion racketeering and other illicit activities (drug trafficking, collusion and violent influence on the award of public procurement contracts)	n/a
H3	'Ndrangheta	1	Italian	Extortion racketeering and other illicit activities (falsification of certificates, corruption, drugs trafficking, money laundering)	No
H4	'Ndrangheta	4	3 were Italian, nationality of fourth n/a	Extortion racketeering	No
H5	'Ndrangheta	3	Italian	Extortion racketeering	Yes
H6	Cosa Nostra	7	Italian	Extortion racketeering	No
H7	Camorra	5	Italian	Extortion racketeering and counterfeiting	n/a
H8	Camorra	5	Italian	Extortion racketeering	n/a

Table 5. Main characteristics of perpetrators (continued)

Case ID	OCG	No. of perpetrators	Nationality	Core business	Involvement of civil servants
H9	Camorra	4	Italian	Extortion racketeering and drugs trafficking	No
H10	Cosa Nostra	13	Italian	Extortion racketeering	No
H11	Apulian OCG	2	Italian;	Extortion racketeering	No
H12	Apulian OCG	2	Italian	Extortion racketeering	No
H13	Apulian OCG	2	Italian	Extortion racketeering	No
H14	'Ndrangheta	5	4 Italians and a Moroccan	Extortion racketeering, drug trafficking, money laundering	n/a
H15	'Ndrangheta	5	Italian	Extortion racketeering	No
H16	'Ndrangheta	3	Italian	Extortion racketeering and drug trafficking	n/a
H17	'Ndrangheta	3	Italian	Extortion racketeering	n/a

Source: Authors' elaboration on the collected case studies.

### Modus operandi

The majority of the case studies involved the typical form of extortion racketeering, which consists in a regular payment (the so-called *pizzo*) demanded by OCGs from legitimate businesses under the threat of violence (Savona and Sarno 2014). However, in some cases, extortion occurred with other forms, as in case IT-H3 where the extortionist (member of the 'Ndrangheta) imposed himself as an employee in the victims' restaurant. Extortion can also take the form of the imposition of goods and services, as was the case in IT-H1, where the extorters tried to force the victim to use draught beer equipment from a specific supplier.

In fourteen case studies (IT-H1, IT-H3 to IT-H5, IT-H7, and IT-H9 to IT-H17), the intimidation phase represented the first contact between extortionists and the victim, which included the use of violence.<sup>15</sup> The intimidation method included damage or arson (IT-H4, IT-H5, IT-H11, IT-H12, IT-H13, IT-H14, IT-H15) or verbal threats (IT-H1, IT-H3, IT-H4, IT-H7, IT-H9, IT-H15, IT-H16, IT-H17) and it seemed to be essential to ensure the acquiescence of the victims to the extortion demands

<sup>15</sup> La Spina considered that the use of violence showed the difference between mafia type and other criminal organisations (La Spina et al. 2014).



without reporting to the police. In most of the case studies, OCGs influence the territory and people on which they want to impose the extortion request by creating a general sense of insecurity.

When imposing an extortion payment, the amount of money may be subjected to negotiation. In this phase, OCGs evaluate the financial resources of the victims and the threshold of the victims' willingness to pay before reporting to the police. The case studies show that the amount of money requested is not fixed once and for all the extorted victims: it depends both on the needs of the criminal group and on the economic situation of the victim.<sup>16</sup> For instance, the case IT-H10 shows that *ad hoc* payment demands are intended for the maintenance of imprisoned family members and may be subject to variation. Moreover, negotiation may be carried out by a third person as it was in the case IT-H11. This is the role of the so-called "good friend" (La Spina et al. 2014), who acts as an intermediary between the victim and the OCG. He intervened to "help" the victim although the result often did not correspond to what the victim hoped for. Indeed, the intermediary was the victim's cousin who was very close to the clan's boss. He managed to reduce the amount the victims had to pay but in the end the victim still had to pay the criminal group and also to be grateful to the intermediary.

Finally, in most of the case studies (see IT-H2, IT-H5, IT-H6, IT-H9, IT-H10, IT-H11, IT-H12, IT-H13, IT-H16 and IT-H17), the request is presented as an offer for protection. This service is necessary for "protecting" the victims from the threats made by the extortionists themselves. Therefore, the victims pay the money in order to stop the intimidation and the fear that derives from the OCG's activities. In case IT-H9, the demand did not seem to respect the basic rule of proportionality, which is "the more the victim earns, the more he has to pay" (Violante 1998) but it follows the strategy of "pay less, pay everybody" described by Grasso (Transcrime 2009, 42). Among the requests, some criminal groups impose specific suppliers (as it is the case IT-H1) or the recruitment of employees, often members under house arrest (as it was in the case IT-H3).

## THE VICTIMS

The case studies collected on extortion racketeering in the Italian hospitality sector revealed that victims are not targeted randomly but are selected according to their vulnerabilities. The most important one seems to be the location of the businesses in the OCG's "zone of influence", where criminals can exert their intimidating power. Indeed, in all the case studies the extortionists controlled the area and were particularly influential in the local economy. Bars and restaurants are easy accessible venues and it seems that the late opening hours is a facilitator factor for extortion attempts.

Table 6 summarises the main characteristics of the victims involved in the case studies collected. Despite the scarcity of information available within the sources, it seems that Italian OCGs usually extort one person at a time, typically male,

<sup>16</sup> Also confirmed by the literature (Transcrime 2009, 25).

between 30 and 40 years old, of Italian nationality and owner of the victimised business. In few cases, the victims were more than one (two or three) and managed the business involved in the extortion.

**Table 6. Main characteristics of victims**

Case ID	No. of victims	Sex	Age	Nationality	Role
IT-H1	1	Male	48	Italian	Owner
IT-H2	2	Male	n/a	Italian	Owners
IT-H3	2	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner and manager
IT-H4	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner
IT-H5	2	Male	31; 40	Italian	Owners
IT-H6	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owners
IT-H7	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner
IT-H8	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner
IT-H9	1	Male	40	Italian	Owner
IT-H10	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner
IT-H11	3	Male	n/a	Italian	Managers
IT-H12	2	Male	n/a	Italian	Managers
IT-H13	1	Male	n/a	Italian	Owner
IT-H14	1	Male	55	Italian	Owner
IT-H15	2	Male and female	39; n/a	Italian	Owners
IT-H16	1	Male	38	Italian	Owner
IT-H17	n/a	n/a	n/a	Italian	Owner

Source: Authors' elaboration on the collected case studies.

The type of legal entity involved was available only for few cases. Three victimised businesses were limited liability companies (IT-H3, IT-H5, IT-H6), two were sole proprietorship (IT-H1, IT-H7), two were general partnership (IT-H2, IT-H10), and one was a limited partnership (IT-H8). According to the information available, only two of them (IT-H6, IT-H9) were members of the Italian anti-racket association.

### Reaction to extortion demands

When extortion racketeering occurs, victims can be either acquiescent (pay what is demanded), resistant (refuse to pay the demanded money/goods and service),

or complicit (receive benefits thanks to their cooperation with the OCG). In the present analysis:

- eleven cases revealed that victims acquiesced to the demands of extortionists (IT-H2, IT-H3, IT-H4, IT-H6, IT-H7, IT-H8, IT-H10, IT-H11, IT-H14, IT-H15, IT-H17);
- one case showed that the victim apparently complied with the demands but in the end he did not pay (IT-H1);
- four cases revealed that victims resisted the extortion (IT-H5, IT-H9, IT-H12, IT-H13);
- one victim was accused of complicity due to his cooperation with the extortionists (IT-H16).

As Blok (2008) has revealed, the boundaries between victim and accomplice are often blurred.

It is important to stress that with the economic crisis businesses had become less inclined to pay for protection because they could not afford it. This was the case of IT-H8, where the victim did not comply with the new extortionists' demands because of liquidity problems. The economic crisis also forced owners to turn to OCGs for help. A case in point is IT-H16, where the victim asked for the help of another clan for stopping the extortionists' demands, which resulted in a reduction of the amount of money to be paid.

The inclination to report to the police varies among victims. Indeed, resistant victims are more likely to denounce than others are. Of the four resistant victims two reported directly the extortion demands (IT-H12, IT-H13), one reported only after enduring damages to the premises (IT-H5) and another reported but only after being subpoenaed by the authorities (IT-H9). The complicit victims often report the crime to the police only when their affairs are exposed by strong evidence (La Spina et al. 2014, 16). In IT-H16, for example, the victim reported only partially the relationship he had with the extorters. The acquiescent victims almost never reported the facts until they had been discovered. Only in one case (IT-H11), the victim reported, although after a subpoena. Such reactions may be explained by the fear of reprisals, which also adds to the underreporting of crime (Cicone, Forgione, and Sales 2012). The victim in IT-H9 was a member of an anti-racket association and resisted to extortion demands from the very beginning but only reported the facts two months later thanks to the police investigations.

### **Protective measures for victims of extortion racketeering**

Different protection programmes have been created for supporting victims of extortion racketeering. These programmes have two aims: to protect victims and to redress the damages suffered by them. The victim protection programme consists of police protection, temporary relocation to safe areas, anonymity and deposition of court testimony through videoconferencing, medical and psycho-social support, financial compensation and assistance (Transcrime 2009, 148). There are also witness protection programmes that offer assistance before and during the trial, physical security and in case of a serious threat, a change of

identity. However, there is no information whether such programmes have been used in the analysed cases.

Anti-racket associations are another protection service available for victims of extortion. Violante revealed that after the victims reported to official authorities, no other acts of violence had been made against one of the forty anti-racket associations (Violante 1998). This is confirmed by an interview with the director of the association Addiopizzo, who said that as the association is becoming bigger and better known over the country, OCGs do not seem to approach their members with extortion demands. When a businessperson joins the association, he receives a sticker with a symbol (e.g. Addiopizzo) which he has to post in a visible place on the premises. This sticker also helps attract clients. Moreover, the decision to join is published on the internet with the name of the business, address, etc. (Gunnarson 2015, 142).

Anti-racket associations have important roles. First, they help the victims in overcoming isolation, which leads to fear and weakness. Indeed, it transforms an individual refusal to pay into a public act. The aim is to change the perception of racketeering and “breaking the silence around the activity” (Gunnarson 2015). Moreover, these associations act as an intermediary between the victims and government institutions. They may help the victims in giving more details about the extortion (DIA 2014, 232).

Italian law also provides for financial redress measures. Pursuant to law No. 44 of 23 February 1999, the victims of racket and usury may request a compensation for the damage caused by extortionists. In 2013, 792 requests of compensation were submitted to the Committee for Solidarity with the victims of extortion and usury of the Italian Ministry of Interior.<sup>17</sup> Of these, 128 requests for compensation were approved and €10.2 million were paid to the victims of extortion racketeering. The majority of the compensations were provided to hotels and restaurants (16.7 %), manufacturing activities (10.7 %) and farming (7.14 %).

## CONCLUSION

The number of unreported extortions may be high and difficult to quantify. For this reason, this report based its analysis on various sources: official data, judicial documents containing the results of investigations, and interviews with judges and members of anti-racket associations, which provided a more realistic picture of the phenomenon, as the literature recommends (Militello et al. 2014).

The analysis revealed the importance of the “association model” of helping victims in countering extortion (FAI 2015). Few vulnerability factors emerge from the analysis and the interviews:

- **Isolation**, which benefits OCGs and disadvantages the victims because, as a victim revealed: “loneliness was the first problem. Nobody talked about it. The

<sup>17</sup> Comitato di Solidarietà per le Vittime dell’Estorsione e dell’Usura.

word *pizzo* was banned” (La Spina et al. 2014). Sometimes, the decision to report set off the reaction of others in the same situation.

- **Fear of reprisals.** This vulnerability usually prevents victims from reporting and is the result of the “successful intimidation phase”. This fear causes victims to maintain silence, which is difficult to break (FAI 2015). Membership in an anti-racket association helps realise the seriousness of the crime and enhances the understanding of what it means to be a victim of that type of crime (DNA 2013). Victims need to realise that extricating themselves from such a situation depends on the degree of collaboration and on the accuracy of their reports. For that reason, anti-racket associations work as a “counselling centres” but also as intermediaries between the authorities and the victims of extortion.

Some recommendations can be given to enhance the cooperation between government institutions/police forces and victims in order to guarantee the security of the latter. As confirmed by the analysis of the case studies, extortion racketeering makes no differences between bars, restaurants or hotels and may hit any sector. While counter-extortion policies have achieved important goals, some problems remain. The main ones include the lack of security in some regions and environments with high entrepreneurial risks such as heavy debts, defaulting on contracts, fraud, etc. (Gunnarson 2015). Other factors facilitating extortion racketeering seem to be the bureaucratisation or the overregulation of services. The SOS Giustizia interview revealed that victims of extortion racketeering are less inclined to report because of the bureaucracy. Moreover, one of the difficulties encountered by associations is that they cannot immediately support the victims financially because there is a time lag before the victims could obtain reimbursement from the authorities (SOS Giustizia 2015).

Beside the analysis of judicial documents, an alternative approach may be based on situational crime prevention, which focuses on high-risk activities and criminal settings. The reduction of criminal opportunities for extortion could work if systematic vulnerabilities, risks factors that produce opportunities for criminals are analysed. Because organised crime occurs in public and semi-public spaces, better surveillance would reduce the opportunity for crimes (Felson 2006).

## EXTORTION AMONG THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES

This section describes and analyses the general economic and social context in which extortion among the Chinese communities in Italy takes place. The analysis focuses on twelve case studies, which were selected on the basis of the feedback received from thirteen requests of collaboration sent to magistrates, judges, chief constables and scholars. The results of the requests were the following:

- 6 persons out of 13 did not answer;
- 7 persons out of 13 forwarded several documents for 40 cases of extortion.<sup>18</sup>

Of these 40 cases:

- 3 were discarded because they did not meet the criteria (2 cases were not about extortion racketeering and in one case the extortion had not been perpetrated by an OCG);
- 25 cases were discarded because they were identical in OCGs and *modus operandi* to other already selected:
  - 15 restaurants;
  - 8 hair salons;
  - 2 massage salons.

Furthermore, nine in-depth interviews with prosecutors, police officers, managers of branches for legal reporting and scholars were conducted.

## IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND EXTORTION

The five biggest immigrant communities in Italy are Romanian, Albanian, Moroccan, Chinese and Ukrainian (ISTAT 2015). The available data on extortion showed that it is a crime committed by Italians and foreigners (DIA 2013b; 2014). Figure 1 shows that Romanians are the most reported foreigners for extortion in 2013 (31 %), followed by Albanians (14 %) and Moroccans (12 %).

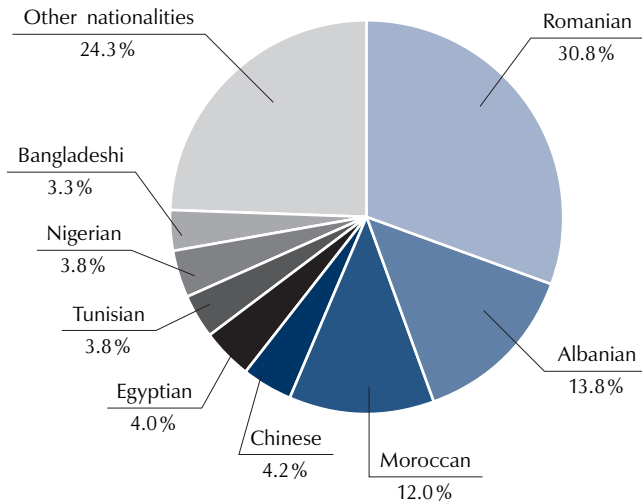
In 2013, Lombardy (19.3 %), Emilia Romagna and Lazio (10.6 %) and Tuscany (8.8 %) were the regions with the highest incidence of foreign perpetrators of extortions (Figure 2).

Using the search engine of the European Media Monitor,<sup>19</sup> it was established that the highest number of extortion-related cases *within* immigrant groups occurred among the Chinese community, which is why it was chosen for the analysis.

<sup>18</sup> In some files there was more than one case.

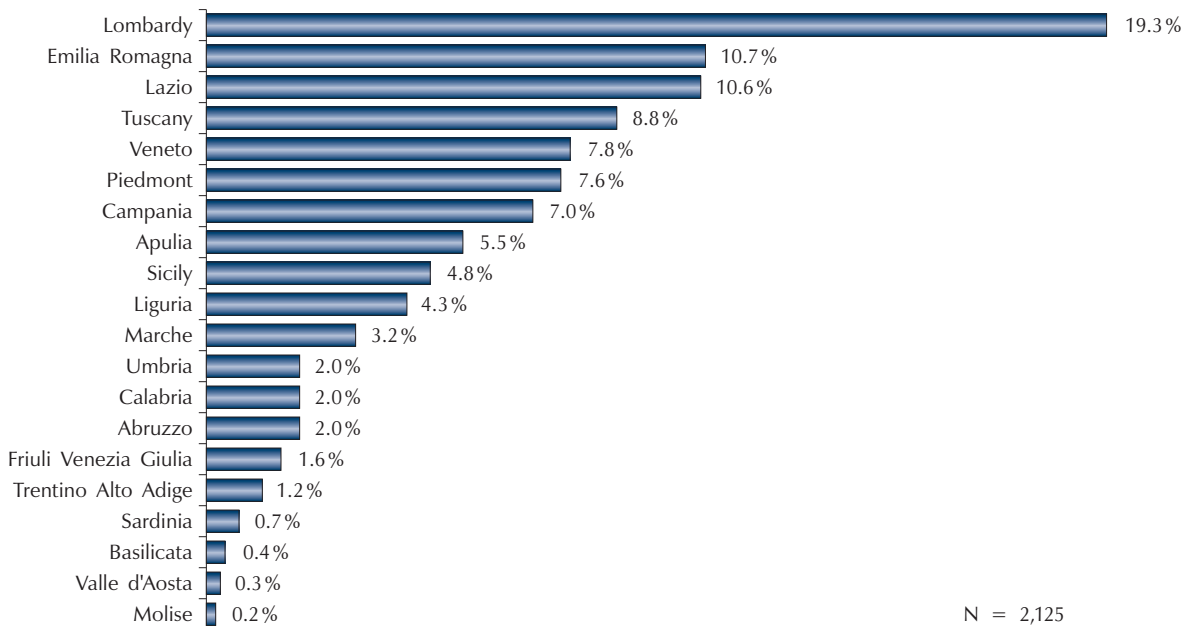
<sup>19</sup> [http://emm.newsbrief.eu/NewsBrief/clusteredition/it/latest\\_en.html](http://emm.newsbrief.eu/NewsBrief/clusteredition/it/latest_en.html)

**Figure 1. Share of extortion cases perpetrated by foreign citizens in Italy, 2013**



Source: Author's elaboration on DIA data.

**Figure 2. Share of extortion cases perpetrated by foreign citizens per region, 2013**



Source: Author's elaboration on DIA data.



## THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN ITALY

The Chinese communities chose to settle in regions with good industrial clusters and essential infrastructure (e.g. harbours, motorways) because they are strongly involved in commerce with other Chinese communities established throughout Europe and with their homeland (Becucci 2015; Nannucci 2015).

Chinese individuals represent 0.5 % of the resident population in Italy (ISTAT 2015), dispersed throughout the Italian regions. The largest groups are established in Lombardy, Lazio, Tuscany and Veneto (ISTAT 2015). However, it is difficult to know the actual number of Chinese living in the country because of the strong illicit immigration (DIA 2013a; 2013b). The regions with the highest share of Chinese among the resident population are Tuscany (1.2 %), Lazio (0.8 %), Veneto (0.7 %), Marche (0.6 %), Lombardy (0.6 %) and Emilia Romagna (0.6 %). The case studies analysed were collected in two regions: Lombardy (Milan and its province, IT-C1 to IT-C10) and Tuscany (Prato, IT-C11, IT-C12). The Chinese population in Lombardy is 62,953 in 2015 and their number has more than doubled in the last ten years (+127.8 % compared to 2005). The Chinese in the Milan province number 37,027 (58.8 % of the regional Chinese residents) and 76.5 % of them live in the city of Milan. The Chinese inhabitants in Tuscany are 43,427 in 2015 and their number has doubled in the last ten years (+113.5 % compared to 2005). The Chinese community in the Prato province is equal to 17,827 inhabitants (41 % of the regional Chinese residents) and 90 % of them live in the city of Prato.

Chinese individuals establish companies or are employees in businesses managed by compatriots eliciting the so-called “ethnic companies” (CNEL 2011; Scagliarini 2015). This situation reproduces the typical secretive trait of Chinese culture (Scagliarini 2015). However, it is very difficult to know the number of Chinese companies operating in Italy because many are not members of business associations and/or are not registered in the local Chamber of Commerce (Becucci 2015; Nannucci 2015).

A recent report by CNEL<sup>20</sup> (2011) revealed a high frequency of dissolution and creation of Chinese companies is probably adopted in order to avoid fiscal reporting. For the same reason, there is a strong presence of individual companies (Becucci 2015; Nannucci 2015). However, in the last years, the high number of bankruptcies can be explained by the economic crisis worsened by the difficulty of being foreigners (e.g. language, bureaucracy, fiscal taxation) (Becucci 2015). Another reason for the absence of the Chinese companies in the institutional networks of support for business can be sought in the cultural tradition of the communities. Indeed, the roles of advisors and problem solvers in case of doubts or disputes are performed by the elders of the community (Becucci 2015; Mundula 2015). Only in rare cases the solutions proposed involve non-Chinese individuals or institutions (e.g. the Italian police) because they are seen as outsiders and the communities prefer not to have Italian investigators looking into their activities (Nannucci 2015). However, recent projects implemented in the city of Prato

<sup>20</sup> Italian National Council of Economy and Labour.

(Tuscany)<sup>21</sup> revealed that irregularities in companies in several sectors (e.g. security, budgetary) had not been deliberate but caused by the complex structure of Italian regulations (Borsacchi 2015; Mundula 2015).

Few data on the Chinese businesses operating in Italy are available. According to the Chamber of Commerce (Adnkronos 2014), there are about 45,000 Chinese registered companies. The regions with the highest number of Chinese companies are Tuscany (21 %), Lombardy (19.4 %), Veneto (11.2 %), Emilia Romagna (9.1 %), Lazio (7.6 %) and Campania (6.1 %). The economic sectors with the greatest number of active businesses are manufacturing, retail, food services and human healthcare (Adnkronos 2014). According to the Chamber of Commerce, in 2014 the number of active businesses managed by Chinese people in the Lombardy region was 8,756,<sup>22</sup> which accounted for 19.4 % of the Chinese businesses in Italy (about 45,000). The region experienced an increasing trend between 2004 and 2014 (+139.2 %). The province of Milan hosts 4,668 Chinese businesses, which accounts for 53.3 % of the regional figure. The number of Chinese businesses has doubled compared to 2011. The number of active businesses managed by Chinese people in the province of Prato is 5,058,<sup>23</sup> which accounts for 64 % of the businesses managed by foreigners and the 16.3 % of the active businesses in the province. The vast majority of the Chinese businesses in Prato are active in the manufacturing sector (74.8 %), followed by trade (15.9 %) and services (5.1 %). The hospitality sector accounts for 3.4 %.

As regards crime, recent reports by Italian law enforcement authorities (DIA 2013a; 2013b; 2014) revealed an intensification of criminality by Chinese OCGs:

- trafficking of human beings perpetrated with the help of Italian OCGs, which provide forged ID documents aimed to recruit people for labour exploitation and prostitution. The latter phenomenon is oriented to Chinese expatriates (illegal brothels in apartments) and to Italian clients (in fake massage salons);
- acquisition of manufacturing companies for producing counterfeit goods. These activities involved additional crimes such as illicit trade in industrial waste, tax evasion and money laundering;
- creation and management of gambling houses with money lending at usury rates;
- import from China of illicit electronic products produced in violation of safety regulations;
- drug trafficking from China;
- extortion, armed robbery and usury against Chinese persons and companies.

Interviews with experts highlighted several problems, which are common to all Chinese communities in Italy:

- Language. Chinese is a complex idiom and has several dialects. It is very hard to learn Chinese and almost impossible to learn more than one dialect. This

<sup>21</sup> For further information, see <http://www.poloprato.unifi.it/it/alta-formazione/offerta-formativa/progetto-asci/home.html> (ASCI project) and <http://www.poloprato.unifi.it/it/alta-formazione/offerta-formativa/progetto-face/home.html> (FACE project).

<sup>22</sup> Number of active Chinese businesses in September 2014 (latest available year).

<sup>23</sup> Number of active Chinese businesses at 31 December 2013 (latest available year).

makes it difficult to communicate clearly with individuals who do not speak Italian;

- Interpreters. Linked to the previous problem is the presence of reliable interpreters able to translate surveillance interceptions or to help with the reports of crimes. The inadequate compensation and the unsuitable protection of their identity reduce the availability of these professionals;
- Communication channels. Chinese citizens traditionally communicate by word of mouth or with online chat platforms like WeChat or QQ chat. The use of social networks permeates every aspect of the Chinese life. Furthermore, institutions of the Chinese community use QR code and mute animated cartoons readable by smartphone to communicate what to do in a case of emergency. Indeed, Chinese expatriates use smartphones for personal communications and for working too (e.g. request of tax forms). Italian government institutions usually provide administrative guidelines on their sites or in the office so it is difficult to establish a contact and to communicate. Only in the above mentioned projects in Prato, first attempts of communication of rules using animated cartoons were made;<sup>24</sup>
- Investigation. The exchange of information between authorities within Italy and with other countries is difficult, but it is essential in order to better identify the OCGs members who use forged documents and different aliases.

## THE PERPETRATORS

Drawing on the case studies collected, this section describes and analysed the characteristics of the perpetrators involved in the extortion racketeering, and the *modus operandi* adopted by the criminals.

### The characteristics of OCGs

According to prosecutor Scagliarini (2015; 2009) the structure of Chinese OCGs has changed since the beginning of 2000. In the 1990s, the Chinese OCGs in Italy were made up of small groups of Chinese middle-aged entrepreneurs, who extorted money from legal businesses in order to acquire property of companies and to use them for laundering money just like the Italian mafias (Paoli 2003). After 2000, the OCGs changed their organisation and now have strong hierarchical structures composed by young Chinese men and women, who operate as henchmen (known in Italian as *gregari*, a kind of foot soldiers of the OCGs) and are controlled by a leader. In case of big groups, the henchmen are overseen by lieutenants (IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7). This description corresponds to the definition by UNODC (2002) and it was identified in all the case studies analysed both in Lombardy (IT-C1 to IT-C10) and Tuscany (IT-C11, IT-C12).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For further information see <http://www.poloprato.unifi.it/it/alta-formazione/offerta-formativa/progetto-face/materiali/molly-limprenditrice.html>

<sup>25</sup> "Single leader and a relatively clearly defined hierarchy. Systems of internal discipline are strict and strong social or ethnic identities can be present" (UNODC 2002, 34, 35).

In the organisations of the perpetrators in each of the case studies, every member had a role. The leaders planned the criminal activities, sometimes with the help of their lieutenants (IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7). They oversaw the henchmen, who actually carried out the extortions and, if necessary, the punitive actions. The henchmen were always younger than their leaders – they are in their twenties, all dressed and combed in the same way (IT-C1 to IT-C10). In the case IT-C1, investigations revealed that the boss said he preferred juvenile boys and girls as *gregari*, because in case of arrest they would receive more lenient sentences than adults. All the OCGs used expatriates and legal companies operating in the Chinese communities as cashpoints with the purpose to control the territory and the supply of money to pay for criminal activities (e.g. buying drugs, paying apartment rents for the henchmen) or supporting activities (e.g. paying lawyers for the imprisoned henchmen). As Paoli (2003) pointed out, this crime is preferred because it involves low risk, is easy to carry out in areas where the law enforcement presence is weak and does not require high initial investment.

The OCGs involved in the analysed cases controlled several crime activities in the Chinese communities where they operated. They set up gambling house or extorted/loaned money at usurious rates to the gamers (IT-C11, IT-C12), controlled drug trafficking (IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C3, IT-C4, IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7, IT-C8, IT-C10) and extorted money to illegal brothels (IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7, IT-C8, IT-C9, IT-C10) and guesthouses (IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C3, IT-C4, IT-C8, IT-C10).<sup>26</sup>

### Modus operandi

Despite the different areas of action and time periods, the OCGs analysed have much in common. They act without the help of external persons, do not draw up alliances with public officials or corrupt police officers. The criminals involved in the case studies follow the same *modus operandi* highlighted by La Spina et al. (2014):

- The first phase is intimidation. They come to their victims in groups of 3-10 people, damage properties, threaten or use violence against owners, their employees or clients in order to arouse fear.
- The second phase is the negotiation, where perpetrators and victims seek a solution to the inconveniences created by the OCG. In this phase, an intermediary could arrive and propose himself as peacemaker. The intermediary usually works for the OCG and his purpose is to reassure the victims and persuade them to accept the criminal demand. This phase was not present in the case studies analysed.
- The third phase is the demand. At this point, the perpetrators make their extortion requests. The OCG members adopt two forms of extortion requests, both discussed in the literature (Scaglione 2008): regular payments (IT-C2, IT-C3, IT-C4, IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7, IT-C9, IT-C11, IT-C12); and/or the imposition

<sup>26</sup> Other episodes of extortion of restaurants are mentioned as “other organised crime activities” in cases IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C3, IT-C4, IT-C8, IT-C10. Other episodes of extortion to massage salons are mentioned as “other organised crime activities” in cases IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C3, IT-C4, IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7, IT-C8, IT-C10. Other episodes of extortion to massage salons are mentioned as “other organised crime activities” in cases IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7.

of services. An example of the latter is the case where the criminals managed a food company and they started to impose themselves as suppliers (IT-C8). A combination of these forms was also present (IT-C1, IT-C10).

According to La Spina et al. (2014), the phases can vary in their order; for example, in some cases the demand was presented before the intimidation (IT-C1, IT-C11, IT-C12).

## THE VICTIMS

Drawing on the case studies collected, this section describes and analyses the victims' profiles, their reactions to the extortion demands and the protective and resistance factors.

### Characteristics of the victims

The businesses selected by extortionists were easy victims because of their characteristics (Schelling 1984). The OCGs selected the most prosperous businesses and calculated a suitable sum to demand by monitoring their revenue; they also opted for businesses that could not be moved in order to avoid the areas of influence of OCGs (IT-C1 through IT-C12).

According to the case studies collected, the victims were 18 Chinese persons, seven men, eleven and women and one unknown. The victims were both owners and employees, as Table 7 shows.

**Table 7. Role of the victims in the victimised companies<sup>27</sup>**

Case ID	Owner(s)	Employee(s)	Case ID	Owner(s)	Employee(s)
IT-C1	1	1	IT-C8	1	0
IT-C2	3	0	IT-C9	1	0
IT-C3	2	0	IT-C10	1	0
IT-C5	1	0	IT-C11	1	1
IT-C6	1	2	IT-C12	1	0
IT-C7	1	0	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Author's elaboration on the case studies.

<sup>27</sup> The case study IT-C4 did not provide data on the gender and the role of the victim the company.

According to the Chief Constable of Prato (Nannucci, 2015), the manager and employees targeted by extortion racketeering were usually documented immigrants or individuals of Chinese origin who had been granted Italian citizenship. Illegal immigrants were not employed in businesses that serve the public in order to keep them undocumented and avoid the risk of being repatriated by the Italian authorities. Investigations did not reveal information on the victims' citizenship status.

### Reaction to extortion demands

According to Centorrino et al. (1999) there are three different reactions to extortion demands:

- acquiescence (victim complies with demands);
- complicity (victim complies with demands and receives improper advantages);
- resistance (victim refuses to comply).

In the case studies analysed:

- two victims complied with the extortion demands (IT-C4, IT-C8);
- in six cases the victims refused to comply with the demands (IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C7, IT-C9, IT-C11, IT-C12);
- in two cases the victims initially refused to pay but later complied with the demands (IT-C2, IT-C10);
- in two other cases the victims initially chose to pay but then refused subsequent criminal demands (IT-C1, IT-C3).

As said before, Chinese entrepreneurs who have become victims of extortion usually prefer not to report to the police because of their traditions, which suggest involving the elders of the community in case of problems or disputes. However, in several cases the victims reported their extortionists (IT-C1, IT-C2, IT-C5, IT-C6, IT-C10, IT-C11, IT-C12) or cooperated with authorities when summoned (IT-C3, IT-C7, IT-C8, IT-C9).<sup>28</sup>

Nannucci (2015) claims that reports are filed when the situations become too difficult to solve without external intervention. Indeed, in the cases analysed victimised owners reported to the police because the OCGs were very violent and hence drew the attention of the police to the community, which was resented by the whole community. According to the experts interviewed (Becucci 2015; Nannucci 2015), the third and fourth generation Chinese are more inclined to report because they are westernised.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> The case study IT-C4 did not provide data on reporting or cooperation of the victim with authorities.

<sup>29</sup> The third and fourth Chinese generations were born and grew up in Italy. They attended Italian schools and are more similar to their Italian peers than to the Chinese ones who live in China (Becucci 2015; Mundula 2015; Nannucci 2015).



### Protective measures for Chinese victims of extortion racketeering

In order to reduce the risk of being targeted and with the aim of stopping the payment demands or the imposition of services, the entrepreneurs organised themselves in several ways. The first method revealed by the analysis was the refusal to pay if the other businesses in the same area were not paying. In the case IT-C2, the victim told his extortionists to start collecting money from the other companies in the area and then return to him. Investigators revealed that all the owners who received payment demands gave the same answer, so the criminals gave up on them. The second method is described in the interviews with experts from Tuscany (Becucci 2015; Borsacchi 2015; Mundula 2015; Nannucci 2015; Squillace Greco 2015). The entrepreneurs had created a private chat on WeChat called “Sicurezza”.<sup>30</sup> All the people involved in the group were able to post warnings or photos about suspicious men, who visited the shops asking for money or information about the owners. The third method occurred in the province of Prato (Becucci 2015; Mundula 2015; Nannucci 2015; Squillace Greco 2015). In this case, entrepreneurs paid a private surveillance company in the industrial area, known as *Macrolotto*. The security service guards had to monitor the area at night and phone the police in case of danger or suspicious activities.

Local authorities have also established protective measures for Chinese entrepreneurs. Interviews stress out the initiatives adopted in the province of Prato (Tuscany). The first measure is the production of documents and brochures in both Italian and Chinese in order to ensure that the community understands the laws and the information about events. The second measure is the creation of round tables with the most active entrepreneurs in case of particular events to plan (e.g. commemoration after incidents with Chinese citizens dead). The third measure is implemented by the CNA World China – the Chinese section of the National Confederation of Crafts and Small and Medium Enterprises. This institution created a WeChat group in order to involve the entrepreneurs in the association and provide them with information about the services offered by the association (e.g. counsels). The fourth measure was established by the Police Headquarters (Questura)<sup>31</sup> and consisted of a help desk managed by a cultural mediator who speaks Chinese. This service provided information and help to victims of crime. Nannucci (2015) shared the story of an undocumented Chinese citizens who was brought by the mediator to the police in order to fill a report against his extortionist. The service was experimental and ended in September 2015, although it is not clear why.

<sup>30</sup> *Sicurezza* means both “safety” and “security”.

<sup>31</sup> *Questura* is a central office responsible for the police force, public order and related administrative services.



## CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations of the collected data, the analysis highlighted several difficulties in dealing with Chinese communities and some good practices to be implemented in the future.

In terms of difficulties, the analysis stressed the issues of **language, the availability of interpreters, the investigations and the bureaucracy**. Solutions suggested by the experts or already implemented in specific areas in Italy include:

1. language and interpreters:
  - a. identify an appropriate number of interpreters able to translate the different Chinese dialects;
  - b. provide them adequate compensation in order to increase the number of professionals;
  - c. guarantee adequate protection of their identity;
2. investigations:
  - a. establishment of investigative units composed by specialised officials with knowledge of Chinese traditions and culture able to speak with foreigners;
3. bureaucracy:
  - a. launch projects with Chinese speaking operators, similar to the ones already implemented in Tuscany;
  - b. use of communication channels already adopted by Chinese entrepreneurs, as the CNA World China did and Chinese channels of communication (e.g. animated cartoons).

It is important to plan new services aiming at encouraging reporting to the police or avoid the risk of minor offences, which should take into consideration two traditional institutions in the Chinese communities. The first is the group of the elders who are able to put pressure on their compatriots counselling them to involve the authorities in case of problems, disputes or threats coming from OCGs. The second is the presence of cultural mediators, who can be the connection between the authorities and the victimised entrepreneurs. They would not be expected to solve the problems but to be helpful by mediating between the request of the victims and the police needs.

Overall, the establishment of trusted relationship between the investigators and the Chinese communities seems to be fundamental in order to fight organised crime and extortion.

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## APPENDIX 1. LIST OF CASE STUDIES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Case ID	Case name	Source
IT-H1	Operation "Stop"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Catanzaro Court
IT-H2	Operation "Addiopizzo 5"	Judgment, Preliminary inquiry section – Palermo Court
IT-H3	Operation "San Marco"	Request for precautionary measures – Busto Arsizio Court
IT-H4	Operation "Minotauro"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Turin Court
IT-H5	Operation "Metastasi"	Order of application of coercive measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Milan Court
IT-H6	Operation "Antiracket Gela 8"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Caltanissetta Court
IT-H7	Operation "Antiracket Caserta Provincia 2"	Judgment, Preliminary inquiry section – Naples Court
IT-H8	Operation "Antiracket Cercola, San Sebastiano, Volla"	Judgment – Nola Court
IT-H9	Operation "Antiracket Ercolano 5"	Judgment, Preliminary inquiry section – Naples Court
IT-H10	Operation "Antiracket Gela 10"	Order of application of coercive measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Caltanissetta Court
IT-H11	Operation "Antiracket Vieste 2"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Bari Court
IT-H12	Operation "Antiracket Vieste 2 bis"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Bari Court
IT-H13	Operation "Antiracket Vieste 1"	Judgment – Foggia Court
IT-H14	Operation "Caposaldo"	Judgment, Preliminary inquiry section – Milan Court
IT-H15	Operation "Bad Boys"	Judgment – Busto Arsizio Court
IT-H16	Operation "Di Grillo"	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Milan Court
IT-H17	Operation "Pandora"	Order of application of coercive measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Catanzaro Court

## APPENDIX 2. LIST OF CASE STUDIES IN THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES

Case ID	Case name	Source
IT-C1	Chinese restaurant in Milan (1)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2010 Judgment, VIII penal section – Milan Court, 2010
IT-C2	Massage salon in Milan (1)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2010
IT-C3	Hair salon in Milan (1)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2010
IT-C4	Chinese restaurant in Milan (2)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2010
IT-C5	Hair salon in Milan (2)	<i>Carabinieri</i> report N 55/8-57, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2011
IT-C6	Massage salon in Milan (2)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2011
IT-C7	Bar in the province of Milan	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2011
IT-C8	Fry shop in Milan	Judgment, VIII penal section – Milan Court, 2010
IT-C9	Arcade in Milan	Judgment, Preliminary inquiry section – Milan Court
IT-C10	Chinese restaurant in Milan (3)	<i>Carabinieri</i> final report, Provincial Chief of Milan, 2010 Judgment, VIII penal section – Milan Court, 2010
IT-C11	Chinese restaurant in Prato	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Florence Court
IT-C12	Hair salon in Prato	Request for precautionary measures, Preliminary inquiry section – Florence Court