



Reviews: *Economy, hidden and visible*

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Felia Allum,

The Invisible Camorra: Neapolitan Crime Families across Europe, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2016; 286 pp.: ISBN 9781501702457, US\$45.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Baris Cayli, *University of Derby, UK*

Keywords

Camorra, international crime, mafia, Naples, organized crime

The Camorra is not simply another organized crime group. It is known as the most flexible, factious and violent mafia in Italy. Even though its origin is Naples and the surrounding area, Camorristi (the members of Camorra) moved to other countries in the last decades and the organization rapidly became internationalized. *The Invisible Camorra* explores the local and global dynamics that characterize the power of this notorious mafia group. Felia Allum spent many years studying the labyrinthine networks of the Camorra. In *The Invisible Camorra*, Allum meticulously examines the Camorra's operational territories in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Spain and the UK. To determine the local and global motives of this movement, Allum interviewed magistrates and police officers and presents court records, police data and criminal confessions.

The Invisible Camorra offers an absorbing narrative and makes clear how and why many Camorristi became invisible when they moved to another country because of police suppression or gang competition in their local territories in Italy. Their movement to another country was not based on merely income generation. There are other social, emotional, or psychological motives that force members of the Camorra to travel abroad. However, the business opportunities that the Camorristi created abroad provided them a good opportunity to present themselves as respectful and law-abiding citizens to the state officials.

Human behaviour regulates actions according to perceived threats and goals. The need for cooperation in collective human behaviour canalizes the members of a social group to create a cohesive structure to respond to threats and then realize goals. Yet the collective human behaviour in the ranks of mafia clans is more capable than many other social structures when it comes to the elimination of threats and the revision of goals. This aptitude is a necessity for a social entity to control, transform and sustain itself as its

surrounding context changes. In *The Invisible Camorra*, the reader will understand why the Camorristi have such a fine ability to adapt themselves to changing circumstances.

In the last few decades, the increasing flexibility in the activities of mafia clans has gained more importance as they have become more international. The need for international networks and the search for new markets forced the clans to cooperate outside the norms of its structural organization at home. This occurred after the end of the First World War when the mafia clans moved to North America. After the end of the Second World War, the surge in the drug market and its huge profits lured many clans in Naples, particularly after the 1960s, to seek new drug markets. This search for profitable markets pushed the clans to increase their international networking capacity. But, internationalization does not always mean relinquishing power at home. It might be assumed that branching out and moving to foreign territories could eliminate local links or weaken the connection of Camorra to the social landscape of Naples. In fact, *The Invisible Camorra* shows that members of the organization always preserve a strong attachment to the territory where they originated. When the Camorristi move between foreign and local territories, the territories become highly interdependent. Allum calls this process 'functional mobility'.

One expects only short-term survival from a fragile social organization. The Camorra has proven quite durable. Albeit certain clans diminish in power, a lack of good governance and effective state social control mechanisms allows new clans to fill the void left by defeated clans. Hence, the mafia survives. A mafia-dominated social environment does not allow for a power vacuum. The paradox is that the mafia has created a stable system based on unstable power relationships while preserving its invisibility.

If there is a conflict of interest between the mafia clans, a struggle for power is always an option. But, a physical clash does not bring mutual benefit. In the end, conflict sustains the mafia as the dominant social force ruling at least one part of a territory. A rational brotherhood, whether structured tightly or loosely, will detect opportunities in its context that will give it a good chance to emerge victorious. The victory lies in a set of relationships among the mafia clans and their relationship with the political class, local people and the bureaucracy in the mafia-controlled areas. Many Camorra clans use these relationships' undetectable social networks in order to remain invisible in the legal landscape.

We learn in *The Invisible Camorra* that four clans in Germany and the Netherlands were active between 1980 and 2015 in acquisitive crime, drug trafficking and counterfeiting while maintaining their roots in Naples. In doing so, their local and international territories became interconnected in order to pursue a lucrative economic agenda. In France, whose economic regulations are different from Germany's, 'members of minor clans, perhaps with less personnel resources, and contacts, tend to resort to acquisitive crime as part of their strategic functional mobility' (p. 107). Yet they still engage in all forms of criminal activities through operational cells. In Spain, criminal activities mostly remain 'undisturbed' (p. 136). They build relationships with the local people using commercial links, for example opening shops and restaurants that eventually render the Camorristi invisible. In the UK, cigarette smuggling by Camorra associates and money laundering reign. 'The detection of acquisitive crime undertaken by members of organized crime groups is not prioritized by the UK authorities' (p. 181). And this policy provides Camorra associates another shield against visibility.

It is hard to define the mafia phenomenon as a single and unified organism when we consider dozens of clans having different businesses, structures, and sometimes methods. In *The Invisible Camorra*, we learn that many Camorra clans have managed to survive in the face of local and international challenges. The international activities of the Camorra do not constitute a migration story but continuous travel between local and foreign territories. The Camorra's main features abroad are 'functionality, liquidity, invisibility, and a special trait, the interconnectedness of its territories' (p. 212). These features also play a role in local activities one way or another. The transfer of skills abroad and their ability to adapt to international settings and social structures make many Camorra associates formidable criminal entrepreneurs. The hard, solid and traditional presence of the Camorra becomes a soft, liquid and invisible presence abroad (p. 213). *The Invisible Camorra* presents a fascinating and sophisticated panorama in which the reader delves into the international criminal activities of the most violent and flexible mafia group in Italy.

Author biography

Baris Cayli is a senior research fellow in criminology at the University of Derby. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He has served as a visiting academic at the Department of Sociology, University of Oxford, and the School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University. His publications explore power dynamics, violence, political ideologies, historical sociology and social and cultural transformation. Address: University of Derby, Kedleston Rd, Derby DE22 1GB, UK. Email: b.cayli@derby.ac.uk

Marion G Crain, Winifred R Poster and Miriam A Cherry (eds),

Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary Economy, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2016; 311 pp.: ISBN 9780520287174, US\$29.95 (pbk)

Reviewed by: Tuulia Law, *University of Ottawa, Canada*

Keywords

Economic sociology, informal economy, invisible, labor

Invisible Labor opens with an evocative foreword by Arlie Hochschild, whose work on emotional labor was a key inspiration for the collection. Hochschild takes the reader in through the front of a department store where the saleswoman trained to merely appear friendly works to encourage the customer to buy, back through the global supply chain to the workers who plant, pick, and process the cotton, to those who weave and dye it, to the laborers who cut and sew it into clothing, to yet other workers who tag and ship it to the department store. This draws our attention to the multitude of workers whose labor we do not see, and likely do not consider, as well as to the visible workers who undertake invisible emotional labor, hiding their exhaustion, shame, and anger about their working conditions to facilitate the customer (or their colleagues or superiors) having a nice day. Winifred Poster, Marion Crain, and Miriam Cherry next introduce the two main concerns