What can Mexico learn from other countries’ successes in limiting organized crime?
US Mafia now limited to NY metro area
  ◦ Not a major player in drug markets
  ◦ High rate of incarceration of senior figures
    • Occasionally no member will accept promotion
  ◦ Some defendants eligible for public defender
  ◦ NY families: 1200 in mid-1990s vs. 3500 in 1970

Italian Mafias notably weaker
  ◦ Unable to hold commission meetings
  ◦ Gangs have been restricted to local activities
  ◦ Political ties have been attenuated
The US organized crime problem, ca 1970

- Well established gangs in Northeast, Midwest cities
  - Closely tied to local/state politics
  - Deeply involved in illegal markets
    - Only marginally in drugs
  - Control of some major unions
- Still restricted to Italian-origin males
  - Violence not prominent
  - No attacks on police or the state more generally
Factors weakening Mafia: non-governmental influences

- Decline in flow of young Italian male immigrants
  - 1.5 million 1900–1909
  - 80,000 1960–1969

- Incompetent, aging, leadership
  - No innovation

- Deregulation of trucking
  - Weakened value of Teamsters control
Factors weakening Mafia: Government actions

- Increased power of federal government
  - More bureaucratic decision-making
- Growth of federal law enforcement
  - Entry of FBI into organized crime control
- New legal powers
  - Title III wiretaps
  - RICO
  - Continuing Criminal Enterprise
- New organizational forms
  - Organized crime strike forces
American Mafia by 1995

- Many senior informants
  - John Gotti convicted by evidence from former deputy
  - Omerta doesn’t survive 15 year sentences
- Families shut down in many cities
- New ethnic groups lack Mafia’s breadth
  - Minimal union control
  - Not connected to local corruption
  - No reputations outside of own community
Visible ties to politicians at all levels
  ◦ 7 time PM Andreotti acquitted on technicality
Rise in internal violence within Mafia
Small number of attacks on the state:
  ◦ Two judges (Falcone, Borsellino) killed 1992
  ◦ Three terrorist incidents 1993
Mafia Groups Are Organisations (Paoli)

- Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta are two consortia of about 100 mafia groups (‘families’) each
  - Mafia families are distinct from members’ blood families

- Ruling bodies exist
  - within each family and
  - at the interfamily level
    - Importance of the ‘commissions’ grossly overestimated

- Locally based
  - Rooted in municipal economic and political structures
Mafia families impose a pre-modern, life-long ‘status contract’ on their member
  ◦ No well-defined duties and rewards

Members are required
  ◦ To assume a new identity: the status of ‘men of honour’
  ◦ To subordinate all allegiances to mafia membership

Honour and secrecy (omertà) are key inspiring principles of members’ duties
Government response

- New laws/authorities
  - Wiretaps
  - Search powers
  - Offenses
  - Trial procedures

- New programs and agencies
  - DIA formed from three national police forces
  - Witness protection program

- Huge number of informants relocated
Mafia Groups Sharply Hit by Crackdown since 1992 (Paoli)

- All leading Cosa Nostra figures and many ’Ndrangheta bosses were captured
  - Totò Riina in January 2003
  - Bernardo Provenzano in April 2006

- Rank-and-file mafiosi were also decimated
  - Members of Sicilian and Calabrian mafia were target of 1,627 and 2,317 DIA-arrest warrants in 1992–June 2006
  - Over 1,200 fugitives were arrested in 1992–June 2005

- Given previous membership estimates (3,500/5,000), probability of being arrested has become very high
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*Source: ISTAT, Annuario Statistische Giudiziarie Penali, several years.*
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*Source: Ministero dell’Interno, 2005c: 8, 12.*
Dynamics of violence

“Especially in the last few years, a number of shoot-outs and murders in central city neighbourhoods in full daylight have raised social and political alarm. Paradoxically, some of these conflicts are unwanted side effects of the law enforcement successes. The weakening of the most powerful criminal clans has left open spaces for a variety of middle-sized and small crime groups that often fight each other for control of the local territory. Crime groups that often fight each other for control of the local territory. Several conflicts have also erupted within large criminal groups when lieutenants have challenged the power of the group leaders to gain control of the most profitable activities, often exploiting the leaders’ judicial difficulties.” (Paoli, 2008; 867)
Cosa Nostra is marginalised from wholesale drug trafficking
- ‘Ndrangheta does better but has no longer strong North Italian position

Extortion is main source of revenues for both organisations
- Local people do not profit from mafia difficulties

Hopes of recovery are on public contracts
- But so far no evidence of large-scale mafia infiltration in major infrastructural investments

Contacts with local politicians, but no influence on national choices

Mafia’s ability to survive should not be underestimated, though
- Southern Italy’s underdevelopment provides breeding ground for crime
How comparable is the Mexican organized crime problem?

- Criminal organizations:
  - More market focused
  - Less stable, durable
  - Much more willing to attack the state

- Violence both more gruesome and with different goals
  - Terrorism
  - Intimidation of media
Can Mexico learn from Italy, US?

- Need for
  - Specific legal tools
  - Institutional reforms

- But lack of credibility of all aspects of criminal justice:
  - Police
  - Prosecutors
  - Judges
  - Prisons
Key references

- **US:**

- **Italy:**