

COMBATING AND PREVENTING ORGANISED VEHICLE CRIME BY DEVELOPING AN EU BARRIER MODEL

Presentation country report – Italy – doctor Veronica Marchio



Italian country report:

- Methodological premise
- Overview of MVT in Italy: data and trends
- Criminal entrepreneurs
- Preliminary results to construct an Italian Barrier Model

Methodological premise

Challenges

- Lenghy administrative procedures
- Preliminary results to be integrated

Good practices

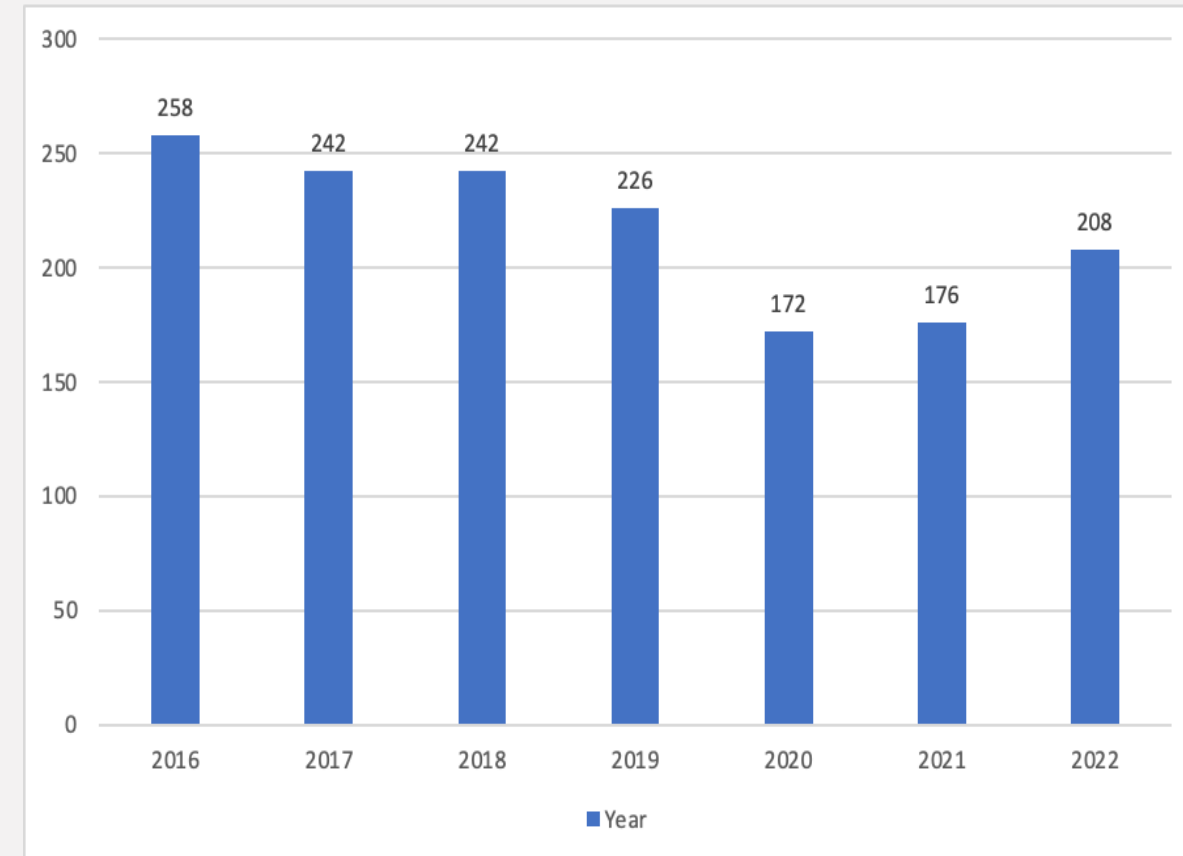
- Interview with the foremost MVT expert of the State Traffic Police
- Interviews with prosecutors



Overview of MVT in Italy: data and trends

- Data from Eurostat underline a high rate of MVT in Italy (per hundred thousand inhabitants) in 2019 and 2020 (Eurostat, 2022)
- and, among EU countries, Italy shows highest values preceded by Sweden, and followed by The Netherlands, Greece, Finland, Portugal, Belgium.
- When national data are considered for the period 2016-2022, motor vehicle thefts show high rates (see Fig. 1), and especially in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, with a decreasing trend in 2019 and 2020 which is followed by a slight increase in the years 2021 and 2022

Fig. 1 - Motor vehicle thefts in Italy per hundred thousand inhabitants, 2016-2022



Source: SDI

* Data refers to thefts of motor vehicles including cars, motorcycles and heavy vehicles.



- In 2022, the total number of motor vehicle thefts in Italy (provisional data from the SDI) totaled 123.136, a value which has increased compared to 2021 with an amount of motor vehicle thefts equal to 104.372 (+17.98%).
- Table 1 shows the trend in motor vehicle thefts in the period 2017-2021, with the highest total numbers of vehicle thefts in 2017, after which a constant decrease is observed.

Tab. 1 - Motor vehicle thefts in Italy per type of vehicle stolen. Total and average values, 2017-2021

| Italy | Motor vehicle thefts | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Average |
| Cars | 103.030 | 105.239 | 98.623 | 75.000 | 75.471 | 91.473 |
| Motorcycles | 42.470 | 37.829 | 33.431 | 25.273 | 26.707 | 33.142 |
| Heavy vehicles | 1.617 | 3.395 | 3.157 | 2.435 | 2.194 | 2.560 |
| Total | 147.117 | 146.463 | 135.211 | 102.708 | 104.372 | 127.174 |

Source: SDI

* Data refers to thefts of motor vehicles including cars, motorcycles and heavy vehicles.

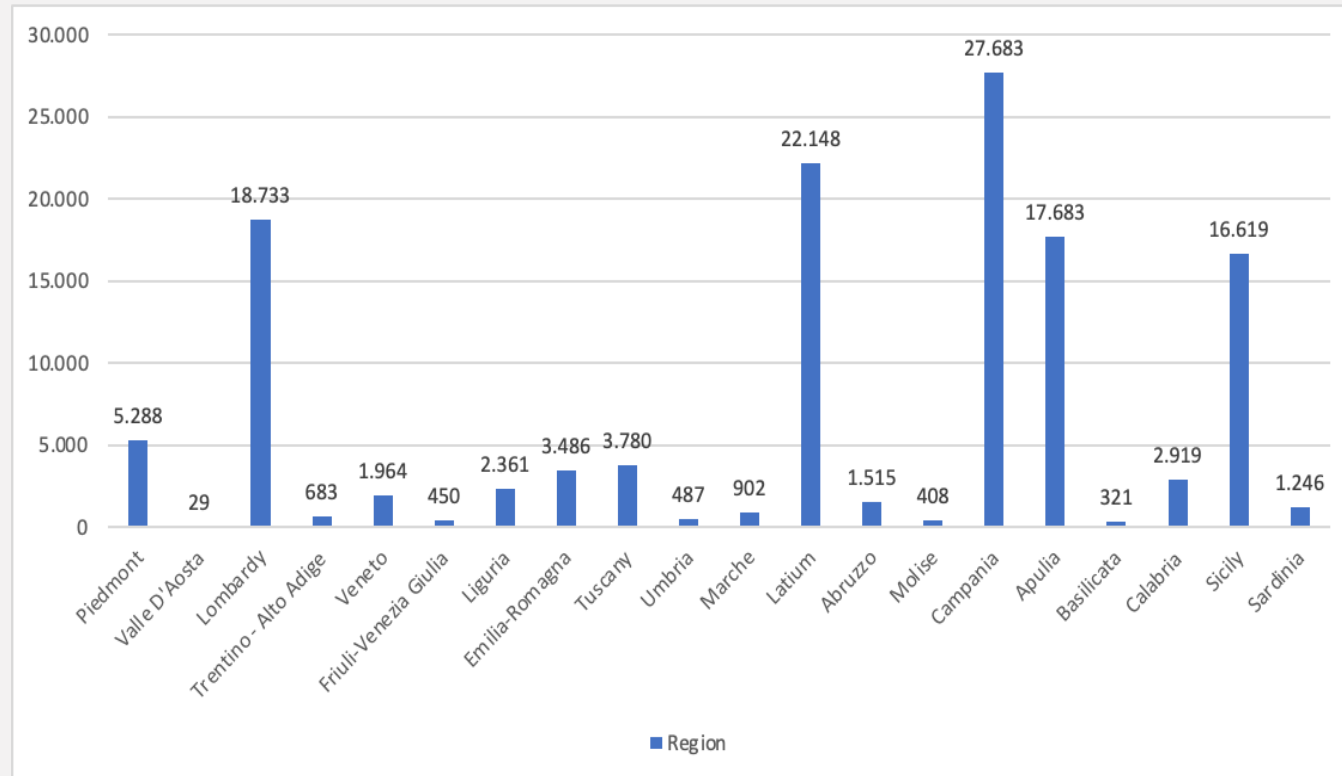


- Variations in the total numbers of motor vehicle thefts when **regional territories** are considered.
- Some regions appear to be more affected than others by motor vehicle thefts (with the highest values between 2017-2021 as well as in 2022), as shown in Figure 2.
- These data could be explained by **geographical and demographic variables**, that is the size of the region and its population density which in turn offer more opportunities for MVT

More in detail:

- In Latium, Campania, Apulia, Sicily (southern and central regions) criminal entrepreneurs have historically developed a high level of expertise, structures and technological skills
- In Piedmont and Lombardy (northern regions) there is a high concentration of luxury car.

Fig. 2 - Average number of motor vehicle thefts in Italy, 2017-2021



Source: SDI

* Data refers to thefts of motor vehicles including cars, motorcycles and heavy vehicles.

Criminal entrepreneurs

Individual suppliers

- high technological expertise and skills
- able to make high profits since they do not rely on partners to commit the crime
- acting alone and steals one vehicle at a time

Criminal associations

- high technological expertise and skills
- art. 416 of the criminal law (association to commit a crime)
- have larger and stable criminal networks
- are native organised crime group
- steal more than one vehicle at a time and in most cases on request of other criminal associations

Roles and duties:

- Individuals in charge of searching and identifying the motor vehicles to be stolen
- Individuals in charge of stealing the identified motor vehicles. In some instances this role may overlap with the former
- Individuals acting as intermediaries between the criminal association and the market

Preliminary results to construct an Italian Barrier Model

Steps:

1. Preparation
2. Entry
3. Precondition: access to the vehicle
4. Crime/Doing
5. Post condition:
 - storage
 - alteration of vehicle identification data/
vehicle dismantling
 - disposal
 - transport
6. Exit: profit

Preparation

Identification of the vehicle to steal individual suppliers

choose low or mid-range cars; criminal groups are specialized in stealing specific vehicle types and brands

Assignment of specific tasks

Identification of the location: the individual suppliers usually steal motor vehicles during night times in large urban centers or areas. The organized groups operate during daily hours in large car parks closed to shopping malls, airports, railway stations and ports.

Identification of co-offenders: the organized groups through the intermediary, start contacts with dealers and recyclers (national or foreign).

| | | |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Opportunities | High concentration of high-end vehicles, especially in northern country | High circulation of low- to medium-end vehicles |
| Signals | Parking areas in shopping centers or near airports, ports, and stations with high concentration of second-hand cars or high-end cars | Few public lighting Few people around the area |
| Facilitators | The Internet as a mean to study high-end car models and locate them | |
| Barriers | To increase police visibility in high-risk areas to deter criminals from choosing those places. | |



Entry

Access to the crime scene: go to the parking lot or private residence or identified area

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Opportunities | Lack of control in parking areas Lack of public lighting | Overcrowded areas or areas with few people |
| Signals | Presence of a suspicious person | |
| Facilitators | The internet | Airport access |
| Barriers | Improve the use of video surveillance to deter the entry into the place where the crime is committed. | |

Pre-conditions



Access to the vehicle through theft:

- physically force car locks (with dedicated tools)
- use of car jammer devices which allow remotely to circumvent the locking of the cars by owners. This allows to access and start the motor vehicles with no breaches. In other cases, these criminal entrepreneurs duplicate the signal released by the key on site.

| | | |
|----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Opportunities | Availability of cheap technologies easily accessible online | High-end residential areas |
| Signals | Signals of forced entry | |
| Facilitators | Technological devices | Knowledge of owner habits |
| Barriers | Restricting access to technologies which are easily available online or monitoring their purchases | |

Doing



Acquisition of the vehicle: driving away with the vehicle

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Opportunities | Lack of public lighting | |
| Signals | Victim reports | |
| Facilitators | These crimes are considered low priority by <i>prosecutors</i> | <i>Victims</i> often do not report due to extortion or private negotiations with the criminal entrepreneur |
| Barriers | Raising awareness among prosecutors about the criminal significance of MVT | Increase control of areas at risk |

Post-conditions



Storage : locate the stolen vehicle in another close by area to circumvent immediate detection by the owner; take the vehicle to open countryside

Alteration of identification data of luxury car

Dismantling the low-end vehicles in parts

Disposal of the vehicle to scrap dealers (who provide facilities and equipments), vehicle repairers and dealers of used vehicle parts

Transport by regular carriers (spare parts), containerization (mainly luxury car) and drivers

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| Opportunities | Large areas in urban centers and open countryside | Abandoned warehouses | Difficulty for State Traffic Police to recognize altered vehicle identification data | Inability to monitor all scrap dealers, vehicle repairers and dealers of used parts | Demand for used parts by vehicle repairers and dealers | Ease of obtaining false or true documents to clean up a stolen vehicle | Unchecked containers on outgoing flows from Italy to land and sea borders |
| Signals | Anomalous characteristics exhibited by dealers of used parts | Large availability of used parts | | | | | |

Post conditions

| Facilitators | Scrap dealers | Vehicle repairers or dealers of used parts | Civilian motorizations | Regular carriers such as trucks and trailers | Drivers | |
|---------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Barriers | Sanctions and administrative control on scrap dealers and vehicle repairers | List of suspicious facilitators | Training campaigns aimed at police officers to address the shortage and complexity of recognizing stolen vehicles during police checks | Agreements between the State Traffic Police and civilian motorizations for data exchange | Making parts identifiable once separated from a vehicle | Contrasting policies on land and maritime borders: controlling the flow of exit in the countries of the first frontier between Europe and Eastern Europe |

Exit



Sell the vehicle and make profit: the stolen vehicle or one of its parts is eventually reintroduced into the legal market, where it is sold to the final buyer as part of a money-laundering scheme.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Opportunities | High demand for used cars and cheap parts | Inability of the police to detect data tampering in the legal online market | Request for used parts or high-end cars at low cost | Difficulty for buyers to recognize tampering |
| Signals | Luxury vehicles at very low prices | | | |
| Facilitators | The Internet as the main instrument of commercialization | Vehicle dealers | Buyers (victims) | |
| Barriers | Raising awareness among buyers to be more suspicious in anomalous trades | Discouraging online purchases | Targeted checks on commercialization channels | |

Thank you for your attention!

V-BAR seeks to analyse the dynamics of the criminal markets of motor vehicle theft and stolen vehicle parts in the EU. Based on logistical analyses of these markets in 6 EU Member States, V-BAR will develop a European barrier model of organised vehicle theft and stolen vehicle parts.

For more information visit www.vehiclecrimebarrier.eu or our [LinkedIn page](#).

