MAFIAS, ITALY AND BEYOND

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Preliminary remarks

The word mafia is very well known far from Italy’s borders. However, instead of designating precisely a specific organized crime phenomenon, it appears to be a kind of cultural sign of Italy, a typical symbol of the country just like pizza, spaghetti and the mandolin. If you type into Google’s search box the words “mafia café,” you receive back more than 18,000 links, testifying to an image of the mafia in which the “criminal” evaporates into the “folkloristic” and which may be useful for commercial reasons. And the impressive number of T-shirts with the face of Marlon Brando playing the title role in *The Godfather* is another sign of this mis-representation.

The problem with the word mafia is that internationally it evokes a large number of stereotypes, that is, it brings to mind fake or quasi-fake conceptual images. In daily life people use this term in a confused way together with words like boss, honorable men, feud, all of them flavored with a certain Italian taste. Among scholars, too, the presence of stereotypes, particularly of a cultural/ethnic type, together with the lack of a common framework for defining the mafia phenomenon, very often leads to models that emphasize some aspects more than others to the detriment of a general understanding.

For a long time mafias had been considered nothing more than a diffuse behavior, a set of practices based on violence embedded in a particular culture; therefore the existence of specific organizations had been explicitly ignored (Blok, 1974). Henner Hess emphasizes the “mafia spirit” from which at most little, scarcely organized groups stem (Hess, 1970: 18). Pino Arlacchi, in his book *La mafia imprenditrice* (*The Entrepreneurial Mafia*), which is a valuable representation of the entrepreneurial characters of the mafia groups, wrote: “The mafia is a behavior and a form of power, it is not a formal organization. Behaving as mafiosi means behaving in an honorable way” (Arlacchi, 1983: 22).

This perspective has strengthened the prejudice about the existence of a “diversity” in Southern Italian culture and receives the blame for neglecting the relational aspects of the mafias: by considering them nothing more than a kind of regional heritage, many have underestimated the fact that the emergence and the strengthening of the Italian mafias is to be read together with the main phases of Italian politics since the times of the national unification process.

One of the most convincing attempts to define the mafias is that proposed by Umberto Santino in the mid-nineties and based on the so called “paradigm of complexity”:

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The mafia is a set of criminal organizations, of which the most important—but not the only one—is Cosa nostra, which operates inside a vast and articulated context of relations and produces a system based on violence and illegality and directed towards the accumulation of capitals, the achievement and the managing of power, which makes use of a cultural code and enjoys a certain social consensus.

(Santino, 1995: 129–130)

This perspective describes a dynamic phenomenon well embedded in a relational system which is of an instrumental nature for the mafiosi.

The main problem with the definition of the mafia is the possibility of distinguishing it from the other phenomena of organized crime (OC). In accordance with Finckenauer (2005), it is not only incorrect to assimilate mafia to OC, but it is also dangerous in terms of planning the policies and practices to counter it. His proposal is to focus on the mafia’s main character, that is, the ability to set up a system of government through violence where there is a power vacuum (Finckenauer, 2005: 74). Finckenauer hits the nail on the head by identifying the specific character of the mafia in relation to its territories, in particular by filling the space the legitimate state has left free. Moreover, the proposal bypasses the tendencies to describe the mafia in an ethnic way or by assuming cultural traits as fundamental to its definition.

Nevertheless, if this view works for the understanding of the functioning of the mafias in their specific territories, in accordance with present-day evidence, we need to articulate it with their movement strategies (Minuti and Nicaso, 1994; Nicaso and Lamothe, 1995; Parini, 2011), as well as with their ability to have a role in the network of worldwide illicit business activities (both, at an international level and of a transnational type).

That is, I try to take as an important fact the idea that the mafias have, for a long time, expanded their activities outside their traditional territories. And this represents critical aspects for any perspectives studying the mafias as phenomena typical of institutionally weak or intrinsically vulnerable territories. This is the case with large areas in the Northern regions of Italy, for instance, whose economy and institutional performances are considered the most advanced among Western countries (e.g. Putnam et al., 1993) and where the mafias are strongly present.

Moreover, it is a widespread opinion that the Italian mafias proliferate mostly in the traditional sectors. For instance, when the ‘ndrine (the single cells of the ‘Ndrangheta) started to settle in Lombardy, their main activities were the construction sector and in particular earth-moving; through these, the mafiosi used to provide the Northern Italian economic fabric with easy services and control over the workforce from Southern Italy (see Ciconte, 1996: 167). Therefore, the importance of the traditional sectors has to be considered as a kind of “spearhead” strategy aimed at infiltrating new territories’ economies with their activities. Nevertheless, things change when the mafias set up complex money-laundering systems in which they are able to deal with high-level sectors of economic institutions. For instance, in Germany the cosche of the ‘Ndrangheta, which have transplanted their activities there, invest their illicit profits in the stock exchange by setting up huge and complex money-laundering systems. In Africa different mafia groups are involved in the trafficking of coltan, a mineral of fundamental importance for the manufacture of electronic goods, such as cell phones, tablets, and so on.

Because of their rootedness in Southern Italy, together with their importance in worldwide trafficking, this chapter is focused on Cosa Nostra and the ‘Ndrangheta. They are paradigmatic cases of the control mafiosi can exert over territories of original settlement as well as of the permeation of legal markets, and of the ability to constitute a relatively organized system between original settlement territories and those of new expansion.
The organization and the origins

It is reductive to consider Cosa Nostra and the ‘Ndrangheta as mere parts of the large family of OC. In fact, they are not just criminal systems, since they have a political agenda aimed at accumulating power. This target is pursued through organizational resources:

Cosa Nostra and the ‘Ndrangheta possess the distinguishing trait of organisations: independent government bodies that regulate the internal life of each associated family and that are clearly different from the authority structure of their members’ biological families. Starting from the 1950s, moreover, superordinate bodies of co-ordination were set up—first in the Cosa Nostra, then in the ‘Ndrangheta as well.

(Paoli, 2004: 20)

The confusion and misunderstanding about the definition of the Italian mafias are emphasized by the existence of foundation myths introduced ex post in order to consolidate the inner organization through initiation rites of an exoteric type (Paoli, 2003) as well as to exert fascination outside the organization (Parini, 2003). Take, for instance, the legend of the three Spanish knights Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso who founded, respectively, the Neapolitan Camorra, the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta, and the Sicilian Mafia, as is usually reported in the affiliation codes of the mafiosi. The following example has been drawn from the initiation rite of Serafino Castagna, a young man who was a member of the ‘Ndrangheta and then became a kind of early pentito or police informer.

In the name of the organized and sacred society, I consecrate this place in the same way our ancestors Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso consecrated it, through irons and chains. I consecrate it through my faith and through my long words. If until now I used to know this place as an obscure one, from now on I know it as a sacred, holy and inviolable place, where it is possible to set and to dismantle this honoured society. “Thanks!,” the others said together.

(Castagna, 1967: 33)

In accordance with mainstream studies about the Sicilian mafia, the original scenery was semi-feudal Sicily and in particular the latifundium, and the first mafiosi are described as intermediary people between the landowners and the poor peasants who were able to subjugate the latter to the former. The historian Salvatore Lupo gives us a more detailed history, in which the Sicilian mafiosi carried on their activities in and around Palermo more than in the latifundia of Trapani or of Agrigento. The Palermo area is for the mafiosi a place of articulation of different activities: “a system of control of the territory which begins with the dense network of the agricultural guards and extends to control over licit as well illicit business activities, such as cattle stealing, smuggling and the first intermediation of the citrus fruit trade and of other products of a rich agriculture” (Lupo, 1996: 18). It is consequently possible to place the role of the Sicilian mafia in the complex and paradoxical processes of modernization rather than considering it as a mere heritage of the past.

According to the social historian Sharo Gambino, “the prehistory of the Calabrian mafia is to be investigated in the events that have interested the land owners since the XVII century to the unification process of Italy, in those fights in which baronies, together with gentlemen and bourgeoisie, were opposed […] to the peasants […] in order to affirm their position and consolidate it through the so-called legality” (Gambino, 1975: 69). In this struggle, though
nourished by the people’s discontent, the ‘Ndrangheta has easily become an instrument of powerful people for social control.

Gratteri and Nicaso (2006: 25–6) stress this fact, since in those years violence was the sole flourishing industry in Calabria and consequently the picciotteria (the first step of affiliation) was an occasion for outcast people to become richer, more powerful, and, above all, respected.

As in the case of the Sicilian mafia, the ‘Ndrangheta very soon based its power on what is called social capital (see Levi, 1996):

Now as in the past, the strength [of the Calabrian mafia] as well as the adaptive ability, rootedness and diffusion of the mafiosi are based on the external relations: a kind of social capital without which the ‘Ndrangheta would not be the ‘Ndrangheta.

(Gratteri and Nicaso, 2006: 33)

During the first phases of consolidation of their power the mafiosi built up, in their original territories, what scholars have called Signoria territoriale (territorial seigniory), which is a key concept describing the particular way the mafia exerts its control over the traditional territories. In these areas, in Calabria, Campania and Sicily, mafiosi are widely considered benefactors willing to help people in the daily minute necessities. As a counterpart, the bosses assume power over those persons living in “their” territory, for instance by claiming (and ensuring) that any decisions have to pass through them. That is what we call territorial signoria, a concept defining a type of power which is totalitarian and based on pervasiveness: the “seigneur” is a person who makes a kind of personal property of the territory.

According to Renate Siebert, territorial signoria is:

A kind of domination focused on the persons and diffused: the organization, the bosses—the little ones as well as the biggest—expect to know and to decide, roughly, on anything that is related to life, the activities, the relations among persons living in the subjugated territory.

(Siebert, 1996: 18)

Territorial signoria is based on a mix of violence (actual or threatened) and the ability to stay at the center of a system of acquaintanceships based on small or large advantages.

Nowadays, these original traits, far from being abandoned, have been strengthened.

Building a system of economic protection

The entrepreneurial dimension of the mafias has been systematically revealed and studied since the early eighties (Arlacchi, 1983), when researchers and scholars realized that, in order to understand and prosecute them, it was crucial to understand the economic behavior, which has some traditional elements though it is continuously adapted to present-day needs.

On 13 December 1982 in Italy, Law n. 646 was enacted, which introduced the crime of association (Article 416 bis) and defines the mafia organization not only as a violent phenomenon, but also as an articulation of social and economic strategies aimed at the accumulation of power through the permeation of the mechanisms of legal markets.

The diffusion and the distribution of the so-called “warning-light” crimes may help in understanding the continuous pressure of the mafias on the economic fabric, particularly in the Southern Italian regions. Researchers label as “warning crimes” damage and setting fire to businesses as well as reported extortions.5 It is worth mentioning that, because of the
unwillingness of those persons living in the territories under pressure by the mafias to report these activities, the data represent just the tip of the iceberg; nevertheless, by taking into consideration the distribution of these crimes among the Italian regions, two elements appear clearly: first, the continuous pressure that the mafias exert on their traditional territories and, second, the diffusion of these crimes in non-traditional regions (Dia, 2011, II).

These two elements confirm that the mafias in their evolutions tend to expand their activities well beyond their traditional borders while continuing to stay rooted in their traditional territories.

The use of violence represents only the first phase of the mafias’ strategy aimed at achieving control over the territories but it remains the “last” resource when some entrepreneurs are reluctant to accept the system the mafiosi impose.

In Sicily, Calabria and Campania, the mafias tend, through a heterogeneous strategy of violence and their ability to share small or large advantages with the victims, to constitute a dense network of accomplices through which it becomes possible to build up a huge system of economic protection. By the expression “economic protection” I mean a strategy aimed at controlling a part of the economic fabric in an area to increase consensus (by sharing very small advantages with people) and to make things easier for the most profitable businesses (from illicit activities) by providing them with efficacious money-laundering systems. The diffusion of the influence they exert, and in general of the pressure on the economic fabric in the areas of origin as well as those of new settlement, has a twofold effect. There are, in fact, many businesses that the owners have to hand over to the mafiosi because of the oppression they have to put up with from them. Moreover, many business people decide to become their accomplices and consequently are drawn into a huge network of money laundering. In fact, as has been suggested by Antonio Nicaso in the case of the ‘Ndrangheta, the true problem for the mafias today is not making money but justifying it.

In the Southern regions of Italy, this pressure reaches such high levels that the economic system is, particularly in specific areas, strongly compromised. The expansion of these activities in new territories in Italy could represent a serious danger for the national economy.

**The political bond**

“The relation with politics has to be read in that complex dimension. They (the mafiosi, nda) address a politician when no other way to obtain what is necessary remains” (Antimafia Parliamentary Commission, 1993: 27). Acquaintanceships with politicians are to be inscribed in a complex relation of mutual advantages in which parts of the ruling class cooperate in order to maintain their power. From the mafiosi’s point of view, it is an important way of consolidating consensus and providing themselves with “high-level” protection.

In the early nineties, the information given by a number of pentiti (police informers) (ex-bosses of the caliber of Tommaso Buscetta, Antonino Calderone, Gaspare Mutolo and many others) has made clear the importance for the mafiosi of becoming acquainted with politicians at different levels, from the local to the national. Tommaso Buscetta declared in 1993 in front of the Antimafia Parliamentary Commission that the “Mafioso has always been looking for political support [. . .]. I myself, in 1962 when I used to import butter in Milan, had my politicians to address to have the import licence” (Antimafia Parliamentary Commission, 1993: 206). And Gaspare Mutolo stated: “for instance, if a person was looking for a job [. . .] he addressed the Mafioso, instead of the employment agency, and the Mafioso would have talked to the employment officer” (Antimafia Parliamentary Commission, 1993: 406).
In the 1993 report of the Antimafia Parliamentary Commission it is emphasized that “[t]he relations between Cosa Nostra and institutional and professional sectors are of extraordinary importance in the strategies of the mafia-type organization” (Antimafia Parliamentary Commission, 1993).

In order to have a raw account of the phenomenon, it is useful to consider the data of the municipal councils that were dismantled because of suspected mafia infiltration. From the early nineties to the end of December 2012 this decree was applied 205 times to municipal councils. Most of the dismantled councils are in the Southern regions of Italy (85 in Campania; 56 in Sicily; 53 in Calabria; 7 in Apulia). Nevertheless, it is worrying that in recent years councils in Lazio, Piedmont and Liguria have been dismantled since that testifies to the continuing geographical advance of the mafia and its ability to infiltrate the political fabric.

It is worth mentioning that four Local Health Agencies were dismantled for the same reasons. This testifies that another sector whose control is crucial for the mafiosi is the public health services because of the important economic resources connected to their management (more than 60 percent of regional public budget—in Calabria and in Sicily—is represented by it). Moreover, by controlling these services they have the possibility of consolidating social consensus through control of a primary right such as health.

It is possible to suggest some hypotheses about the importance for the mafiosi of the relationship with and the control of politics. First of all, the possibility of controlling a number of local administrations is of a crucial importance in terms of the consensus the mafia boss can get from the daily managing of local public resources, whether economic or not (see, for instance, Mete, 2009).

Then the importance of the control mafiosi can exert on a local level on politics has to be referred to the control of economic resources provided by the control of public contracts, some of them of conspicuous economic importance. But overall, through these alliances the cosche seek full social legitimacy and a stronger integration in the local economy and local politics (for the case of the 'Ndrangheta, see Forgione, 2008: 25).

The local level of relationships with politicians is somehow functional to the national one, since from the control of the specific territories it is possible to build up networks of reciprocal help between mafiosi and high-level politics. Mafiosi are willing to ally themselves to members of any government parties, since their pragmatism does not allow of any ideological view. In order to focus on this strategy, aimed at receiving a kind of political protection, let me report what the Corte d’Appello wrote in its sentence against Giulio Andreotti, one of the most important and powerful Italian politicians during the so-called First Republic: “Senator Giulio Andreotti had full knowledge that his party companions in Sicily had maintained friendly relations with the mafia bosses [. . .]; he showed to these [the bosses] a not fictitious willingness” (Sentence of the Palermo Corte d’Appello, 2 May 2003, quoted in Pepino, 2008: 419).

In search for legitimation

As we have seen, in order to provide protection for themselves, the mafiosi entered a multilevel system of relationships with members of the Italian ruling class. Far from the mafiosi being external actors endangering the order of the State, inside this articulation of relations they have been trusty allies of Italian governments in crucial moments of Italian history, and this has provided them with a kind of “hidden” legitimation.

In his discussion of Luigi Barzini’s and Anton Blok’s findings about the mafiosi, Mark Findlay states that
They are an outgrowth of the particular process of state formation in Italy, presumably from the expansion of national systems of power which failed to subsume and obliterate local quasi-feudal systems of power. For long periods of time, various central governments in Italy were forced to work with the rural landlords and the mafiosi whom they helped to create and patronise. The central government was continually compromised by the forces of traditional corruption and partisanship. (Findlay, 2004: 152)

This is a long history, which started immediately after the national unification process, when the so-called “briganti” were considered a danger to the affluent classes, as well to the Italian authorities, much more than the mafiosi. That is when the mafiosi started to be the instruments of the so-called “manutengoli,” that is, members of the ruling classes who were accomplices and protectors of the mafiosi in a relationship of reciprocal advantage. According to the historian Salvatore Lupo, Raffaele Palizzolo, “charged as ‘manutengolo,’ could be remembered after years as being a ‘champion of morality,’ the leader of the owners’ league in the resistance against the brigantaggio” (Lupo, 1996: 84). Raffaele Palizzolo was a Palermo municipal councilor and then member of the Italian Parliament who was accused of being the instigator of the murder of the Marquis Emanuele Notarbartolo on 1 February 1893. This fact is considered to be the first mafia murder of a prominent figure and it is worth mentioning that the assassins were two mafiosi, Matteo Filippello and Giuseppe Fontana.

Some decades later, the mafiosi played a controversial role during the landing in Sicily of the Allied forces. Lucky Luciano, a Mafioso who had emigrated to the United States, after complex and unclear events in which mafiosi like Vito Genovese and masonic powers took part, would seem to have been put in charge of facilitating the landing in Sicily of the Allied forces at the end of World War II. This operation—whose real significance and the mafia’s role in it are still not clear (see Lupo, 1996)—was, nevertheless, crucial to legitimate the Sicilian mafiosi in the post-war Italian political fabric. With regard to Luciano, the pentito Tommaso Buscetta said:

He [Luciano] told me about his role during the Allied landing. He placed his influence on Cosa Nostra at the disposal of the success of the operation without bloodshed. And in fact the Americans took a good walk in Sicily. (Arlacchi, 1994: 51)

Moreover, in Sicily and in Calabria at that time the peasants’ leagues were demanding a new system of agricultural ownership in which resources (in particular land) were to be given directly to the peasants. This attempt was opposed by the owners of the land, who often utilized the violence of the mafiosi against the peasants demanding land (see Lupo, 1996; Santino, 2009). The Portella della Ginestra attack on unarmed peasants on 1 May 1947—for which the bandit Salvatore Giuliano was charged—is a blatant example of this strategy of defending traditional interests and order. In those years a number of labor union members were killed by the mafia in Sicily, among them, Accursio Miraglia (January 4 1947), Placido Rizzotto (March 10 1948), Calogero Cangelosi (April 2 1948) and many others in the years that followed.

Another obscure period of Italian history in which interests of some hidden powers inside the state encountered some mafia strategies was during the attempted coup d’état planned by the general Junio Valerio Borghese at the end of 1970. Important mafia bosses such as Tommaso Buscetta, Salvatore Greco and Luciano Liggio took part in the planning of the conspiracy to give support to the subversive armies in Sicily; the same happened in Calabria, where the
De Stefano family was involved in the conspiracy by means of the subversive political right as well as members of the secret services (cf. Ciconte, 2008: 92–3). This fact testifies to the interests of the mafiosi in taking part in the political conflict even in extreme cases, such as an attempted coup, in order to exert continuous pressure on politics.

In the middle of seventies, the Calabrian cosche decided to deal more effectively with their relationships with masonic lodges and other hidden powers of the Italian State in order to consolidate their legitimation inside the articulation of the power system in Italy. That is the reason why a number of doti, that is levels endowed with high prestige and, consequently, decisional power, were introduced, starting with the Santa (see Gratteri and Nicaso, 2006: 75; Ciconte, 2008: 97). The persons belonging to those levels of the organization have the exclusive power of staying in contact with the so-called “gray area” of Italian power in order to consolidate their hidden legitimation. They are a kind of diplomatic corps of the mafiosi.

**Transnational business activities and the search for a second legitimation**

One shipment which arrived at Montreal in October 1974, most likely choreographed by the transnational Cuntrera-Caruana-Rizzuto factions of the Cotroni decina, consisted of 5.5 kilos of pharmaceutical cocaine that had been shipped in London, England, and disappeared from a bonded warehouse at Dorval Airport.

*(Schneider, 2009: 506)*

From the mid-seventies, the Cuntrera-Caruana and Rizzuto families of Cosa Nostra achieved a leading position in international drug trafficking especially because of their ability to work in Montreal (a very important crossroad in the drug traffic for the North American continent and where cocaine processing laboratories had been set up) in close relation with South American importers. It is worth mentioning that those families have been established in Venezuela since the seventies in order to consolidate their strategic position and rule in drug trafficking. Some years later, in the Pizza Connection Trial evidence was given of a huge heroin trafficking operation, the organizer of which was the Sicilian boss Gaetano Badalamenti: in the seventies, the mafiosi, in a “franchise agreement with American organized crime groups” (Roth, 2010: 73) set up a multimillion business using a nationwide network of pizzerias for distribution.

Partly because of the Italian State’s reaction against Cosa Nostra after the murders of judges Falcone and Borsellino, from the mid-nineties Calabrian mafia groups became very important actors in the worldwide cocaine market and reached their peak in the 2000s.

By 2005 the area around Locri on Calabria’s east coast was deemed the narco-capital of Italy. Links were discovered between the eastern ’Ndrangheta and Colombian, Turkish, German, Dutch, Belgium, and French criminal organizations. Two investigations—“Borsalino” and “Super Gordo”—yielded players in several countries, including Canada. Arrests in Calabria were made in Plati, Marina di Gioiosa, and San Luca, all key towns in the growth of the ’ndrangheta.

*(Nicaso and Lamothe, 2005: 29)*

Particularly relevant is the evidence that has emerged from the so-called “Decollo” inquiry which testifies to the high favor and the reputation of Italian mafias among other criminal groups. Actually the inquiry has revealed cocaine trafficking groups of the Calabrian mafia planned with the right-wing paramilitary army called the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia).
Italian mafias operate within a huge network of illicit markets thanks to alliances in many parts of the world and to their subsequent control of crucial functions for the carrying out of this trafficking. On the global stage, the mafias are becoming a true power system developed at the border between what is licit and what is illicit, by mixing together typical elements of the socio-political behavior with those typical of the economic ones. [Their] success derives from the capability to take together local and global better than the backward model of the national state can do.

(Armao, 2000: 298)

On the basis of this suggestion, it is possible to forecast a slow move towards the managing of the illicit aspects of the licit economy. This pertains essentially to illicit waste disposal, since it represents an important part of its budget that the industrial system is interested in cutting. Moreover, it is worth mentioning too that in times of global crisis, the mafias, through the revenues from their illicit business activities, are introducing significant monetary resources into a thirsty economy. The “Metropolis” inquiry, carried out in the first months of 2013 by the District Antimafia Agency of Reggio Calabria, shows an impressive money-laundering system through the selling of tourist products in very upmarket villages in Calabria, allegedly made with money from drug trafficking in Great Britain and in Ireland.

“The ability to make money through money, to finance other activities through accumulated illegal capital has multiplied the power of the ‘Ndrangheta members enormously” (Pellegrini, 1997: 74). It has multiplied, too, the chances of becoming a crucial—and somehow tolerated—actor in the licit economic system.

Notes

1 Pino Arlacchi in one his subsequent books (1994) has honorably recognized his under-evaluation of the mafias’ organizational aspects.

2 It is worth mentioning the proposal by Francesca Longo (2010) for a general definition of Organized Crime to keep together the local and the transnational level: “Organized crime is, at the same time, a contextualized phenomenon which is strongly connected with local dynamics, and a transnational reality in that different organized groups create reciprocal links, structures of interdependency and forms of cooperation which affect the global system. Secondly, it permits us to govern in a more coherent way the activities of prevention, tackling and combating organized crime and TOC both at national and/or international levels” (Longo, 2010: 27).

3 I want to mention here that the ‘Ndrangheta is based on family groups, called ‘ndrine, which can be anyone exerting independent power in their specific territories. The only superior organism, the crimine, has coordinating and representative functions. In contrast, Cosa Nostra has a structure based on a territorial division and has a vertical structure: each group is subordinated to the ones above.

4 This is an ancestral myth widely considered as constitutive of all the mafia organizations: the three knights, belonging to the Garduna, a secret sect, were imprisoned for thirty long years because they had avenged the honor of their sister. After their imprisonment, they decided to remain in Italy and took different paths. Osso went to Sicily, where he founded the mafia; Mastroso went to Calabria and founded the ‘Ndrangheta, while Carcagnosso, once he had arrived in Campania, founded the Camorra. As we can see, the myth of the three knights is aimed at describing the mafia’s organizations as stemming from a culture characterized by a strong attachment to traditional values of honor.

5 In 2011 (data from Dia, 2011, II), cases of damage, mainly to shops, numbered 388,207; there were a little more than ten thousand (10,075) cases of damage followed by fires. Extortions number more than five thousand (5,293). With regard to damage followed by fires, in the second half of 2011 the majority is concentrated in the Southern regions (1,186 in Sicily; 606 in Calabria; 317 in Campania; and 753 in Apulia); nevertheless, in Northern regions, where the presence of the mafias is relatively recent, such as Lombardy; the same data is significant (418) as it is in Lazio (331). The data on the
number of extortions is particularly significant since Lombardy is the second region in Italy (395) for the diffusion of this type of crime.

6 http://rotocalcoafricano.wordpress.com/2012/09/20/ndrangheta-e-coltan/

7 In 1991 in the Italian system the legislative decree N. 164 allowing the dissolution of municipal councils and other local policy’s agencies in case of suspected mafia infiltration was adopted.

8 Moreover, the influence over the health system may be a good occasion for the bosses in jail to illegally lighten their conditions of imprisonment. In Calabria, in 2012 judicial inquiries pointed out the role of compliant physicians working in two private clinics where the bosses used to be admitted on the basis of false medicals by their testifying to a state of mental illness (Badolati and Sabato, 2012).

9 In the recent past the Calabrian cosche managed to control the public contracts for the modernization of the A3 highway, the principal highway in Southern Italy, by imposing on contractors a fee of 3 percent (as “Tamburo” and “Arca” judicial inquiries made clear). In general the cosche, particularly in the traditional territories, but also in some regions of expansion, control the building sector from concrete to asphalting, and manage to distort the assignments of public contracts to the firms with which they are in collusion (Antimafia Parliamentary Commission, 2012: 111–13).

10 The ’Ndrangheta, for instance, has from the seventies come into contact with the Masonic lodges, by setting up a kind of “cupola,” the so called “Santa” whose function is to keep in touch with politicians, professionals and masonic lodges. Cosa Nostra has a long history of connections with politicians.

11 In the sentence, Andreotti’s role in covering the bosses’ responsibilities in the murder of the former President of the Sicilian Region Piersanti Mattarella is criticized.

12 The “Crimine 3” inquiry carried on by the Dda (District Antimafia Agency) has confirmed the great ability of the ’Ndrangheta to work together with other criminal groups in huge criminal networks—in the specific case the Mexican cartel “Las Zetas,” and this confirms the attitude of the mafias to working in criminal consortia (Nicaso and Lamothe, 1995).

13 According to the 2012 Legambiente Report on the so-called Ecomafie, since 2006 there have been 1,229 inquiries into organized illicit waste traffic and more than 3,500 people who have been reported. These activities involve Italy as well as some 23 different countries around the world. Through these activities, a huge amount of waste is taken from the legal disposal firms’ system, whose processing costs are significantly higher.

References


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